

Grove Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131329
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	319548
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	563
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Guy Blakesley
Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Slee
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2007
School address	Grove Road Rayleigh Essex SS6 8UA
Telephone number	01268 743445
Fax number	01268 748365

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Grove Wood Primary School is a large foundation school that opened in September 2007, following the amalgamation of Grove Infant and Grove Junior schools. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, and a few are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is also below the national average. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Activemark and National Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Grove Wood Primary is providing a good standard of education and is making a successful start as a new school. The headteacher provides strong and energetic leadership so that there is a clear vision for the school's development. Parents, teachers and governors greatly respect and share her focused approach to promoting high standards of behaviour, real enjoyment in learning and good achievement. The school is very popular and parents speak highly of the support for their children. One parent wrote, 'This is a very good school and we are delighted that we chose Grove Wood. Our children have both made good progress and really enjoy attending the school'.

Because of the well-planned teaching, pupils make good progress and standards are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. There is an excellent system in place to track pupils' progress in order to identify underachievement. There is very effective support for those who are not making sufficient progress. Pupils' personal development is good, mainly because of the good quality of care and guidance provided. The majority of pupils behave well and are very proud to be part of the school. Pupils are particularly aware of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and keeping fit, through, for example, physical education (PE) and sports clubs. Their contribution to the community is a strength of the school. Pupils develop into positive, confident and friendly individuals.

There is a very positive atmosphere in lessons and teachers provide a variety of activities that engage pupils. However, marking of their work is not always consistent in showing them how to improve it. Curriculum provision is good with an exceptional variety of experiences to extend pupils' learning. These are strengthened by the school's strong partnerships with the local community as well as with the neighbouring primary and secondary schools through the Hockley, Rayleigh and Hullbridge consortium. The new skills-based curriculum is encouraging creative links between subjects and providing an enjoyable experience for the pupils. One parent said 'My child really enjoys the work and regularly comes home excited about all the things he is learning'. Communication with parents is good, although a significant minority of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire would appreciate even more information from the school.

The school runs very smoothly and calmly because leadership and management are effective. Because self-evaluation is accurate, the school is aware of areas for improvement. Subject leaders are developing their roles; there is some inconsistency in the monitoring and assessment of the subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Governors are playing an active part in the development of the school and are providing good support for the headteacher and senior leadership team. The school has good capacity to improve further as it moves towards the next stage of its development.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage provides children with a satisfactory start to their education so that they learn and use the basic skills. Children settle well to class routines and enjoy coming to school. Where teaching is most effective, teachers encourage the development of language and social skills at every opportunity. In these lessons pupils make good progress. However, the quality of opportunities for learning through imaginative and structured play is variable. The satisfactory

