

The Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110668
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337543
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Karen Heath

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 of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Miller
Headteacher	Miss Valerie Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the

- school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school development plan, school policies and minutes of the governing body meetings. Inspectors spent the majority of the time observing learning and speaking to pupils. All the teachers in the school were observed and 21 lessons were seen. The inspection team looked at 39 parent questionnaires, as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff. Inspectors also looked at documentation with reference to the safeguarding of pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- what impact the school is having on tackling any poor attendance
- how effective the new leadership team is in improving the quality of teaching
- how the improvements to Key Stage 2 attainment will be sustained.

Information about the school

The Grove Primary School is smaller than average. There are 15 nationalities in the school, speaking 17 different languages. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high.

The school has been through significant changes since its last inspection in 2006 and further changes since the monitoring visit in March 2008. The school had four different headteachers during the academic year 2007/8, before the new headteacher was appointed in September 2008. The Grove provides a breakfast and after-school club. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The Grove is a satisfactory and improving school. After a turbulent period, the school now has a settled staff with a headteacher who has a clear sense of direction and has put in place strategies that are moving the school forward and improving the outcomes for pupils.

For the last three years attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 has shown steady improvement. Pupils attain significantly above national averages in English, including the proportion of more able pupils attaining Level 5. Attainment in mathematics and science is broadly in line with national averages.

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. They make good progress in English but less progress in mathematics and science. This is partly due to the fact that many pupils in the school have had a series of different teachers and this has not provided enough continuity in their learning to ensure consistent progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The school works hard to ensure their needs are catered for and they have every opportunity to be fully integrated into the life of the school. Many pupils are admitted to the school with little or no English. These pupils make at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress.

Whilst inspectors observed some good teaching, the majority of teaching observed was satisfactory. In some lessons, the pace is too slow and teachers do not extend learning and challenge pupils. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, or to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a variety of ways. Where teachers are insecure in their subject knowledge, this means that explanations are not clear to the pupils and this impedes their progress.

The pupils enjoy many aspects of the school's curriculum and talk enthusiastically about their school visits and people who had come in to the school. They particularly enjoyed the touring opera and the science week which provided them with different experiences to stimulate their interest. They respond well to this practical approach to learning but they would like more opportunities to do independent practical activities in the classroom.

The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. 'I can't say anything negative about The Grove', said one pupil. However, a minority of pupils do not attend the school regularly and this has an adverse impact on their progress and learning. Pupils feel safe in school and say there is no bullying.

The headteacher has quickly gained the respect of the school community, helping all levels of leadership and management to gain an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Until recently, the school did not have a fully functioning

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governing body; however, the addition of new members with expertise is already supporting the headteacher in addressing areas that require improvement. In addition, the appointment of new senior staff with key responsibilities means the school has a satisfactory capacity to continue its improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall attendance of pupils by:
 - reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent
 - working with parents so that their children attend school regularly
 - celebrating good attendance.
 - Strengthen the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring all lessons maintain a good pace so that pupils are active for the majority of the time
 - meeting pupils' learning needs by being more aware of how pupils are responding in lessons
 - using questioning more effectively to challenge thinking and engage pupils in their learning
 - ensuring all teachers have secure subject knowledge.
 - Make the curriculum more stimulating to improve achievement by:
 - planning and explicitly teaching speaking and listening skills so pupils acquire higher levels of language
 - ensuring pupils learn to apply their basic literacy and numeracy skills in a variety of ways
 - providing opportunities for pupils to become less dependent on the teacher.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may
 - receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5
 - inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils of all abilities enjoy school and are keen to talk about the interesting things they have learned. They particularly enjoy opportunities to engage in practical activities. Pupils work well individually and cooperate well in groups. Pupils apply themselves in lessons and listen well to the teacher. Lesson observations, work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking system show that all pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are keen to learn and, consequently, many make good progress.

Behaviour in and out of lesson time is good and pupils show respect and courtesy to

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each other as well as to adults. Pupils feel safe in school and confident that their concerns will be dealt with. 'You couldn't feel safer in this school,' said one pupil.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. During the inspection, the pupils were participating in a healthy week and much of their work related to this aspect of the curriculum. Even the youngest children in the Reception class know about eating a healthy diet and the uptake of school lunches has recently doubled.

The Grove is a cohesive school community. Pupils from different social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds mix well and are supportive to each other. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to influence the life of the school, such as improving the playground. Pupils participate in many activities within their immediate and local community, such as helping to develop a piece of local waste land as well as singing with the choristers from the one of the university colleges. Pupils have also helped fundraise for international charities.

