

The Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114046
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338283
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Hillery
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Hume
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 10 lessons and saw all teachers teach. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. The views of stakeholders in the school were also considered through questionnaires from 74 pupils, 30 parents and carers, and 14 staff.

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

- the effectiveness of leadership and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of teaching and the care, guidance and support for pupils
- how well pupils apply their basic skills in all subjects
- how effectively leaders use monitoring and evaluation to identify, and action, improvement.

Information about the school

The Grove is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are White British and there are few pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs. Mobility into and out of the school is slightly higher than found in other schools nationally. The school is host to a privately run, wrap-around-care club which was inspected separately.

The school holds awards for: Investors in People, Investing in Children, Healthy Schools, Football Charter, Eco schools, Lead Climate Change, Rights Respecting, Anti-bullying, Basic Skills and the Financial Management Systems in Schools.

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

This is a school which has every child at its heart because it follows the principle that fully meeting the emotional and social needs of pupils is the key to their success. Staff work together extremely closely to create a learning environment that is exceptionally caring and supportive of pupils and their families. Exemplary links with a range of partners secure exceptional support for pupils with differing needs at different stages in their education. Parents and carers acknowledge fully the range of support for their children and say, for example, 'This whole school is special—every child is an individual.' Pupils enjoy school and want to achieve well because of the extremely close relationships they have with their teachers, who provide exciting and interesting activities for them. Teachers' use of assessment is improving, but there are some inconsistencies in how well individual needs are met and this can slow pupils' progress. Standards are average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' progress overall is satisfactory, although progress is slower in Key Stage 1 and pupils work at a faster rate in Key Stage 2. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, changes to staffing and inconsistencies in using the assessments of children's work to plan next steps in learning impacts upon the progress children make.

The rich and interesting curriculum is particularly good at developing personal skills and knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy and enables pupils to access a range of opportunities which widen their understanding of the world outside of their immediate community. Pupils show confidence through their positive interaction with visitors, with whom they are extremely polite and communicative. They volunteer to take on responsibilities eagerly because they wish to be partners in improving their school.

The direction and drive for improvement provided by leaders, managers and governors are satisfactory. There have been improvements to the curriculum, to systems for assessment and resources since the last inspection although much is still embryonic. Although the school has a deep commitment to care and guidance and the impact upon pupils' well-being, its self-evaluation relating to other aspects of the school is not sufficiently sharp and this means that the pace of improvement to academic outcomes and other aspects of provision is satisfactory, rather than good. Overall, the school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve learning opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage to increase the pace of progress and raise standards by 2011 by:

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- determining entry and exit data accurately to ascertain progress made
- using the assessments made of children's work to identify their individual learning and development needs accurately
- monitoring all aspects of provision regularly to identify weaknesses in order to inform plans to increase the rate of children's progress.
- Increase the pace of pupils' progress at Key Stage 1 in all subjects and improve standards by 2011 by:
 - ensuring teaching is consistently good
 - using assessment information more effectively to ensure that tasks challenge pupils of all abilities
 - making sure that marking clearly indicate success against set individual targets and identifies what pupils need to do to improve and make progress towards their next steps in learning.
- Sharpen monitoring and evaluation in order to increase the pace of improvements and raise standards by:
 - increasing observations and using the evaluations of teaching to improve the quality of learning taking place
 - increasing the knowledge and understanding of governors relating to their full statutory responsibilities and the needs of the school, so that they can better engage with its developmental needs.
- 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**

Good behaviour means that pupils are able to access every opportunity to engage with new experiences. Pupils enjoy school. They work hard at tasks set for them and confidently ask for help when they feel unsure. Their positive attitudes and excellent relationships with staff enable all pupils, especially those who need additional help or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make broadly satisfactory and sometimes good progress, often from low starting points. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is below average. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, satisfactory and sometimes good progress over Key Stage 2 show standards to be improving and these are now broadly in line with the average found nationally for English, although standards in mathematics are lower.

Pupils are very confident, extremely polite and enjoy communicating with visitors. They feel safe and say that bullying is rare. They are completely sure that if other children are unkind to them this will be quickly and effectively dealt with by adults. Attendance is affected by a small proportion of pupils who do not attend regularly, which reduces an otherwise positive picture for most who attend regularly and on time. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and make the most of

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opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities to keep fit and learn about the benefits of growing produce and creating healthy meals. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their health and safety skills through, for instance, cycling proficiency and learning first-aid skills. There are many successful opportunities for pupils to contribute very well to the school and the wider community. As a school and through their various roles as school council members, sports leaders and buddies, the pupils contribute to ideas to benefit themselves and their friends, for instance, their contribution to improve the quality and choice of school meals. They seek to improve the quality of life for others also nationally and globally, for example, for pupils in their sponsored school in Nepal.

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
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils' social and emotional needs are met exceptionally well. Teachers use their knowledge of these needs successfully to engage pupils in learning and demonstrate excellent skills in managing behaviour. This ensures a harmonious learning environment wherein teachers provide engaging activities for pupils. Increasingly, these activities

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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provide opportunities for practical learning in which pupils engage in investigations, problem-solving and creative activities. For example, Year 6 pupils investigated different ways of separating a range of materials. The use of assessment and sharing of targets is at an early stage and is beginning to show some impact, especially for older pupils. However, the work set by teachers does not consistently match the differing needs of pupils. Although teachers write positive comments for pupils about how well they have completed tasks, these comments do not always tell them how well they have done against their individual targets or how to improve further. As a result, progress is inconsistent for differing groups of pupils.

Central to the curriculum is the personal and social development of pupils. The strong focus to engage pupils to respect the rights of themselves as individuals and the rights of others has a highly positive impact upon their understanding of actions and consequences. The wider curriculum provides many significant experiences, through visits and visitors, for pupils to develop their sense of the world outside of their immediate community and the possibilities that this can provide for them in the future. The development of greater links between subjects, such as humanities and science, and the use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to support learning is enabling pupils to improve the use of their basic skills. The school provides a good range of after-school clubs, which are very well attended.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are considerable strengths and underpin the entire ethos of the school. The staff's detailed knowledge contributes considerably to the rapid and successful support of pupils and their families. Parents and carers speak extremely highly of how they and their children are assisted to overcome barriers to learning and how successfully the school works to provide for their specific needs. Links with external partners, in particular outside agencies to aid pupils more in need of support, are superb. Strong links with other providers to assure effective induction and transition are very well embedded and pupils move extremely confidently between the different stages of education.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is supported by a leadership team who share her vision of high quality care, which is highly successful. Leadership and management roles are distributed between teachers who are clear as to their responsibilities and who are developing their

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roles as part of the monitoring and evaluative process. Professional development and action on areas highlighted for improvement have successfully contributed to the introduction of assessing pupil performance, improving attendance and the provision of a more creative curriculum. However, accurate assessment of the school's performance through regular monitoring and evaluation is not yet sharp enough to improve standards at all levels for all pupils. The school works diligently to ensure that the school is fully inclusive and there is no discrimination. The effectiveness of the school's work for community cohesion is satisfactory. The school's policy for community cohesion is rooted in its work to improve understanding of citizenship through 'Respecting Rights'. The school has established links within the local community and with the school they sponsor in Nepal. As yet, action is not yet planned to enable pupils to engage with others from different ethnic groups and backgrounds in Britain through regular and close contact. Governors are proud of their school and are keen to support its development. Recent events have instigated a number of necessary changes but, although governors are aware of their statutory duties, not all are in a position to challenge the school as the breadth of their role is not fully understood. Safeguarding requirements are fully met and appropriate risk assessments assure pupils' safety. Overall pupils have satisfactory equality of opportunity in a school that provides satisfactory value for money.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

Children settle quickly in this warm and caring atmosphere. Their skills on entry are below the levels expected for their age and are lower in communication, language and

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literacy, in personal and social development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world than other areas of learning. Behaviour is good and children learn to interact positively with each other as they play together, sharing resources and taking turns. By learning simple rules of hygiene and how to use apparatus correctly, they understand how to keep themselves safe and well. Children make broadly satisfactory progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is below average.

Developments to the outdoor learning area have enabled children to engage with a number of exciting activities which have the potential for purposeful play and exploration. Teachers provide a range of resources which engage children in learning through play. These factors, together with a shared vision to develop happy and emotionally stable children, mean that progress in personal and social development is good. However, the use of observations to inform assessment and identify children's next steps in learning is not sharp enough and this blurs the potential for higher achievement and progress children make. Very close links with parents and carers, together with highly effective support from outside agencies, addresses rapidly the needs of children who require more help. Despite changes to staffing, there is clear identification, by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, of identified areas for development, including the creation of 'learning journeys', through which to share children's achievements with the children and with their parents and carers. Staff training needs are identified and acted upon to ensure that statutory requirements are met and children are safe.

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 the number of returns was smaller than usual, the overwhelming majority of the questionnaires returned indicated that parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and hold the headteacher and her staff in very high regard. There is great appreciation of the care and support given to their children and they know that their children are very happy and enjoy school. One comment reflective of many said that the school, 'promotes a caring, friendly, stress free learning environment'. Overall, inspectors agreed with the views of parents and carers. There were no serious issues raised and the very few concerns raised were shared with the headteacher.

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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 183 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	57	13	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	70	9	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	57	9	30	4	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	63	9	30	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	73	6	20	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	47	13	43	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	67	10	33	0	0	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)	17	57	9	30	2	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	57	10	33	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	63	8	27	2	7	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	50	12	40	2	7	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	21	70	7	23	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	67	9	30	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

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.



9 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Grove Primary School, Consett, DH8 8AP

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Because you and your teachers were so friendly and helpful, it made our visit a real pleasure. We enjoyed talking to you and it was really good to see how well you get on with your friends and with the adults in your school. You take up lots of opportunities to make a difference to your school and to help others that you know are in need of assistance. You behave really well and make the most of the many experiences your teachers provide in lessons and when you make visits to different places to learn about the world outside of your own community,

What we thought was excellent was the way in which your teachers care about you. They make sure that you feel safe and happy in school. We know that you and your parents and carers are absolutely certain that your headteacher and teachers will do all they can to get the best help they can to help you when you have problems in your lives, or even if you just feel unhappy or concerned about something.

Part of our job is to help the school to improve and be even better in the future so we have asked your headteacher and teachers to make changes. What we would like to see are:

- better learning opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that the youngest children can learn faster and achieve more by making sure that the observations key leaders make better inform the next steps in learning
- faster progress for pupils in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics to make sure that they achieve higher standards by 2011. This means that we would like teachers to use your assessment information to make sure that the tasks they set challenges all pupils to progress well. When teachers mark books we would like them to make sure they say what you have achieved against your targets and what you need to do next
- more focussing by your leaders upon speeding-up improvements, and especially raising standards. This means they need to closely monitor how well teachers teach; to track your achievements more rigorously and ensure that governors have a better understanding of the needs of the school and what they are responsible for

so, that they can make sure that all of you are doing the very best that you are able.

We know that you are immensely proud of your school and care very much for your teachers so I am absolutely sure that you will do your very best to work as hard as you can for them.

The very best of luck for the future

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kate Pringle

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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