

The Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125131
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315159
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Allan
Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Gray
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Chobham Road Frimley Camberley GU16 8PG
Telephone number	01276 22447
Fax number	01276 675122

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Grove is a primary school of above average size. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average as is the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The school has a 20-place Speech, Language and Communication Needs Centre which includes a junior and an infant class for statemented pupils. A well above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A very much higher than average number of pupils leave or arrive at the school other than at the usual time. There have been three changes of headship in the last year and the newly appointed headteacher took up her post in January 2008. The school has accredited Investor in People status and achieved the Healthy Schools Award in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Grove Primary School has many good features and provides a satisfactory standard of education. The newly appointed headteacher has settled in very quickly and has responded sensitively to the needs of a school which has experienced three changes in headship over the past year. Importantly, senior and middle leaders, along with support and administrative staff, continued to maintain the school's impressive pastoral strengths during these leadership changes.

Children settle in well in the Foundation Stage when they first start at school. They make satisfactory progress and most achieve the expected standards for their age by the time they start Year 1. Pupils achieve satisfactorily between Years 1 and 6 and standards are broadly average. The school has responded well to the disappointing summer 2007 Key Stage 2 test results. Teachers now track progress more effectively and plan work that is more matched to pupils' needs. Current assessment data shows pupils making better progress in their basic skills especially in mathematics. Nevertheless, expectations of what average and above average pupils are able to achieve are still not high enough and not all teachers make effective use of assessment data. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make satisfactory progress. The two language units for younger and older pupils are integrated well into school life and pupils here make good progress because of the additional specialist support they receive.

Pupils' personal development is good. The school has a friendly, caring ethos and staff work well in partnership with the wider community. Behaviour is excellent and firmly built on the very positive relationships between all members of the school community. Parents report that they are pleased with the good level of care their children receive. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They make a good contribution to the school community and subscribe well to a healthy lifestyle. School councillors talk enthusiastically about their responsibilities. A group of them recently interviewed applicants for the headship of the school and asked a number of searching questions including, for example, 'How would you make us happy?'

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In all classes, lessons are well organised and there is some good and outstanding teaching. However, not enough lessons are better than satisfactory because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. Teaching assistants receive good professional training to develop their skills and pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties in turn receive well-structured additional support. The curriculum is appropriately planned to ensure continuity in pupils' learning and is enriched well by a range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs. Care, guidance and support are good. Bullying and harassment are not issues within the school, but the children and parents would know what to do should they take place. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders and governors were initially surprised by the dip in 2007 test results but have responded positively and are working well together to raise standards. Improvements over the past term and since the last inspection, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT), show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. They enter the Reception classes with broadly average skills in most areas but with weaknesses in writing and calculation skills. When they enter Year 1 the majority are working within the learning goals expected for this age. Children co-operate well with one another and are considerate of the needs of others. They enjoy learning and join in enthusiastically in physical, musical and creative activities. They develop literacy and numeracy skills through well-targeted activities. The good outdoor play area is a strong feature of Reception provision and children are encouraged to continue and develop topics they have begun indoors. Assessment and record-keeping procedures are good. Staff are dedicated to working as a team to helping children develop and have a clear vision about what needs to be done to improve. Good arrangements ensure that children progress smoothly into the next stage of education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment is used more consistently across the school to raise teachers' expectations of what learners can achieve - particularly of average and above average learners.
- Spread the best teaching practice throughout the school.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall, standards are broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. In 2007 national assessments, pupils in Year 2 met their overall targets. The number of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in mathematics was below average. Results in the 2007 tests at the end of Year 6 were broadly average but lower than in previous years. This was because the year group contained a significant number of pupils who moved to the school after Year 2 with low levels of prior attainment especially in mathematics. There is some inconsistency in standards because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and achieve similarly to their peers. Statemented pupils make good personal development and good academic progress mainly because of the expertise provided by the two specialist language units. Recent improvements in tracking pupils' progress and identifying those who are likely to underachieve are having a positive impact on achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that they feel safe and happy. They particularly like taking part in clubs. As one pupil said, 'I like all of the school.' Attendance is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are respectful and have a positive self-image. Behaviour in all parts of the school is excellent. Pupils make good use of the 'Buddy Bench' in the playground. The school council makes an effective contribution to pupils' strong sense of community. Pupils demonstrate a willingness to take on responsibilities and all contribute to making the school a pleasant and happy place to live. Pupils have a good

understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and many have made determined effort to eat more healthily. At break times, active and regular involvement in sport boosts their fitness, self-esteem, confidence and teamwork skills. Pupils are confident that adults in the school will listen to their concerns. Many pupils develop the skills they need for later life through opportunities to work collaboratively and by taking responsibility for spending sensibly the small finance budgets delegated to each class by the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In Year 6, learning is particularly effective in mathematics because of careful planning for the four ability groupings. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Marking is regular and helpful and many teachers use questioning effectively to adjust their lesson planning. There is some good use of detailed assessment information and target setting, for example, in Year 6, but this is not consistent across the school. Homework is set and parents are encouraged to be more actively involved in supporting their children's learning. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and where pace and challenge are exceptionally good learners flourish because they are really interested and involved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language are supported well. Group and paired work gives pupils the opportunity to learn independently. The gifted and talented are identified and encouraged but a number of average and above average pupils are not always challenged to achieve higher standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned and resourced with appropriate emphases on progress in the teaching of basic skills and on promoting healthy lifestyles. Where classes are shared teachers plan very carefully to ensure continuity. ICT has developed well since the last inspection. Displays and pupils' work around the school illustrate the varied curriculum approaches used. Clubs, especially in sport and music, provide good lunchtime and after school activities. Good liaison with secondary schools helps progression and promotes quality provision in French and German. The local area is used well and visits and residential stays contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning and to their social skills. Curriculum planning caters well for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or specific gifts and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Extensive risk assessments ensure that pupils are taught in a safe and welcoming environment. The arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding pupils are secure. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and effectively supported. The school works closely with outside agencies to evaluate pupils' needs and provide support and guidance to pupils and staff. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are supported effectively. The parent of a child with English as additional language (EAL) comments 'as an EAL mum I am grateful for the special approach made to help EAL children.'

The school has a trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistant who works effectively with children who need additional support in these areas. Monitoring of pupils' progress by class teachers and in the language units has been strengthened with the introduction of new, more frequent tracking arrangements in 2007.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Very good attention is given by all managers to the way pupils are cared for during the school day and through the extended day. This contributes very well to the development of pupils' self-confidence. As a result, they enjoy their experience in school and parents have positive attitudes towards the school. The school has identified key priorities for improving the achievement of the pupils in its self-evaluation. However, it is not clear how the impact of initiatives to improve achievement throughout the school in mathematics will be measured. Senior and middle leaders set themselves challenging pastoral and academic targets. Regular and systematic monitoring of classroom performance has been introduced but at classroom level expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. This is because assessment data are not yet used effectively or consistently by all leaders to raise achievement. Governors have led the school well during a difficult transition period of changes in headship. Financial controls are good. However, governors do not ask enough challenging questions on the outcomes of new school initiatives designed to raise standards and achievement. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	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	3
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	1
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?	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	3
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

29 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Grove Primary School, Camberley, GU16 8PG

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We really enjoyed talking to you and appreciated the help you gave us with the inspection. We think that The Grove has many good features and that you are making satisfactory progress in your lessons.

Here are the things we like about your school.

- You behave brilliantly and you are keen to come to school, you work hard for your teachers and enjoy learning.
- You are keen to follow a healthy lifestyle and make a good contribution to the life of the school.
- You take on responsibilities very well and in a mature manner. For example, younger children especially appreciate the work of older pupils who act as 'buddies'.

These are the things we think your teachers, with your help, could do better.

- Make fuller use of the information they have on how well you are making progress to help you reach higher standards.
- Share the best ways of teaching across the school.

Yours sincerely

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector