

Grove Junior School

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

Inspection dates 8–9 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a happy and exciting school. It is well led and improving.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together. They ensure that pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well.
- Governors have improved their knowledge about how well the school is doing and have improved their skills to support the school. They ensure monies are well spent, leading to improvements in achievement, safety and health of pupils.
- The achievement of all groups of pupils is good throughout the school and improving in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Excellent use is made of the exciting specialist areas to stimulate pupils' creativity. Pupils are inspired in their development of writing, reading and mathematical skills across all subjects. Middle leaders promote this well.
- Classrooms are well presented and fun places to be. Pupils enjoy dressing up in characters and using their imagination.
- Technology is used well for research, presentations and reading. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent as a result.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support all pupils and to meet specific needs.
- Pupils are passionately provided with interesting activities with different levels of challenge to choose from.
- Pupils feel safe and looked after. They behave well around the school and their attendance is average and improving well.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of trips and clubs to enhance their learning. A dedicated gym, a specialist sports teacher and regular use of bicycles during lunch times, improve their fitness and sports skills very well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not regularly explain and make conclusions about mathematical information.
- Some untidy presentation, errors in sums, and misunderstanding of mathematical methods, are not always picked up quickly enough.
- Older pupils do not practise writing at length enough. Not all pupils check and correct their
- Information on pupils' progress is not understood well enough by some staff.
- Links with the infant schools that pupils come from are not close enough for staff to have the information they need to speed up pupils' rates of progress even more.

spellings quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Pupils' books were checked closely by inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of 15 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Responses to a parental questionnaire recently carried out by the school, were looked at. Many parents were spoken to at random on the school grounds on both days of the inspection.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils and inspectors spoke informally to pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors also held discussions with four governors, including the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, parents and school staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, documents relating to the school's plans for improvement, its procedures for checking the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clarice Nelson-Rowe, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marilyn Massey	Additional Inspector
John Shutt	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized junior school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of girls is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school exceeds 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.
- Five teachers are new to teaching and were appointed to the school in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching to be outstanding, by ensuring that pupils:
 - regularly explain and make conclusions about mathematical information in their work
 - present work in mathematics carefully to ensure greater accuracy in calculations
 - show how they arrived at answers in calculations, so that any misunderstandings of mathematical methods can be picked up sooner
 - check and correct their spellings more quickly in lessons
 - practise writing at length in different subjects, particularly older pupils.
- Further improve leadership and management to be outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all staff understand information on pupils' progress
 - continuing to develop links with the schools that pupils come from, so that information on what pupils know and can do is accurate, known by staff and used to raise the standards that pupils reach even more quickly and right from when they enter the junior school
 - improving links with parents, to ensure greater levels of satisfaction about all aspects of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is good throughout the school and for all groups of pupils. This is because the school has a strong commitment to ensuring that all groups of pupils achieve equally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. This is because their needs are identified early on entry to and throughout the school. Their needs are met well through suitable activities, resources and timely support given in lessons and in small groups.
- In the most recent Year 6 national tests, pupils supported by the pupil premium, including pupils eligible for free school meals, were just over a term behind in writing but the same in reading, and mathematics compared to other pupils. However, the progress they make is sometimes better than others in the school and pupils nationally. This is because leaders and governors ensure that specific monies allocated for their needs is used wisely.
- Work in books and school records show that girls now achieve as well as boys in relation to their starting points. The small but growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language also do well compared to others. This is largely due to the targeted support they receive through the use of pictures and key words to help them with speaking, reading and writing.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from the varied starting points when they join the school.
- The proportion of pupils who make the progress expected of them, compares well with national figures by the end of Year 6 and currently in the school. The proportion of pupils who do better than what would be expected, was slightly below the national figure in 2013 in reading and mathematics, but above in writing. Currently in the school this is now improving well across all subjects, all year groups and from all starting points.
- Pupils achieve well in reading because they enjoy using technology to read stories together and research topics of interest. Pupils told inspectors that they value the books in the library and classrooms. They are encouraged to read books regularly at school and at home.
- A key strength in pupils' writing is the imagination and creativity they show in their work. Most demonstrate good skills in writing in different forms such as letters, reports and diaries. The most-able pupils in particular, show good skill in writing at length using a wide range of words and sentences. However, not all older pupils are consistently given the opportunity to write at length in different subjects.
- Due to the interesting way that mathematics is linked to all subjects in the school, pupils enjoy it a lot and make good progress. Most-able pupils, like other pupils, are challenged well to complete higher level tasks. However, sometimes untidy presentation, such as where numbers are placed and then added up, leads to some errors in calculations.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good. This is because of the strong drive of senior leaders in the school to check and improve teaching. All staff are passionate about planning lessons to make learning enjoyable and challenging for all groups of pupils.
- Teaching is highly engaging and expectations of pupils are high. There is no limit placed on what pupils can achieve. There are always activities that pupils can choose from, to help them to move on to higher levels of learning.
- An outstanding aspect of teaching is the way that the environment is used and presented to fire pupils' imagination, for example the use of the Victorian School Area and the Tudors' classroom. Reading and writing skills are taught well in these settings through encouraging pupils to put themselves in the place of people they read about in history or in stories. Pupils and sometimes staff, regularly dress up in characters to make their experiences even more real!

