

The Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113234
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338127
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Grahame Sherfield

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Mead
Headteacher	Hilary Priest
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils and informal discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors looked at key documents, such as the improvement plan and the minutes of meetings of the governing body, as well as 69 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- how successfully the school has improved the progress made by girls and attainment in English by the end of Year 6
- how successfully the school has promoted pupils' attendance, despite the impact of swine flu and norovirus outbreaks
- how effective are the school's actions to improve teaching
- how effectively the school promotes community cohesion in the United Kingdom and globally
- how successfully the school is improving attainment in writing and in calculation in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

The Grove is of broadly average size and serves a mainly White British community in a south Devon town. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An above-average percentage of pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

A breakfast club started in April 2010 and is managed by the governors. There has been a change in the leadership of the school since the previous inspection. A new headteacher arrived in January 2008 and a new deputy headteacher took up her post in September 2008.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The Grove is an outstanding school. Pupils are proud of their school and, greatly, enjoy learning from the outstanding curriculum within the exceptionally caring environment created by the headteacher and her staff. The pupils' attendance has improved and is above average. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school. One praised the 'very rich curriculum' and 'highly motivated teachers', whilst another described 'a wonderful school □ well managed, safe, caring and creative'. Inspectors agree with these views, which are representative of the very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their progress in the Reception Year is good and the school has acted effectively to improve attainment in writing and in calculation. Currently, the outdoor area does not consistently provide an inviting environment within which pupils can pursue all areas of learning. Progress is accelerating in Years 1 and 2 and the school has successfully maintained the improving trend in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment is also rising by the end of Year 6 and is above average. Inspection evidence, the school's data and early indications from unvalidated test results show that attainment in English has risen, with particular success in writing, where many pupils are working at the higher Level 5. Progress by the end of Year 6 is good and improving and girls' progress is similar to that of the boys. The rising standards and improving progress are the result of rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and the school's success in improving teaching. There is an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching where teachers' enthusiasm and commitment are infectious. However, pupils are not yet making exceptional progress, as excellent teaching is not yet embedded across the school. Teaching, overall, is currently good, with a small proportion of lessons where the pace of learning is slower and activities are less successful in gaining pupils' full engagement.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils report they feel extremely safe and safeguarding procedures are excellent. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the school and local communities. The curriculum offers excellent opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of working independently and collaboratively and to build their confidence. The pupils are prepared outstandingly well for the next stages of their lives and their future economic well-being.

The headteacher's very effective leadership has established high staff morale and a widely shared commitment to continuous improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate, resulting in clear and appropriate priorities for action. The pace of improvement in pupils' progress and attainment is accelerating and the school has a good record of reaching challenging targets. There have been significant improvements in aspects of

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pupils' personal development, in the curriculum and in the care, guidance and support provided. Consequently, the capacity to improve further is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Press ahead with the drive to improve the quality of all teaching to the level of the best, ensuring that:
 - all staff enable pupils' learning to progress rapidly
 - activities consistently engage pupils fully.
- Ensure that provision in the outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage is more consistently stimulating to promote all areas of children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils respond with much enthusiasm to the interesting activities teachers frequently provide and sustain their concentration very well. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed their work writing poems on the theme of waterfalls, where the lesson began with a film clip, followed by consideration of a poem by Southey, prior to pupils writing their own poetry. In a Year 4 class, pupils responded very well to opportunities to compare two film trailers as part of their work culminating in a trailer for the current Year 6 performance of 'The Wind in the Willows'.

A key strength of the school is the careful tracking of the progress pupils make. Each term, the headteacher reviews the progress made by each class with the class teacher. This process involves careful consideration of each individual pupil. Pupils at risk of not doing as well as they should are identified and action taken to provide further support or challenge. As a result of this approach and of improving teaching, pupils' attainment is rising. Achievement is good and improving strongly by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers as a result of the carefully planned additional support they receive.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils have a strong grasp of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. Pupils use information and communication technology with confidence. They, also, benefit from opportunities to plan and carry out fundraising activities, for example for the Year 6 residential visit.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have established excellent relationships in the classrooms and learning support assistants make an important contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils benefit from frequent, encouraging marking of their work, where teachers identify pupils' successes and give guidance on how to improve. Increasingly, pupils are involved in drawing up criteria for judging how successful their work has been for themselves.

The best teaching observed was outstanding, with an exciting focus for learning that engaged pupils' interest considerably and stimulated great enthusiasm. Sessions were well planned and designed within a sequence that developed pupils' skills and understanding systematically and progressively. Teachers challenged pupils to think and to explain their views and lessons proceeded at a brisk pace. Where teaching was less strong, teachers' explanations were sometimes a little too long, slowing the pace of learning, and the activities were not as stimulating or engaging.

