

Grove Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123149
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314515
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. John Robertson
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Grace
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004
School address	North Drive Grove Wantage OX12 7PW
Telephone number	01235 769867
Fax number	01235 769867

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Inspection number	314515

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Grove Church of England Primary School is smaller than average and the number of pupils has declined in recent years. It has a smaller than average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and nearly all speak English as their first language. More pupils move in and out of the school other than at the expected time. The school has a similar proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to other schools, most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The current headteacher took up her post in January 2008 after a long period of temporary leadership. The school holds the Investors in People, Inclusion Quality Mark, Activemark and Healthy Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Grove Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education. It has a number of good features. Since the appointment of its new headteacher, it has gained a fresh lease of life. Under her calm, perceptive leadership the school has started to address its weaknesses. Behaviour is better and teaching and learning are starting to improve, although this is not yet reflected in raised standards and achievement.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff support the headteacher strongly, managing their areas effectively and working well as a close-knit team. Governors try hard to support the school effectively, but their desire to be more fully involved is limited because they do not monitor the school sufficiently, although this is improving.

Pupils are well cared for and there are strong arrangements to ensure their well-being. Pupils are happy and feel safe in school because they know there are many helpful adults to support them. This engenders a positive ethos and pupils' personal development is good. The school promotes healthy lifestyles very well and pupils know the importance of diet and exercise. They appreciate the visiting experts who help run sports activities. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils are orderly and considerate but a few spoil the atmosphere of lessons and need to be reminded more frequently of how to behave.

Children enter school with below expected skills, make a good start to school life and achieve well in the Foundation Stage, reaching expected standards by the start of Year 1. Pupils reach average standards in all subjects at the end of Year 6 and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are strengths, such as the good planning to support pupils' learning needs and the effective contributions from teaching assistants. Pupils are generally keen to learn. While most teaching is satisfactory, some can be slow and the management of off-task behaviour is not always effective enough. Some work for older pupils is insufficiently challenging. The curriculum is good because it provides a complete and interesting range of learning opportunities. Pupils greatly appreciate the many clubs and societies, sporting and otherwise on offer, and attend in large numbers.

Parents are content with the school, particularly with the new stability and quality of leadership. A few are concerned over bad behaviour, but inspection evidence indicates satisfactory and improving behaviour patterns. The inspection found no evidence to confirm the view of a small minority that parents are ill-informed about the school. In fact, many parents wrote that they like the way the school keeps in touch. A typical comment was, 'The door is always open for parents to call and discuss concerns, class teachers are willing to help and advise.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start the Foundation Stage with skills that are below expectations. Good planning and careful analysis of their needs helps staff promote effective learning. Standards as children move into Year 1 are at the expected levels. Progress is carefully recorded and analysed and this helps teachers plan interesting work that supports good achievement. Teaching is good, ensuring the right mix of adult-directed and child initiated activities. The school has very good links with the on-site independent pre-school and this helps minimise the stress of transition into the Reception class. The shared play areas provide plenty of stimulating space, both inside and out.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop teaching so that pupils are consistently well managed and lessons run at a brisk pace.
- Support pupils' understanding of their standards and what they have to do to improve through setting clear, individualised targets.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average, as they have been for some years. Those at the end of Key Stage 1 are also average and this is better than at the time of the previous inspection.

There are no significant variations between standards and achievement in subjects. After a dip in 2007, the school's improved emphasis on science teaching lifted science standards this year so that they are now similar to those in English and mathematics. The school is inclusive, supporting learning well. This ensures that pupils' achievement, including those with moderate learning difficulties, is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and have constructive relationships with teachers and one another. They play happily, collaborating as they learn and behaviour is satisfactory overall. The new behaviour and rewards policy has improved behaviour and the atmosphere around the school is calm. However, there remains some persistent low-level disturbance in lessons.

Recent initiatives, for example, a junior citizenship event, ensure pupils have good knowledge of how to stay safe. They understand how to avoid danger. Pupils report very little bullying and say they know the school deals with such incidents firmly. Attendance is above average.

Pupils show good awareness of and make good contributions to the school, local and wider community. They like the school council because they know it represents their views and acts decisively when required. They raise funds for a pupil in Bolivia and are proud that they have helped him buy basic furniture. Pupils' preparation for the future is satisfactory. Initiatives, like 'Young Apprentice,' promote an awareness of how to manage money. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The headteacher has recently introduced more rigorous lesson monitoring and this is starting to improve teaching, which has some good qualities. Learning is also starting to improve, although this has yet to significantly impact on raising standards.

Teachers plan carefully to ensure continuity of learning and usually take into account the varied learning needs of pupils. Lessons on the whole provide good support for those who find learning difficult and teaching assistants act well to improve opportunities and to give support for such groups. Most lessons are challenging for the more able, but some older pupils complain that some work is repetitious and not stimulating. Good planning ensures an interesting range of resources is to hand.

Not all pupils find it easy to learn and some have short attention spans, showing too little commitment to their work. Teachers' management of these pupils varies. The new school behaviour policy has helped, but disturbances reduce the pace of learning when pupils require constant correction.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well organised and provides an interesting, relevant range of learning opportunities. Careful monitoring has ensured good coverage of the required subjects. An increasing emphasis on practical and outdoor activities suits pupils' needs very well. Good contacts with a French school help promote modern foreign language teaching to Key Stage 2 pupils.

The school has good links with the nearby sports specialist secondary school to promote very good sporting opportunities, both during and after the school day. There are many other clubs such as choir, chess, gardening and recorder. Pupils appreciate all these opportunities, participating in large numbers. The school's provision of before and after school activities is very good. Regular trips and visitors provide further good enrichment of pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes great care of its pupils and the school's systems to promote their well-being are robust. It works well with parents and outside agencies to ensure all pupils progress similarly. Those with particular learning difficulties are well supported. Pupils are confident that there are adults they can turn to if they need help. Older pupils take care of younger ones as a matter of course, their role acting as 'buddies' for new entrants reinforces this trend.

Marking of work by teachers is careful and supportive and pupils tend to act on the advice in order to improve their work. Older pupils are well informed about their future options in secondary education. Pupils have targets in English and mathematics and parents are kept up-to-date about these. Targets are easy to understand but are too generalised and pupils find them hard to remember.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides clear, calm leadership and gives the school stability and a sense of purpose. Through careful self-evaluation, she has developed a clear understanding of the school and quickly produced effective plans for the future. The new behaviour policy has made the school much more orderly. Other improvements, such as in teaching and learning, have been

slower to impact on achievement. Staff work closely with the headteacher. They assist in monitoring and share her vision for the future.

The school uses assessment information constructively. It sets itself challenging performance targets to improve pupils' performance and raise standards, but these are new and yet to have a significant effect. The school has good resources and spacious accommodation, both inside and out, and these are increasingly used to promote learning.

Good links with a local consortium of primary schools, the local special and secondary schools and schools across Europe help avoid isolation and provide interesting development opportunities for staff and pupils. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed, providing pupils with a good start to their school lives.

Governors support the school and seek to challenge it. They have been partially involved in setting priorities for the future but, because they do not systematically monitor all aspects the school, cannot be as proactive as they wish. There are plans to improve their monitoring regime.

With uncertainties over leadership in recent years, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. While the school's potential for the future has improved, its current track record means that capacity for the future is also satisfactory.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

03 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grove Church of England School, Wantage, OX12 7PW

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited recently. It was good to meet and talk with you. You told me that you are happy at school and think it is improving and I agree! The school provides a satisfactory education and, since your new headteacher arrived, it has started to improve.

The standards of your work at the end of Year 6 are about the same as most schools in the country and achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory and staff work hard to help you. There is some bad behaviour and, sometimes, this slows down your learning. The mixture of subjects and topics you do (called the curriculum) is good and I know you like the great range of sporting and other clubs that the school offers.

You are well looked after and told me that there are many adults ready to help you if you should need it. You know a little about the quality of your work but this could be better. The good care you are given promotes good personal development and you know a great deal about how to grow up healthy and safe.

Your headteacher and all staff work well as a team so the school leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff plan well to raise standards and make other improvements. Most schools have things that could be better. I have asked the school to focus on two main areas.

- Raise the level of teaching to the best, especially in improving classroom management. You can help in this by making sure you behave well at all times.
- Develop personal targets for each one of you so that you understand the next steps in your learning.

Thanks, once again, for all your help. It was a great pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead Inspector