

Grove Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109082
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	309871
Inspection dates	11–12 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jill Arnold

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Preslean
Headteacher	Robert Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002
School address	Whiteoak Way Nailsea Nailsea BS48 4YZ
Telephone number	01275 852685
Fax number	01275858660

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average but the roll has fallen over recent years owing to a reduction in the number of children of school age. Almost all pupils are White British and come from relatively prosperous backgrounds. Most transfer from the infant school on the same site. There is a relatively small proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Grove Junior is a good school with some outstanding aspects. Good leadership and effective teamwork ensure that the quality of education and care enables pupils to achieve well, feel very safe and really enjoy school. Parents are strongly supportive and appreciate the hard work and caring approach of the staff. The following comment is representative of the many received by the inspection team: 'Our children have flourished and grown in confidence during their time at Grove. The staff are hard working and committed to the whole development of each child. Children are encouraged and praised and made to feel special and important. As parents we are extremely pleased with the way that Grove Junior School teaches and supports children.'

The school is well led by the headteacher and his senior colleagues, who are ably and enthusiastically supported by the staff team. Together they have created a caring, welcoming and stimulating environment in which pupils feel valued. Staff and governors have worked successfully to improve the school's provision since the last inspection and demonstrate a good capacity to move the school forward yet further. The school's accurate self-evaluation ensures that staff know where to focus their energy on improving pupils' academic achievement, alongside developing important areas of their all-round personal and social development such as thinking skills, creativity and teamwork.

Teaching is good, at times inspirational, and motivates the pupils to behave well, work hard and to do their best. This, together with effective systems for monitoring pupils' progress, has helped to maintain above average academic standards for several years. By the time they leave, pupils have made good progress and are well equipped academically, socially and personally for the next stage of their education. The staff adopt consistent approaches in their teaching and management of behaviour which succeed in developing pupils' willingness to 'have a go' and to express their views. Good relationships between staff and pupils underpin the learning and permeate school life. Teachers have put considerable time and energy into improving pupils' standards of writing, with some success, but boys in particular do not all achieve as well as they should in this area of English.

Pupils behave well and their positive attitude to learning is shown in their attentiveness and willingness to participate in lessons. They play safely and harmoniously and cooperate well in lessons. Their self-esteem and confidence are successfully developed through the quality of teaching, their curricular opportunities and the care, guidance and support they receive. They are developing a good appreciation of healthy lifestyles and can explain why eating a balanced diet, taking exercise and looking after themselves are important.

The outstanding quality of the curriculum and additional activities greatly enhances pupils' enjoyment of school. This, and their positive relationships with staff and each other, is one of the reasons why pupils are rarely absent. Particularly strong features are the creative arts and personal, social and health education (PSHE). They successfully promote pupils' personal development as well as their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Information and communication technology (ICT) is another strength, which helps pupils to achieve well by applying and developing their computer skills in many different subjects. There is also an excellent range of additional clubs and activities which enriches learning and provides good opportunities for pupils to take part in community events.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing, by focusing particularly on accelerating the progress of boys.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school's national test results for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science are consistently above average and have improved over time. Teacher assessments indicate that many pupils also attain levels in ICT that are beyond those expected for their age. Although pupils' reading skills are well developed, their writing standards are not as high, particularly the boys'. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully from their start in Year 3 and by the end of Year 6, they have achieved well. This includes pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Many pupils are good ambassadors for their school, show responsibility and speak confidently about what they enjoy and their work. They feel well supported in resolving conflicts or the rare incidents of bullying when they are not able to deal with these for themselves. They are proud of the role of the school council in securing new play equipment and feel this to be a vehicle for expressing their views. Teachers are introducing a new approach, known as critical skills, to improve pupils' involvement in their learning, their ability to think for themselves and to use their initiative.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff are united and effective in promoting improvements in teaching across the school to ensure that pupils receive consistent messages about what is required of them. Teachers' very positive relationships with pupils encourage them to give of their best and meet challenging targets. Whilst most pupils are attentive and participate well, just occasionally teachers have to work harder with a few pupils to keep them on task and interested in their work. Lessons are typically well structured, with a good balance of listening, discussing and practical activity. Pupils are given opportunities for self-assessment, which helps them to take responsibility for measuring their progress. Teachers use ICT very effectively to engage and motivate pupils. Although the use of ICT has been effective in improving standards of writing, pupils' skills require further development to bring standards in line with other areas of their learning. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress as a result of effective support staff, who are sensitive to their needs and skilled in moving them forward in their learning. Teachers' marking consistently helps pupils to identify their strengths and understand where and how they need to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is exceptionally well planned and successful in meeting the range of pupils' needs and interests, including provision for pupils with a specific learning need or talent.

Teachers plan collaboratively in year groups, making effective links between subjects and creating opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a meaningful way in other subjects. The creative arts programme benefits from having specialist teachers across the school who work together to ensure a highly coordinated approach. PSHE permeates school life, contributing to pupils' good personal development. The school offers an outstanding range of opportunities that have a high take-up. French is taught in all year groups, not just in discrete lessons but also throughout the day when the opportunity arises. Almost a third of pupils have musical instrument tuition, which is a high proportion, and a great number take up the opportunities in sports, music, drama, dance, art, ICT and international clubs after school. A well-established cycle of curriculum review ensures that it continues to adapt to pupils' interests and local and national needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Very good relationships ensure that pupils feel able to talk to staff about any concerns they might have. Systems for monitoring pupils' progress are used effectively to identify where to provide additional support for pupils to boost their achievement or to support their emotional needs. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is coordinated very well, including the involvement of outside agencies where appropriate. There are effective induction and transition arrangements in place for pupils starting school or transferring to secondary school. There are suitable procedures for ensuring the health, safety and protection of pupils, with some minor aspects requiring review.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and his senior colleagues provide clear direction for the school, which is strongly supported by the staff. Their leadership ensures that learning is made meaningful and enjoyable for the pupils and promotes their good achievement. There is strong emphasis on pupils' academic development which is balanced by the aim to equip pupils with a range of life skills. The headteacher empowers his staff to lead and develop their areas of expertise through staff development and training and support, in and out of school. The monitoring, evaluation and review by subject leaders is very thorough and accurate and leads to clear improvement. Several of them are specialists whose impact extends beyond the school as their advice is widely sought in North Somerset. The recently introduced assessment for Year 3 pupils is helping to measure progress more realistically than in the past and this is used to set clear and challenging targets for improvement. The need to improve writing standards is identified by the school in its self-evaluation. It has had some success but has not yet resolved the problem fully.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grove Junior School, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 4YZ

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your work and hearing your views. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

The people who run your school do a good job of making sure you receive a good education and are properly looked after. Most of you love coming to school and are very keen to learn and do well. At your school, fewer pupils have days off than at many others in England! This is partly because your school provides an excellent range of subjects and activities and your teachers work hard to make your time at school interesting and fun. The good teaching and the way all the staff take good care of you help you to feel safe and confident. Your enthusiasm, good behaviour and the considerate way you treat each other also help to make your school a happy and calm place in which to learn. We received many comments from parents telling us how pleased they are with your school, the dedication of the staff and the good progress you make.

Most of you are achieving well in all of your subjects. In English, we agree with your teachers that although you are doing well with your reading, some of you, particularly some of the boys, could do even better with your writing. You can all help by trying your hardest to follow the good advice your teachers give you, so that your writing skills improve and you equip you for your future.

With best wishes for the future

Jill Arnold Lead inspector



14 September 2007

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Lead inspector