curriculum provides an appropriate balance between learning in the classroom and the outside activity area. Many of the activities are interesting and lively but they are sometimes not planned sufficiently well to provide an effective experience. Teaching assistants interact positively with children but are not always used well to support the children with their learning. Procedures to assess what children know and can do are not yet fully secure. The newly appointed leader has already identified the areas for improvement. Appropriate priorities for development are identified in the action plan, including the need to improve resources, particularly for the outdoor activity area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of planning, teaching and assessment in the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure consistency in marking across the school so that pupils know how to improve their work.
- Develop the roles of the subject leaders so that they are all fully involved in monitoring and assessment of pupils' work and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has been increasingly successful in improving the standards of reading and writing through focused work on literacy skills. For example, the creative use of writing across the curriculum is supporting improvements in English. Targeted support for pupils who require additional help is effective in improving achievement. Evidence from pupils' work during the inspection demonstrates all classes are making good progress during the current year. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make equally good progress. Additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they, too make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Attendance is above the national average because pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. One pupil said, 'Teachers make school fun because our lessons are exciting, and they get us all involved'. There are very good relationships with teachers so that behaviour in the classrooms is excellent. Pupils concentrate hard and work well together. They have good social skills and are extremely friendly and polite. However, there are occasional incidences of misbehaviour in the playground by a small number of pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall but more could be done to increase pupils' awareness of other cultures. Pupils like taking on responsibility as play leaders, peer mediators and sporting ambassadors. Members of the school council are proud of its work in improving playground facilities. They regularly support charities and the 'Big Hush Day' raised a considerable amount of money in aid of cancer patient care schemes. Pupils' good progress in basic skills, information communication technology and social skills means that they are well prepared for their secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors set the scene well for learning. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and establish a good working atmosphere in their classes. They manage the pupils well so that most respond with interest and enthusiasm for learning, enjoying the variety of interesting activities and working together well. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson in the sports hall, the pupils were fully engaged in practical activities demonstrating multiplication and division using hoops, balls and coloured counters. Most lessons are taught at a brisk pace but on occasion the pace drops and some pupils lose concentration. Teachers' lesson planning is very detailed and makes the purpose of lessons clear to pupils. Teachers use questioning soundly to support and extend pupils' understanding. Computers are used well to motivate them and to support their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The lively and innovative approach to curriculum planning provides a clear focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills as well as encouraging cross-curricular links with other subjects. Themes such as the Olympic Games provide opportunities for integrated work in PE, art, technology and science. For example, involvement with a local authority writing project is increasing pupils' enthusiasm and raising standards in English. There is good provision for PE in lessons and after school, and for personal, social and health education. Pupil participation is high in the exceptionally large number of clubs. A range of visits, residential trips and special focus weeks greatly enhance the pupils' educational and personal experience. Appropriate additional provision is made for pupils with particular gifts and talents. The newly devised curriculum is in its first year of introduction, however, and has yet to be fully embedded.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe because staff take excellent care of them. All required safeguarding procedures are in place. Excellent relationships and good systems, such as a 'worry box', ensure that pupils have someone to talk to if they have a concern. The school uses its tracking systems very effectively to ensure strategies are put in place to help those who are not making sufficient progress. High quality individual plans and additional staff support those pupils who struggle particularly with literacy or have medical conditions. There is a strong target-setting system designed to motivate pupils, for example by trying 'to beat the monster'. They know their targets and teachers refer to them regularly. Although marking of pupils' work is sometimes good, it is too often inconsistent. Pupils are not regularly clear enough about what they need to do to improve their work on a day-to-day basis.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides dynamic and highly organised leadership of the new school. She is supported well by the senior leadership team, which provides a significant impetus for

improvements across the school. There are challenging targets to raise standards. The school development plan is a very effective working document with clear targets and actions. Subject plans are closely linked to whole school-priorities. Overall leadership and management are good but subject leaders are developing their roles. They are not all fully involved in the monitoring and assessment of their areas. Support staff are valued and well integrated into the school. Governors are well informed about the school's progress and areas for improvement. However, their roles and responsibilities with particular regard to monitoring have not been fully clarified.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	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?	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	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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grove Wood Primary School, Rayleigh, SS6 8UA

Thank you for making us so welcome and talking to us during the inspection. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you working and playing together. We did not realise that it rained so much in Rayleigh! Grove Wood Primary is providing a good standard of education and is making a successful start as a new school.

There are many positive things about your school:

- you have a very good headteacher who leads your school well
- you enjoy coming to school and try hard in lessons
- you make good progress in your work to reach above average standards
- you are positive, confident and friendly
- you take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities
- you raise a great deal of money for charities
- you are aware of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles
- the teachers and staff provide excellent support and care for you
- teaching is good and usually makes you very interested in your work
- the school is tidy and your display work in classrooms is excellent.

We have asked your headteacher, the staff and the governors to do the following things to make your school even better:

- improve further the provision for the children in the Reception classes
- make sure that marking shows you clearly how to improve your work
- support the subject leaders so that they are fully involved in assessing and checking your work in their specific areas.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and enjoy learning. We wish you every success in your future education.

With very best wishes

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector