

Grove Street Primary School

Grove Street, New Ferry, Wirral, Merseyside CH62 5BA

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until very recently, leaders had not recognised or addressed the long-standing weaknesses in teaching and pupils' progress.
- Pupils in key stage 1, particularly boys, do not make the progress of which they are capable. The standard of their work in reading, writing and mathematics remains too low.
- The leadership of the early years does not promote good standards of education.
- Children in the early years do not make good progress and are, therefore, not well prepared for starting Year 1.
- Across the school, too much teaching is ineffective. Sometimes the tasks which teachers set are too easy for the most able pupils and too hard for the least able.
- A considerable number of pupils do not attend school regularly enough and, therefore, fall behind in their learning.
- The organisation and management of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not effective.
- Although the school is vigilant and pupils are safe, the school's records relating to safeguarding are not well organised or quickly accessible.

The school has the following strengths

- The very recently appointed headteacher has used her considerable experience as a headteacher and school improvement partner to review the school and quickly make substantial changes.
- While it is too early to see sustained impact on areas of weakness, some improvements in teaching and pupils' progress are already evident.
- There are considerable strengths in some aspects of middle leadership.
- Some teaching, including in the early years, is highly effective.
- At key stage 2, pupils' progress from low starting points is in line with national averages and is improving, especially for the most able.
- The school provides a very high standard of care for pupils who have medical needs.
- Staff generate very good relationships with pupils. Pupils, including children in the early years, settle in quickly, enjoy school and behave well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate ineffective teaching by:
 - sharing the very effective practice evident in some classes
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils, particularly boys, can and should achieve
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information well to plan activities which match pupils' capabilities and prior attainment
 - ensuring that explanations are clear and tasks are well modelled.
- Improve the leadership and management of SEND by:
 - making sure that the needs of pupils with high-level SEND are identified and addressed quickly
 - improving how the academic, social and emotional progress of pupils with SEND is recorded and monitored
 - addressing weaknesses in systems for communicating with the parents and carers, and teachers of pupils with SEND.
- Improve the quality of leadership in the early years by:
 - promoting high expectations of what children are capable of achieving
 - improving the accuracy and use of assessment
 - ensuring that resources and displays are well organised and accessible to children
 - modelling effective use of adults' conversations with children as opportunities for teaching and learning.
- Ensure that safeguarding records are stored and organised in a way which enables appropriate adults to gain access quickly to all the necessary information.
- Work closely with families and external agencies to improve attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until very recently, leaders did not acknowledge or address the considerable weaknesses in teaching and pupils' progress over time. As a result, standards in the early years and at key stage 1 continued to decline.
- A new and very experienced headteacher took up post in September 2018. She welcomed support from the local authority to work with her to identify very specifically what leaders need to do to ensure that pupils reach their full potential. She has a very accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Working with governors, she has developed clear and coherent plans for improvement. Together, they have prioritised well to ensure that change is introduced at a realistic pace. They have already taken action in the weakest areas, such as the teaching of phonics in key stage 1.
- The introduction in September of a systematic phonics programme has been very effective in providing teachers with a logical sequence of activities to improve pupils' reading and writing skills. Leaders have given teachers clear guidance on how to use the resources available. It is too early to see lasting impact. However, there was clear evidence in the lessons which inspectors observed, as well as the work in pupils' books, that teaching is beginning to improve and that pupils are starting to make better progress. This is particularly true of boys, who have underperformed in the past in relation to the performance of girls.
- Leaders did not previously have in place an effective system for monitoring the quality of teaching. There is now a cycle of monitoring which takes into account lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and review of assessment information. This is at an early stage of development, but the headteacher already has a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. She has put in place support plans for those staff whose teaching is less than effective.
- Teachers now have the opportunity to learn from each other and to observe good practice in other schools. A programme of training is in place. It includes whole-school sessions and individual coaching.
- Previously, teachers' appraisal targets were imprecise and did not allow for effective management of their performance. This year, the headteacher conducted the appraisal of all teachers herself. Targets are very specific and related to the school improvement plan. As a result, leaders are now using performance management to improve weaker teaching and leadership.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils had been inaccurate and not reflected in actual performance. More frequent opportunities to moderate work with colleagues in school and from other schools have given teachers the opportunity to discuss and refine assessments. This has ensured that teachers use progress tracking information better to plan for improvement.

- In the past, middle leaders, including subject leaders, did not have the time or training to monitor their areas of responsibility. As a result, they were unable to influence either standards or the quality of teaching. They now have management time and opportunities to conduct monitoring activities alongside the headteacher. They feel valued and are very supportive of the planned changes and those that the headteacher and governors have already made.
- Leaders of mathematics, English, key stage 1 and key stage 2 articulated very well to inspectors the strengths and weaknesses of their areas and explained well-devised plans for improvement.
- Support for pupils with SEND is not well led or managed. Pupils with the highest levels of need, especially those with social, emotional and behavioural needs, are not identified early enough. Consequently, they remain in school for too long without specialist help. Monitoring of the academic, social and emotional needs of pupils with SEND is not of sufficient frequency or quality to inform planning for progress. Systems for communication with parents and teachers of these pupils are not well developed.
- At key stage 2, leaders have used the pupil premium funding well to address the barriers to learning faced by the considerable number of disadvantaged pupils. In this key stage, disadvantaged pupils often make more progress than their peers in school and sometimes more than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. At key stage 1, they do not make as much progress as their peers because support is less well targeted.
- The content of the curriculum meets statutory requirements at each key stage and is interesting for pupils. Teachers give them a good understanding of the locality and the wider world. Teachers use Birkenhead docks and Port Sunlight well to make good links between subjects. They weave fundamental British values such as democracy and respect for difference into schemes of work. These values are exemplified in the work of the school council and in themed assemblies with visiting speakers.
- Teachers give pupils across all phases of the school opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Staff draw on external expertise in this area, and the school has achieved the National SMSC Gold Quality Mark.
- Leaders use the sports premium well to develop pupils' skills in a wide variety of sports. However, since this teaching is done by an external sports coach and class teachers are not involved, this is not developing the school's sustainable capacity to provide good physical education teaching should the funding cease.
- Accurate local authority reviews have helped governors to recognise the need for change. Local authority officers arranged and funded support from a national leader of education, who is the executive headteacher of an outstanding primary school. Her skills and experience bring extra capacity and stability to the leadership of the school at a time of great change. She and the headteacher have well-prioritised plans to involve specialist leaders of education in those areas which require the most support. The headteacher uses external expertise well. However, she is not overly dependent on it.

Governance of the school

- Governors did not previously challenge the school's leadership effectively or hold leaders to account for long-standing weaknesses in teaching and pupils' progress.

- More recently, with the local authority, they acted swiftly to appoint a very experienced headteacher.
- Governors are reflective, honest and determined about the need for change. They show this commitment in the amount of time they give to meetings and visits. They are currently undertaking a wide range of training related to their role.
- They have changed the committee structure and meet more frequently to ensure that the pace of change does not slacken.
- Since September, the chair and vice-chair have spent a great deal of time scrutinising and evaluating detailed information about pupils' progress. In this way, they are able to assure themselves that their actions and those of the headteacher and middle leaders are having the desired impact.
- Members of the governing body bring a range of relevant skills to their role, including educational, financial and business expertise. They fulfil all statutory responsibilities and fully understand their role in safeguarding pupils and staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff understand their role in safeguarding the pupils in their care.
- Policies, systems and processes are based on the latest national guidance and are up to date.
- The school works closely with parents as well as external agencies to ensure that procedures and practice keep pupils safe.
- Staff know which procedures to follow if they have concerns. They have undertaken recent and regular training in all relevant aspects of keeping children safe.
- While staff record all relevant information, it is not stored in an organised or efficient way. Some information is held across several different files maintained by a number of different leaders.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Across both key stage 1 and key stage 2, the quality of teaching is too variable. This has less impact on pupils' progress at key stage 2 because of the strength of teaching in Year 6 and Year 3.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. The headteacher has begun to address this by facilitating visits to other schools where standards are higher. This is beginning to open teachers' eyes to the full potential of their pupils.
- Some teachers do not use assessments of pupils' work well enough when planning activities. As a result, the most able pupils sometimes find work too easy and the least able find it too hard. Some teachers introduce more advanced concepts to the least able pupils before they have understood the basics. For higher-ability pupils, they plan too many activities which repeat too often what pupils have already grasped well.

