

Grove Primary School

Framfield Road, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 8RQ

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not demonstrated the capacity to improve the school. They do not have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have not focused well enough on school improvement.
- Development planning is muddled because leaders are not sure what the current school priorities are or what needs to be done to address them.
- The academy trust has not provided effective support to the school during a period of leadership transition. Governors and the academy trust do not hold school leaders to account. Governors do not fully understand their strategic role, or the roles and responsibilities of leaders.
- The quality of teaching and learning varies across the year groups, and the use of assessment to improve pupils' outcomes is weak. Leaders have not ensured the accuracy of assessments made by teachers. They do not have an accurate overview of the progress of pupils from their starting points.
- The most able pupils are not challenged well enough, particularly in mathematics and writing. They do not make as much progress as they should. They do not develop their writing skills across a range of subjects or their reasoning skills through problem-solving activities.
- The presentation of pupils' work is too variable because teachers do not set consistently high expectations.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour is good and pupils show positive attitudes to learning. Parents are pleased that their children are well looked after at school.
- Attendance is improving as a result of effective support for pupils and their families.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly as they move up through the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school has serious weaknesses because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders, governors and the academy trust have a strategic overview of the school so that they:
 - understand their roles and responsibilities in identifying the strengths of the school and areas for improvement
 - develop a focused, accurate action plan for school improvement that is linked closely to raising standards at the school
 - monitor regularly and robustly, so that they can evaluate all aspects of the school's work
 - check assessments of pupils' progress, to ensure that this information is used to improve outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Improve teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils, by:
 - increasing challenge for the most able pupils in lessons, particularly in mathematics and writing, so that they make as much progress as they can
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills
 - creating more extended writing opportunities across the curriculum
 - setting consistently high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders, governors and the academy trust do not have a strategic overview, or an accurate understanding, of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school's own self-evaluation provides an overinflated view of its performance and lacks evidence to support the judgements that leaders make. Consequently, leaders do not know their school well enough to be able to make rapid improvement.
- The school is in a period of transition in leadership. The academy trust identified that this made the leadership of the school potentially vulnerable. However, they have not provided effective support to leaders to enable them to secure improvements to teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school development plan has many initiatives and actions, but planning lacks focus on the necessary priorities for improvement. This makes it difficult to identify key actions and to evaluate the impact of leaders and governors in improving the school.
- Roles and responsibilities within the senior leadership team have not been clearly established. There is a lack of clarity and evidence about how leaders are monitoring aspects of school improvement and overseeing the work of subject and phase leaders.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of subjects. However, there are variations in the quality of teaching for some subjects. Pupils lack writing opportunities in subjects other than English. Pupils value extra-curricular learning and visits to local museums. They talked with excitement about a visit to the Time and Tide Museum, where they learned about being an evacuee.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development raises pupils' awareness of respecting others and of tolerance. This includes parents from different faiths and cultures visiting the school. For example, a parent taught the children about the festival of Diwali.
- The leader for special educational needs has a growing understanding of the quality of provision across the school for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She has improved the focus of planning and provision on pupils' needs and is monitoring the use of funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Funding is being used more effectively. This includes by deploying teaching assistants to support the changing needs of pupils.
- The use of pupil premium funding is effective. As a result, the differences in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing as pupils move through the school.
- Effective use is made of the extra funding to promote participation in sport and physical education (PE). The school uses the funding to provide training for staff and this has given them greater confidence when teaching PE lessons. There are also an increasing number of pupils taking part in competitive inter-school sporting events.
- The vast majority of parents who expressed their views were positive about the school. They feel that their children are happy and safe at school.

