

Grove Park Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118529
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339234
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Timothy Feast

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	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Carey
Headteacher	Ceranne Litton
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 21 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including school improvement plans, school assessment data, safeguarding procedures, governors' minutes, information about pupils who have special educational needs and about enrichment activities. Inspectors also considered responses to questionnaires from 38 staff, 104 Key Stage 2 pupils and from 228 parents.

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

- the attainment reached and progress made, especially of pupils in Years 3 to 6
- standards and achievement in 2009 tests results
- the provision for and outcomes of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the impact school leaders make on securing school improvement
- the school's care, guidance and welfare provision.

Information about the school

Grove Park Primary School is bigger than most primary schools. About one in seven children has been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is slightly lower than average. The proportions of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals are below average. A large majority of pupils are from White British ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in two Reception classes. A new children's centre has recently been developed on the school's site and it will be inspected separately.

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

Grove Park Primary School is a caring school that provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Parents overwhelmingly agree that the school provides a safe, happy and supportive environment for their children. Since the last inspection, standards have remained broadly average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' performance in English has been higher than in mathematics. This is because, following an effective focus on reading, pupils make good progress. Their progress in writing is satisfactory, as it is in mathematics. The good start that children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage helps to give them a secure base on which to build but, since the last inspection, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 has been too variable between classes and in the different subjects. School leaders have taken appropriate steps to tackle this and the most recent attainment information shows improved learning for pupils in these year groups, so that progress is now becoming more consistent.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils so that pupils are usually eager to learn. In most lessons teachers challenge the pupils with work suited to the needs of all abilities. In these lessons it is clear to pupils what it is they are to learn and when they have been successful. In a few lessons, there is insufficient focus on providing work that challenges and suits the needs of all pupils, and other adults are not deployed effectively enough to ensure that all pupils are progressing well with their work.

Pupils have a good appreciation of what it means to be safe in school, particularly in respect of the dangers of using the internet. Their enthusiastic participation in physical education lessons and sporting activities and their good understanding of how to eat healthily reflect a good awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles. The attendance of most pupils is good but the school's attendance rate is brought down by the poor attendance of a small number. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is reflected in the way pupils look out for and help each other.

School leaders have a clear if sometimes over-optimistic view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and plan appropriately to tackle the areas for improvement. Monitoring of the quality of the school's provision is regular and satisfactorily rigorous. Steps taken to improve have had good impact on pupils' progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, but only limited impact in Years 3 to 6. School actions through initiatives such as the 'transition system' are beginning to increase impact in these year groups, thereby helping to make pupils' learning more consistent. School leaders are aware of the need for a continuing focus on improving writing and mathematics. These indicators illustrate the school's satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and accelerate the progress that pupils make in writing by:
 - teachers consistently giving pupils guidance in their marking on how to improve
 - establishing writing support groups alongside the successful reading support groups
 - teachers in Key Stage 2 providing pupils with greater opportunities for extended writing.
- Raise standards and accelerate progress in mathematics by:
 - teachers focusing more sharply on the time implications of the mental and oral starters to lessons
 - securing greater effectiveness of the mathematics support groups.
- Improve teaching so that it is of a consistently good quality by:
 - improving teachers' planning for and implementation of challenges that meet the differing needs of all pupils
 - teachers consistently focusing their deployment of other adults in the classroom so that they make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Overall, pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. Pupils from ethnic minority groups usually do well and often outperform their White British peers. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in their learning from their starting points. In previous years, pupils have not made the expected rate of progress between Year 2 and Year 6, particularly boys, but inspection findings now confirm that rates of progress are improving and are in line with what is expected.

While satisfactory overall, there are variations in the quality of pupils' learning. In a Year 1 numeracy lesson, pupils learnt very effectively as they really enjoyed counting the coins into a golden 'Piggybank' on the interactive whiteboard and enthusiastically shared how they used different coins to make up more challenging amounts. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, the teacher used well the strategy of 'talking partners' to enable pupils to discuss and predict what happened next. However, in some lessons, the pace of learning drops as the work is not sufficiently challenging and pupils say that they find it 'too easy'. Despite this lack of challenge, pupils in these lessons remain attentive and well behaved and continue to demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils appreciate their opportunities to contribute to the school community and further afield, for example, through charity work for national and international causes. Pupils are good at thinking of others less fortunate than themselves, for example, in supporting the local children's hospice. They enjoy the various activities which develop their workplace and life skills. A good example is the whole school focus on money at the time of the inspection.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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?

In lessons where the most effective learning takes place, teachers plan innovative and imaginative activities and challenge the pupils well. They introduce lessons in interesting ways and make clear to the pupils what it is that they are expected to learn. In these lessons, there is good implementation of planning to meet the differing needs of the pupils and other adults are deployed well to make sure that any pupils finding the work particularly challenging have the help that they need to keep up with the pace of learning. In a few lessons, the pace at which pupils are expected to work is too slow and the teachers' expectations are not high enough. Pupils' work is marked regularly and positive comments are provided. There is less evidence in the pupils' books or in displays in the classrooms of what pupils must do to improve and to accelerate their rate of learning. Pupils do know their targets but say they do not always know what to do next to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, which is reflected in it being adjusted appropriately to meet the needs of pupils who require specific help. The curriculum's effectiveness is best when supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils are given time to reflect and particularly to indicate the moral and social aspects of their learning. In this they are supported well by the assembly themes. The school offers a good range of enrichment activities and clubs and they are popular, well-attended and appreciated by parents and pupils. The school is creative in establishing links between different

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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subjects, which enhances pupils' enjoyment, but pupils have limited opportunities to use computers to enhance their work in other subjects. In seeking to improve this and other aspects of provision, the school has established links with other schools, focused on the teaching of information and communication technology, mathematics and modern foreign languages.

The school places a high priority on pupils' well-being and provides good care, guidance and support. Parents and pupils are very appreciative of the supportive environment provided by the school where pupils feel safe and know who they can turn to if they have problems. The school has good procedures in place for ensuring that adults have the required security checks, that risks are comprehensively checked and assessed and that the school runs in a smooth and orderly fashion. Pupils who are vulnerable or have specific needs are supported well and parents are very appreciative of this. The school communicates well with parents and there are effective partnership arrangements with other agencies when further support for pupils and their families is required.

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?

School leaders systematically monitor the quality of provision and have a generally clear view of the schools' strengths and areas for improvement. In some areas the self-evaluation is over-generous, particularly in respect of pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stage 2. Although this has sometimes reduced the rate at which improvement has been secured, school leaders have satisfactorily pursued their ambition to improve pupils' attainment. For example, they have put in place initiatives that are beginning to make pupils' learning more consistent throughout the school. This has involved creating teams of staff to work across specific year groups and the most recent progress data indicate that these are having success.

Governors are supportive of the school and are aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. While they monitor the school's work satisfactorily overall, they do not currently provide sufficient challenge to the school in respect of the standards reached and the progress pupils make.

The school enjoys a strong partnership with parents and carers. Many attend subject workshops to learn more about the school's expectations and how to help their children to reach them. The school promotes equality appropriately. This is shown, for example, in effective action to ensure that boys' progress currently matches that of girls', which

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has not always been the case in past years. The school is a cohesive community. There is a very positive ethos in the school and in its relationship with the local community. The school's audit shows that there are some variations in the impact of some of the different community strands, for example in respect of the national dimension, but its development planning identifies ways in which this will be tackled. The school works appropriately with other schools and institutes of higher education and with other providers to widen opportunities for pupils. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are good. It deploys resources satisfactorily to achieve 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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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

Good pre-school links with parents and local nurseries ensure that children settle quickly into school life. Reception staff are skilled in providing a wide range of good activities, both inside and outdoors. They challenge children to make their own choices and to develop their own ideas, for example, in role playing in the hospital area. Attainment of children on entry to the Reception classes is lower than expected for their age, particularly because of children's weak skills in aspects of literacy and numeracy. They make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, almost all attain the goals expected for their age and sometimes exceed them, particularly in aspects of their physical and personal and social development. The outdoor learning area has been redeveloped and is used to provide activities that excite and interest the children, although there is insufficient linkage to activities being provided indoors. Teaching is good. Great care is taken in planning the activities and other adults are deployed well. Care, welfare and induction are good and contribute to children's positive achievement.

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The provision is well led and managed. The leaders are new in role and are aware of the need to focus on some areas for improvement, such as children's skills in calculation.

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

In their response to the questionnaires, parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about the school and its impact on their children's learning and well-being. Almost all thought that their children enjoyed school and were confident that their children were kept safe. The parents' and carers' views in these areas reflect the inspection findings. A few parents raised concerns about how inappropriate behaviour is dealt with but the inspection findings are that overall behaviour is good and that the school deals effectively with any poor behaviour. A few parents indicated that their children did not make enough progress; the inspection finding is that pupils' progress is satisfactory overall but there is scope for improvement as reflected in the recommendations.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grove Park 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 12 statements about the school.

The Inspection team received 228 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 455 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	119	52	114	46	2	1	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	116	51	106	47	6	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	71	31	122	54	27	12	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	32	111	49	36	16	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	83	36	126	55	15	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	29	139	61	13	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	72	32	139	61	7	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)	77	34	121	55	9	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	72	32	121	53	19	8	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	64	28	118	52	31	14	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	25	131	58	20	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	95	42	114	50	10	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	103	45	106	47	14	6	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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 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 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grove Park Primary School, Sittingbourne, ME10 1PT

Thank you all for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and with your teachers. We will remember how well behaved you all were and how you looked out for each other. You and your parents told us how well the school cares and looks after you and we agree.

These are the things we found that your school does well.

- You get off to a good start in the Reception class and make good progress by the end of Year 2. This is because of the good teaching you receive.
- You all show considerable enjoyment in your learning and most of you attend well.
- Your behaviour is good and sensible and you know how to keep safe.
- You enjoy and benefit from the many clubs, visits and other fun activities.
- Staff care for you well and help you to know about how to be healthy and how to care for others.
- You do well in thinking of others less fortunate than yourselves, for example, in the local children's hospice.

We have asked the school to help you to improve your standards in writing and in mathematics. We have asked the teachers to make some of the activities more difficult, to give you more opportunities to write at greater length and to make sure that the activities they plan for you meet the differing needs of all the children in the class.

Thank you for a most enjoyable visit to your school and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Timothy Feast

Lead Inspector

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