Pupils enjoy the cross-curricular topics that meet their needs very well. Visits, for example to a 'Victorian classroom' and to the seashore, are a particular feature, as are other exciting opportunities, for example broadcasting on a local radio station. As a result, pupils throw themselves into their learning. As one put it, 'If things are fun and exciting, you want to learn.' There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in writing and in using information and communication technology across the curriculum. Pupils' personal development is, very strongly, promoted, for example in building pupils' confidence in presenting findings to their peers. The 'themed weeks' provide excellent opportunities for pupils to work together with others of different ages. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities and these are well attended.

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Pupils in need of additional care are cared for superbly in the friendly atmosphere where staff know pupils and their families well. Rigorous and thorough approaches are, successfully, promoting good attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff have very effective systems for monitoring the school's work and have established an evident ambition for continuous improvement. Leadership for the key subjects of English and mathematics is strong, with clear priorities for future development, very well informed by thorough monitoring and evaluation of provision. The 'learning focus' role is highly effective in enabling the school to pursue a particular priority and provides an outstanding opportunity for the professional development of staff involved. The governors are well informed about the work of the school by the headteacher and other staff and by regular reports from individual governors on the subjects to which they are linked. Governors are not yet closely involved in monitoring progress with the school improvement plan.

The school, successfully, ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others and its support for all pupils in need of a little extra help is outstanding. This shows it is highly effective in promoting equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve as well as they can. The school also ensures that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. There is a very strong sense of community in the school, with very good links in the local area and good opportunities for pupils to find out more about other parts of the world. The school has recently established a link with a school in a multi-cultural setting in Bolton, although this is at an early stage in its development. The school has excellent partnerships with a range of external organisations, to extend the opportunities for pupils both academically and in their personal development. Good examples of these are the multi-agency approaches used to support individual pupils when required and the various visitors and visits that enrich the curriculum. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding and all necessary policies are used very well. Careful checks have been made on all adults who work within the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the school, their skills are below the expected levels, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress in their learning and most reach the levels expected by the end of the Reception Year. Their good progress is supported by comprehensive procedures for observation and assessment, which staff use well to plan activities to meet children's needs.

All welfare requirements are met and children are happy and well cared for in the warm and supportive atmosphere. Staff know the children well and those children who need a little additional help are supported very effectively. Behaviour is good and children have good relationships with the staff. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-selected activities. Although the outdoor area is accessible to children throughout the day, provision is not consistently stimulating and does not always fully reflect all the areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Staff work well as a team and careful monitoring of children's progress results in a clear and accurate view of the priorities for development. A good range of practical activities are provided to develop skills in calculation and in writing to best effect, so that most children make good progress in these areas. Children's skills in calculation are currently stronger than in previous cohorts, but staff, carefully, check pupils' progress in this area as well as in writing to ensure good progress.

There is an effective partnership with parents and carers who have good opportunities to share information about their children with the staff, including contributing to the records of progress. Links with pre-school provision are good and the school works closely with providers to secure accurate information on what children can do when they

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join the Reception Year.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers have positive views on all aspects featuring in the Ofsted questionnaire. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with children's enjoyment of school, the progress their children make, how the school keeps them safe and the quality of the teaching. Inspection evidence endorses these positive views but does not support the concerns of a very small minority of parents and carers about behaviour.

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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	65	21	30	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	77	13	19	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	52	26	38	5	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	52	32	46	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	54	29	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	42	32	46	4	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	51	32	46	2	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)	30	43	33	48	3	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	45	33	48	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	39	31	45	8	12	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	45	31	45	4	6	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	31	45	30	43	3	4	4	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	52	29	42	2	3	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupil's 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.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Grove Primary School, Totnes TQ9 5ED

Thank you for your involvement in the recent inspection, particularly for the friendly and open way in which you talked to us. We enjoyed visiting your school very much.

You go to an outstanding school and we think you are right to be proud of it. Here are the main things we found out.

- You make good and improving progress in your work and you enjoy the outstanding curriculum.
- You behave very well and benefit from good teaching, which is getting better.
- The children in the Reception Year get off to a good start.
- The school cares for you exceptionally well and you feel very safe.
- The governors, the headteacher and the other staff have been successful in improving the school and are determined to make it even better.

There are two things we have asked the school to do to keep improving.

- The teaching in the school is good and some is outstanding. We have asked the school to ensure that even more teaching is outstanding to help you to keep improving your progress.
- We have also asked the school to make the outdoor area for Reception children more stimulating for them and more helpful in supporting their learning.

Thank you again for your involvement in the inspection and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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