Governance of the school

- The impact of governance is inadequate.
- Governors do not understand their strategic role in self-evaluation and school development planning.
- Governors do not know what the key school priorities are and how the school is tackling them.
- Monitoring by governors is generally very weak as it is not linked to the school development plan and generally lacks focus, so has little impact in evaluating the work of the school.
- Governors do not have a clear overview of the current roles and responsibilities of leaders so are not able to fully hold them to account. This is evidenced in governing body minutes which show a lack of challenge to leaders; governors are too trusting in accepting information they are given. For example, governors did not challenge a significant drop in attainment shown in assessment information presented to them. They trusted that this was accurate, without checking.
- Governors recognise their responsibility for safeguarding, and monitoring of this aspect is effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school promotes a culture of safeguarding by encouraging pupils to 'speak up and speak out'.
- Leaders provide training, with regular updates to staff, so they are confident in using the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. This includes 'Prevent' duty training to help raise awareness of the risks of extreme or radical views.
- The school has four staff who have completed the training for designated safeguarding leaders. This is part of the school's approach to ensure that there is always at least one specifically trained safeguarding lead on site who can respond quickly and effectively to concerns.
- The designated safeguarding leaders are efficient in providing timely support for pupils and their families. Concerns are swiftly followed up, through good liaison with other agencies, to ensure that pupils are free from harm.
- The headteacher and governors responsible for safeguarding work together to complete an annual audit to ensure that the school continues to have effective arrangements for all aspects of safeguarding.
- The academy trust recently completed a health and safety audit through an independent and external provider. Although issues were highlighted, they have been dealt with by leaders in a timely manner. The school now uses an online system to manage health and safety issues and carries out regular monitoring.
- Safer recruitment processes are robust. Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning varies too widely across the school. The use of assessment information is weak.
- Teachers do not have an overview of the progress that pupils are making from their starting points in order to support them in planning activities that tackle gaps in learning and enable all pupils to make good progress. Teachers use learning objectives in lessons linked to expectations for subjects, so that pupils understand what they need to do to learn successfully. Nevertheless, weaknesses in long-term assessment slows progress.
- Teachers do not ensure that the most able pupils are suitably stretched in their learning. A system has been introduced in mathematics so that pupils choose their level of challenge. This is most effective in Years 5 and 6. However, this is not consistent across the school and teachers do not always build on pupils' prior learning in order to move them on quickly. This slows progress.
- Teaching in mathematics has been successfully focused on developing arithmetic skills. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning skills and develop them by using their knowledge and skills in problem-solving activities.
- Pupils use their reading skills with increasing confidence as they move through the school; for example, in making inferences and deductions about texts that they are reading to show their understanding. Pupils read widely and are able to discuss and compare the styles of authors.
- Time is used well in many lessons, particularly when pupils are given time reminders which support them in keeping on task. Questioning by adults is a strength in many classes. Where this is most effective, teachers check pupils' understanding or extend their thinking.
- Pupils have the opportunity to work in guided groups with their teacher, and also to work on their own to show how they can apply their knowledge and skills. Pupils value and respond to the feedback they receive from their teachers and this helps them to refine their work or edit their writing. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing across the curriculum.
- The way in which teaching assistants are used has recently been reviewed, so that they support pupils with the greatest need. Where teaching assistants work with individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, they skilfully support these pupils in small groups or within the classroom so that they can make progress in their learning that is comparable to that of their peers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils value the inclusive ethos of the school: 'We are all individuals, but at Grove we are all together.' Parents are very pleased that their children are well looked after at

school. Parents are particularly positive about the newly established parent support group, which has involved parents working in partnership with the school to review individual support plans for their children. One parent described this by saying: 'If there are any problems raised regarding my child with special educational needs, I have found [that] the school combat[s] them pro-actively and with the full involvement of myself and my husband, which helps to nurture a trusting and positive relationship.'

- Pupils feel safe in school because bullying is rare. If it should occur, pupils say that they are confident that adults will sort out any problems that they may have. Pupils understand what bullying means, including racism and homophobic bullying.
- Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The school supports both pupils and parents in understanding how to be safe when using the internet.
- Attendance is monitored regularly and is improving, including attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The breakfast club provides a healthy and social start to the day. For some pupils, attending the breakfast club has helped to improve their attendance and punctuality.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is an orderly environment and the vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school at different times of day. They are polite and courteous to visitors and to each other, remembering good manners by saying please and thank you, and readily holding doors open.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are well recorded and there are now few incidents. The school has worked in partnership with parents, so that pupils are supported effectively to improve their behaviour.
- Pupils, including the youngest pupils and children, listen and show respect for each other's ideas and views. They respond quickly to instructions from adults as they aim for 'golden behaviour, through the 'golden rules'.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning by settling quickly to tasks and sustaining concentration as they apply themselves to their work. Pupils cooperate when working in small groups or with a partner, and describe how they use collaboration to help each other in class. Where routines are less well established, there is occasional low-level disruption by a small number of pupils, which potentially disrupts learning in those lessons.
- Adults model the school's expectations for behaviour and encourage pupils to show resilience and to become more independent. One pupil described this mindset by saying, 'If we don't get it right first time we try, try, try, so we can, can, can.'

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Too few pupils consistently attain higher standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics. While pupils' outcomes are generally in line with what is expected

nationally for pupils of their age, the most able pupils are not supported or challenged well enough to reach their potential.

- Leaders do not have a secure view of the progress pupils are making. Therefore they are unable to use this information to improve outcomes for pupils.
- In 2016, at the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils attaining age-related expectations was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, too few pupils attained the higher standard. The school is not doing enough to improve outcomes for the most able pupils.
- In 2016, at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining age-related expectations was above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the school is not addressing the underperformance of pupils who do not reach the higher standards in writing and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils currently in the school is uneven because the quality of teaching varies too widely between subjects and across year groups. School leaders are doing little to address this. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum or to extend their mathematical skills, for instance by solving problems in different contexts.
- The quality of presentation in pupils' books is variable and expectations by adults are not always high enough to encourage all pupils to take pride in their work.
- Phonics is taught well across the school, so in 2016, by the end of Year 1, the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard was in line with national averages. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils reach the expected standard, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with levels of knowledge and skills similar to those found in children of their age, although some children have less experience in reading and writing than in other areas of learning.
- In 2016, the percentage of children meeting national expectations by achieving a good level of development by the end of their time in the early years was below average. The deputy headteacher is now working alongside the early years leader and is supporting greater focus on addressing gaps in learning. This approach is beginning to show a positive impact.
- The early years leader and Year 1 teacher have worked together to improve transition from the early years into Year 1. As a result, planning in Year 1 has been adjusted so that learning groups are based on pupils' learning needs and there are greater opportunities for learning in the outside environment. This means that pupils in Year 1 can access tasks more easily and build on their experiences and learning from the early years.
- Children learn in a safe environment and have settled well into the routines of both Nursery and Reception classes. Independence is encouraged and children show this by making their own snacks and helping to tidy up. All welfare requirements are met.

- Behaviour is good. Children listen to adults as there are clear expectations.
- Tasks are planned across all areas of learning within the early years curriculum and these support children in developing their basic skills. For example, children enjoy writing in the role-play area, where they were observed writing thank you letters. However, there are few opportunities for children to learn how to apply their phonic knowledge to develop their writing skills.
- There is a good balance between work that is led by the teacher and opportunities for children to explore ideas for themselves. Children concentrate well and are confident to choose their own resources. Adults demonstrate spoken language well when working with groups of children, but do not always intervene to improve children's language as they work and play.
- All adults play a key role in helping children to learn and they use effective questioning to extend children's learning. Teaching assistants have been trained to support teachers' assessments of children. Adults keep careful records of what children can do through online 'learning journeys', which allows parents to add their own observations of their child's learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	140823
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10026123

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Jay
Headteacher	David Baker
Telephone number	01502 538527
Website	www.groveprimaryschool.org
Email address	office@groveprimaryschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in May 2014, sponsored by the Active Learning Trust.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Grove Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school offers a breakfast club.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly higher than that found in most schools.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by pupil premium is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classrooms, including observations carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made short visits to observe learning at other times, to review the teaching of phonics and the broader curriculum, including how the school promotes aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values. One inspector reviewed provision for pupils attending the school's breakfast club.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work from all year groups in different subjects, both within lessons and through a joint scrutiny with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff with leadership responsibility. Discussions were held with members of the governing body and representatives from the academy trust.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including: the school's self-evaluation summary; the school development plan; and documents provided by the academy trust.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures, including records of checks on the suitability of staff and adults, and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took account of the 63 responses and 12 free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as parents' views through speaking to parents and carers at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Pauline MacMillan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Crane	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Fisher	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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