

Inspection of Grove Academy

Turner Street, Northwood, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST1 2NL

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Since September when the school began receiving additional support, things have been moving in the right direction. Leaders' ambition is helping to bring about improvements at the school. The teaching of reading is effective. Mathematics and science have also been developed. However, there is further work to do to improve the curriculum and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Generally, the school is calm and orderly. Most pupils behave well and say that they enjoy school and feel safe. However, there are times when learning is disrupted by poor behaviour. Over time, this has become less common. When bullying happens, adults respond swiftly to any concerns that pupils have. However, sometimes bullying continues. Leaders know that they need to stop this.

The school is inclusive. Pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly develop their reading skills. Teachers focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and spoken English.

Parents and carers have mixed views about the school. In the main, they say good things. However, leaders are working hard to address the concerns of a small minority of parents.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is well structured in English, mathematics and science. However, there is some variability in the quality and delivery of planning and teaching in a few subjects, including art and design and computing. In these subjects, teachers have not identified the key knowledge to be taught. A range of assessment strategies are still being developed. Leadership is underdeveloped in many curriculum areas.

Reading is a priority across the school. Staff adopt a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics for those who need it. Staff are skilled at teaching reading and pupils' books are well matched to their abilities. As a result, most pupils make good progress in reading. However, some of the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to read longer, harder texts. Pupils in Year 6 do not have a secure knowledge of a range of authors. Teachers are addressing this successfully through their reading sessions with pupils.

Beyond the academic curriculum, leaders have made sure that the three school rules are central to everything. They want pupils to, 'be safe, be respectful and be ready to learn'. Leaders plan lots of opportunities for pupils to live by these rules. Pupils learn from assemblies about fundamental British values and diversity. As a result, they have a good understanding of the differences that exist in society. Pupils benefit from attending a variety of clubs, including football and sewing. Pupils are currently producing a drama performance of 'School of Rock' for parents.

Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to access the same curriculum as other pupils. Staff are developing guidance that takes account of the mixed-age nurture classes. Leaders focus on these pupils' social and behavioural needs. Staff provide pupils with the additional help that they need.

Leaders are working hard to address any incidents of low-level poor behaviour. Attendance for some pupils is low. Some pupils are persistently absent from school. Leaders have identified ways to make sure that all pupils attend more regularly. These strategies are beginning to have an impact.

The trust is supporting leaders well. Leaders know the school well and what the next steps are. Some staff would like more support with managing behaviour and developing their subject leadership.

Governors and trustees fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The trust is providing effective challenge and support. This is enabling leaders to make improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors make sure that safeguarding is a high priority. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding. They are fully aware of their responsibilities. Leaders and staff are vigilant. Safeguarding concerns are dealt with thoroughly. Leaders make sure that appropriate safeguarding checks are in place for adults working in the school.

The systems in place to identify any pupils or families that may be vulnerable or may need extra support are strong. Records are detailed and show that concerns are followed up promptly. This helps to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects do not have leaders to develop these areas further. Some plans are new. Currently, pupils do not know enough in the foundation subjects, such as art and design, and computing. Leaders are appointing curriculum leaders. The changes they make need to ensure that pupils of all abilities acquire the knowledge and skills they need to achieve well.
- Attendance for some pupils is low. This limits the pupils' progress. Leaders need to continue to work with parents and external agencies to address persistent absence.
- A few pupils disturb learning in lessons and there is some bullying. Leaders need to support staff in managing incidents more effectively, so that pupils' behaviour and attitudes continue to improve.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	144696
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10212180
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	429
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Atkins
Principal	Shirley Carrigan
Website	http://www.grovejunior.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has experienced significant staff turnover in the last three years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for any of its pupils.
- The school operates two nurture classes for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and SEND.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the deputy chief executive officer of the FFET and representatives from those responsible for governance. Inspectors also met with the principal, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator and a range of teaching and support staff.
- Deep dives were carried out into reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors looked at curriculum planning and

spoke to leaders about their subjects. The inspectors conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and wider experiences, and looked at a range of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector scrutinised a wide range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the recording and reporting of any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors checked the school's website and looked at planning from other subjects, including art and design, and computing.
- The team considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff in Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

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