The school has worked hard to encourage pupils' attendance, which is satisfactory. The supportive work with some families and the school's good use of external agencies has resulted in improved attendance for a number of pupils. However, there is a small minority of pupils who do not attend school as regularly as they should and this is hindering their progress.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils and teachers have good relationships. Teachers' marking is a strength: pupils benefit from the comments made by teachers and the guidance given by identifying the next steps in their learning to accelerate their progress. Lesson activities are matched well to pupils' different learning needs. Resources are used well to provide appropriate support, in particular for less able pupils. Support staff are well deployed to work with pupils who have specific needs, so that these pupils are fully integrated. In some lessons, the pace is too slow and pupils are given insufficient time to work independently. Lesson planning is detailed, however, teachers do not always pay enough attention to how pupils are responding to the teaching so that they can move the learning on more quickly. Teachers do not always use questioning effectively to open up debate, extend language skills and provide challenge to more able pupils.

The breadth of the curriculum has been strengthened by a range of visitors and visits. The pupils particularly enjoy these events because they capture their imagination and make them eager to learn. The pupils are keen for these practical approaches to learning to be developed further.

The school provides good guidance and support, particularly for pupils with specific medical needs. The school's close monitoring means that the learning needs of pupils are responded to quickly, for example providing additional group work or support from a teaching assistant, and this means that pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The arrangements to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable when they transfer to high school are particularly good.

The breakfast and after school clubs are well attended and provide a homely and secure environment for the start and end of the school day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher demonstrates clear vision. She has accurately evaluated the school's effectiveness and has implemented a range of strategies to bring about necessary changes. Her drive and tenacity is moving the school forwards and the school

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development plan provides a sharp focus on improving outcomes for pupils. The headteacher is well supported by the senior leaders, some of whom are relatively new in post.

Under its new leadership, the governing body has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Recently elected members bring to the school levels of expertise and a willingness with which to support the necessary improvements.

The school has formed a range of partnerships, including with local and national businesses, to enhance learning; this gives pupils experiences which they would otherwise not have.

Equal opportunity is promoted well, the staff are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve equally well, regardless of their background. There is no significant variation in the progress made by particular groups of pupils within the school. The school has carried out an audit of its social, ethnic and religious context and understands that well. It is in the process of implementing a plan to improve the way it promotes community cohesion.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and all statutory requirements were in place at the time of the inspection. Staff are suitably trained in child protection and appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken for activities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Having made satisfactory progress, children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment broadly in line with national age-related expectations. Regular daily routines

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help the children understand the need to stay healthy. They participate in regular exercise and eat fresh fruit and vegetables. Children are able to follow basic hygiene rules and know to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating food. Children feel secure and are well behaved; they play happily together and talk freely to the adults around them who are warm and caring.

Children have free access to the outside area where they can develop their physical skills as well as explore other areas of the curriculum, for example playing with water and sand. The classroom is well resourced but not all resources are stored at child height, or signposted attractively to foster independent play and develop children's reading skills.

Some children enter the Reception class with little or no English and they are soon well integrated., They are able to enjoy listening to stories, sing rhymes and practise phonics to help develop their communication skills and enhance vocabulary with their peers. Many children are keen to experiment with writing and make good attempts to write words and simple sentences using the phonics they have been taught. Although some activities give children opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, these are not sufficiently planned across all areas of the curriculum.

Parents are encouraged to understand the importance of regular attendance and are welcomed into the Reception class at the beginning and end of the day. Specific meetings are arranged to share plans with parents to help them support their child's learning.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Adults have received suitable training. Regular assessments are made and recorded with photographic and other evidence, which help with future planning and ensure that the needs of individuals are met satisfactorily.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Although there was a limited response to the questionnaire, nearly all parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the recent changes that have been made. One parent described it as 'an amazing school' where the staff are friendly. However, a small percentage of parents are less happy with how the school is led and do not feel that it takes their concerns fully into account. The inspection found that

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leadership and arrangements for taking parents' views into account are satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Grove Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 153 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	64	14	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	54	18	46	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	56	15	38	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	51	17	44	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	24	62	12	31	0	0	2	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	49	16	41	2	5	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	56	16	41	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	36	17	44	2	5	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	38	17	44	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	36	20	51	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	38	17	44	3	8	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	17	44	14	36	3	8	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	54	17	44	0	0	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Grove Primary School, Cambridge, CB4 2NB

Thank you for making my team so welcome when we visited your school and for spending time talking to us. You go to a satisfactory school and we agree with many of your comments about the school. We are pleased that you feel safe. You behave well and we were impressed with your good manners.

We liked the displays of your work around school which show you have learned about a lot of exciting things. You told us that you enjoy the many visitors you have in school which makes learning interesting for you, like the scientist who made fire in the school hall which let off the fire alarm!

Your headteacher and her staff are making some good improvements to your school. We would like The Grove to be even better so we have asked the headteacher to:

- make sure you all attend school regularly so you can make good progress in your learning
- make your lessons even more exciting by giving you more opportunities to learn independently and practise your speaking and listening skills
- strengthen the quality of teaching by making sure lessons keep your interest and challenge your thinking so you learn more quickly.

We would like to wish you all the best for the future, and remember you can help your school to improve by attending regularly.

Yours sincerely

Karen Heath

Lead inspector

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