

# Grove Vale Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103972
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	308471
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Carrington

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	362
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pauline Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy Leivers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Monksfield Avenue Great Barr Birmingham B43 6AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01213 574319
<b>Fax number</b>	01213 582199

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of provision for gifted and talented pupils; the school's work to improve attendance; and the improvements made to teaching, especially for pupils in Year 3, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and in information and communication technology. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, pupils' work, discussions with pupils, staff, governors and the school improvement partner, and the study of school documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Grove Vale is larger than most other primary schools. The pupils come from a wider area and range of social backgrounds than they did at the time of its previous inspection. There are now many more pupils from minority ethnic groups than in the past. There are almost equal proportions of pupils from White British and Indian families. Their joint numbers make up just over four-fifths of the total. A well above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Grove Vale Primary is a good school that is improving at a steady rate and has several outstanding features. The key strength of the school is the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Together, they have encouraged the development of a strong team of staff and governors, pupils' excellent personal development, an extremely rich and rewarding curriculum, and the very thorough care, guidance and support of pupils. Parents have overwhelmingly positive views of the school, and the partnerships with them and outside agencies are significant factors in the school's many strengths.

Academically, the pupils do well. Pupils make good progress from the time they join Reception through to the end of Year 6. Standards are above average, and the school has a good track record of improving standards in writing and information and communication technology (ICT). The school has adapted well to the changing nature of the intake. Pupils who speak English as an additional language progress well because they want to join in the very stimulating activities provided. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress. Pupils from both Indian and White British backgrounds share this good progress. Results at the higher Level 3 and Level 5 are above average but it is only recently that the process of guaranteeing that the top achieving and talented pupils make the same brisk progress as all the other pupils has gathered speed.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and continues to improve. Until this school year, the quality of teaching in one of the Year 3 classes was not as good as in other parts of the school. Now it is becoming equally effective for all pupils. Teaching is good in ICT and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching and support staff are a talented team who show considerable originality in the work they set for their pupils. The pupils are quick to say that they enjoy school immensely because learning is fun, staff help them when they have difficulties, they learn something new each day and the work is challenging. Pupils in Year 3 are proud, for example, that they are completing some work that is usually reserved for those in Year 4. The marking of pupils' work assesses how well they have reached their individual targets although it is less consistent in identifying the next steps to be taken. However, enhanced learning for the gifted and talented pupils is the key area where further improvements can be made to the quality of teaching.

The pupils are keen learners and show thorough enjoyment of their tasks. They want to be in school, so attendance levels are rising well. The school is taking effective steps to ensure that attendance continues to improve. Pupils work productively and purposefully, whether investigating balls floating in jelly in Reception, firing questions at a pupil acting very convincingly in the role of King Henry VIII in Year 3, or finding the sum total of all the faces on a set of dice with many segments in Year 6. The pupils relish the challenge of such work. They are very alert to the need to keep healthy and safe and have proposed a number of sensible improvements to make their school a safer place to be. Pupils have a really strong sense of community. They work very harmoniously together, have many friends and they look after each other with great maturity. They also show considerable initiative, independence and dependability. These qualities contribute strongly to their excellent preparation for life after their primary education.

Pupils have a very long list of subjects they particularly like. History, physical education, ICT and art are highlighted amongst them. The reasons for these choices are not hard to find and

are linked firmly to the outstanding quality of the curriculum. The emphasis on the development of pupils' creativity is especially noteworthy. Even fairly straightforward activities are interpreted in imaginative and very motivational ways. Pupils say that the programme of out-of-school activities is excellent. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have annual opportunities to take part in worthwhile residential visits. The school has a strong record of achievement in sporting events.

The school's many strengths are due to effective leadership and management. High expectations are the norm and all leaders hold continual improvement and good achievement as the benchmarks of their success. Governors have an astute understanding of the school's performance. They make thorough checks to ensure that all decisions will benefit the pupils and they monitor the implementation of such decisions actively. Senior and middle managers do a good job and they competently track the challenging targets set for achievement. They recognise that ensuring that gifted and talented pupils actually make good progress is the next responsibility for them to tackle. Performance management of staff is effective, although the process is not yet linked consistently to their professional development. Nevertheless, the school's record of improvement is good. The potential to continue this into the future is excellent because everyone now shares the same commitment to improvement and all show equal capacity to make changes that benefit the pupils.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage provides a vibrant and enjoyable introduction to school for all the children. The changing nature of the intake has been recognised well and provision is being refined to help the children, regardless of background, to settle quickly and make good progress. The below average starting level of many children, especially in language and literacy, has led to the provision of well targeted support to help them communicate fluently with each other and with the adults in class. When children leave Reception, most have achieved their targets and are well set for work in Year 1. The Foundation Stage is led well and the quality of teaching is good. Improvement priorities are currently centred on making the exciting curriculum even more focused on individual needs. As in the rest of the school, the early identification of children with particular gifts and talents and enhancing the provision to ensure they flourish quickly are the prime areas for improvement within this stage.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- enhance the provision for pupils with particular gifts and talents and track their progress more effectively.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grove Vale Primary School, Birmingham, B43 6AL

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited school recently. I enjoyed talking with many of you and seeing all of you at work. You told me you really like coming to school and you were keen to make sure I saw all the good things you share. I think you go to a good school and I found many things you can be proud of:

- you make good progress and reach above average standards
- you are becoming very pleasant children who behave impeccably\* and look after each other with great care and kindness
- you are taught well and you are given work that is challenging and great fun
- your teachers look after you very carefully and they give you helpful guidance so you can learn well
- your headteacher leads the school with great success and other staff and the governors join him in making sure you do well.

I know that you will want to help your teachers make your school even better. There is one thing in particular that your teachers can improve now:

- make sure that those of you with particular gifts and talents always build well on your skills.

I am sure you all have a bright future. Good luck with your work.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead inspector

\*I am sure you will want to find the meaning of this word if you do not know it already!