- Marking is good across the school. Pupils improve their work in response to teachers' comments. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to look for ways that they can improve their work. However, pupils are not always guided soon enough, on where to correct their spellings.
- Questioning of pupils is good. Pupils are regularly encouraged to think about the skills they are using and how to improve them.
- Around the school and in specialist areas, pupils are taught to apply their mathematical skills to different topics. For example, pupils were observed converting measurements of weights used in Victorian times to weight measurements used today. Pupils were also observed when drawing graphs about the numbers and types of people who died from the Black Death.
- However, pupils are not consistently encouraged to explain or draw conclusions about what the mathematical information is showing in their work. Also, sometimes pupils and staff are not able to find out quickly enough why some final calculations are wrong or if pupils have used particular methods correctly. This is because pupils have not been encouraged to show how they arrived at their answers in their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is particularly the case around the school and outside on the school's grounds. Space for play can get cramped on the playground at break times when all year groups are out. However, pupils play safely, and there are few incidents of poor behaviour.
- An outstanding aspect of behaviour is the way that pupils are highly engrossed in their learning. This is due to the well-timed variety of activities, wide coverage of topics, regular use of technology and the varied use of stimulating spaces around the school in lessons. Pupils say they enjoy their learning a lot and that concentration and effort is always high in lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school site is secure and pupils are supervised well during their breaks. Staff are allocated to support specific pupils and families with emotional, relational and health needs and so there is harmony here.
- Pupils say they get on well with each other and are happy at school. The overwhelming majority of parents also agree with this. Pupils also display at least good levels of understanding on how to keep themselves safe, including when using the Internet.
- Attendance has been variable in the past but is now at least average and improving strongly.
- Pupils spoken to say they feel safe, well cared for and free from bullying. Most responses from parents on Parent View agree with this although a few do not.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher. They both demonstrate a strong drive for improvement. They have both ensured that, despite significant changes to staff most recently, that good standards of teaching have been maintained. They demonstrate high expectations of themselves, pupils and staff.
- The plans to improve the school are carried out well and the school knows what they need to do to improve. This is because pupils' progress is generally tracked well by senior leaders. However, not all staff have a secure understanding of the information on pupils' progress and how rapid progress needs to be for it to be outstanding.
- All staff, including those new to teaching, feel well supported. They are keen to improve and welcome the regular checks on the quality of teaching. They also value the opportunities to see each other teach in order to improve their own performance in teaching. The systems to manage their performance are rigorous and linked well to pay.
- An excellent aspect of leadership is the way that leaders at all levels ensure that there are strong links between subjects and activities, including trips and clubs, to enhance pupils' skills. They all promote pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. Although some are new to post, middle leaders show a positive impact on promoting pupils' learning throughout the school.

- Pupils' health and sports skills improve well. This is due to specialist staff employed by the school to deliver physical education lessons, as well as to the use of the school's gym by pupils during and after school. Pupils told inspectors about their enjoyment of bicycles at lunch time and inspectors saw this for themselves. More pupils also take part in sports outside of school as a result of the school's strong promotion of sports and physical education. The school spends the primary school sports funding well.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school. However, it is helping to further improve links with and between the schools that pupils come from. The school is aware of the need to ensure accuracy about what pupils can do, so that the standards pupils reach can be raised even more quickly right from when they enter the school in Year 3.
- The school's most recent survey results of parents' views suggest that parents are positive about most areas of the school's work. However, views expressed via Parent View and through discussions with parents selected at random during the inspection, showed that a few are not consistently satisfied with all aspects of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved well since the last inspection. Governors now have a good understanding of the performance of the school due to their improved training, skills and the addition of new members to the governing body. As a result they support and challenge the school well. Regular visits to the school and good communications between the governors and leaders at all levels enable them to have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and achievement in the school. They ensure that the performance of staff is managed and rewarded well. They also ensure that any weaknesses in teaching are tackled quickly.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124032
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	444295

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Gibson
Headteacher	Nicola McIntyre
Date of previous school inspection	14 December 2010
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