- Using a great deal of warmth, praise and humour, teachers and teaching assistants generate very positive relationships with pupils. Pupils follow instructions quickly and enjoy well-established routines. However, sometimes, when activities are too hard or too easy, pupils, especially boys, lose concentration and waste time.
- As a result of a number of changes which the headteacher has made since September, teaching is beginning to improve. This is particularly the case in the teaching of phonics at key stage 1. The new programme has given teachers a strong structure to which they have responded very well.
- Teachers sequence phonics activities in a logical order to allow for consistent progress and use resources well to reinforce concepts. The use of skilled teaching assistants has allowed smaller teaching groups, enabling adults to match their teaching closely to individual pupils' needs.
- The same improvements are not evident in the teaching of mathematics at key stage 1, but the headteacher and new mathematics coordinator have plans for similar changes. They have already resourced these plans and booked training. The new scheme is fully ready for introduction once changes in the teaching of phonics are well enough established.
- At key stage 2, the combining of target setting, tracking and discussions with pupils about their next steps now provides a strong focus on raising standards. This is at an early stage of development but, in lessons and in pupils' books, inspectors saw some improvement in progress in mathematics and English. This was particularly true of the most able pupils.
- Across the school, leaders have introduced new systems for more accurate assessment and more effective tracking of pupils' progress. These now allow for more targeted intervention to address gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This is a recent change, but inspectors noted some resultant improvements in the work of individual pupils.
- There is some very strong teaching in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. The headteacher and subject coordinators are beginning to ensure that weaker teachers have opportunities to be coached by and learn from the best teachers in the school.
- All teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Some do not use this knowledge well enough in planning for pupils' progress or in framing questions to encourage pupils to think more deeply.
- Teachers give all pupils reading to do at home. Pupils are keen to record their reading, and the school's system has involved parents well in supporting their children's literacy. As pupils move up the school, teachers give them a wider variety of homework to consolidate what they have learned in class.
- Teachers sometimes use subjects other than English and mathematics to develop literacy and numeracy. However, this is not planned or systematic.
- Leaders agree with some parents who said that they are not given enough information about their children's academic progress. The school is in the process of developing a new system of reporting to parents.
- Neither pupils nor staff accept the use of derogatory language. Staff teach pupils to respect difference of every kind.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school has not quickly enough identified pupils who have high-level special needs, especially those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result, leaders have left some pupils too long trying to cope in situations which leave them feeling vulnerable and upset or angry.
- The nurture room has not been effective in helping vulnerable pupils to return to learning. There has been a lack of clarity in the purpose of this room and the rationale for sending pupils there. In practice, this system has hindered pupils' academic and social and emotional progress.
- Very recently, leaders have changed how the room operates, so that its use supports learning and the development of confidence and self-esteem.
- Leaders ensure that staff have an excellent knowledge of those pupils who have medical needs. The school provides a very high standard of care for them, including when they return to school after a long period of absence.
- Discussions with pupils and staff, as well as responses from parents to Ofsted questionnaires, indicate that all have confidence in the school's systems to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The school has strong systems to deal with bullying. School records, and discussions with staff and pupils, indicate that bullying is rare and that when it occurs staff deal with it well.
- Staff teach pupils to care for others and to treat everyone with courtesy and respect.
- Assemblies and lessons make pupils aware of how to stay safe online and the dangers of communication with strangers. Staff also teach pupils about safety when crossing roads and riding bikes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance remains considerably below the national average. This means that too many pupils miss valuable learning.
- The introduction of free breakfast activities, which involve parents too, has contributed to good punctuality.
- Across the whole school, pupils behave well and are polite and courteous. They are keen to produce their best work and want their books to be neat and tidy.
- In lessons, pupils listen to each other and to adults and follow instructions quickly.

- Pupils are enthusiastic about the school's system of rewards and sanctions. They told inspectors that it is fair and that all teachers use it in the same way. They said that on the rare occasions when someone misbehaves, teachers quickly deal with them so that lessons are not disturbed.
- Inspectors saw teachers using praise and very good observational skills to prevent pupils from losing concentration or distracting others.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils in key stage 1 do not make enough progress in reading, writing or mathematics. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are well behind what is expected for their age. This is partly because a considerable number arrive in Year 1 without the skills needed to make a good start. It is also partly due to some ineffective teaching in key stage 1.
- Key stage 2 pupils make progress which is broadly in line with that of similar pupils across the country. However, because this progress is from low starting points when they enter Year 3, standards in reading and writing are below national averages. Standards in mathematics and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling are now above the national figures.
- At key stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics remains below national averages, but is improving year on year.
- During this inspection, in key stage 2, inspectors saw standards of work which show further improvement in English and mathematics, especially at the higher standards. This is because of swift action by Year 3 teachers to make up for gaps in learning, and of particularly strong teaching in Year 6.
- In key stage 2, the new system for monitoring and managing independent reading practice and promoting reading for pleasure has resulted in pupils reading more books across a wider range of themes and styles. This has increased boys' enjoyment of literacy and, in particular, their enjoyment of reading.
- At key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils make better progress than their peers in school and sometimes better than that of non-disadvantaged pupils across the country. At key stage 1, this is not the case. Disadvantaged pupils in Years 1 and 2 remain behind their peers in most subjects.
- Boys underperform in relation to girls across the school. Some of the recent changes made, especially at key stage 1, are beginning to address the needs of boys more effectively, but it is too early to see sustainable impact on their progress.
- The progress of some pupils with SEND is good. However, in the case of those whose individual needs the school has not met, pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- By the end of Year 6, most pupils have the academic and social skills needed for starting secondary school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children in the early years do not develop the full range of skills needed for a good start to Year 1. This is particularly true of skills in mathematics, communication and language, and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The leadership of the early years has not been effective in providing a good standard of education.
- Leaders do not compare standards to those achieved nationally. This has resulted in low expectations of what children can and should achieve.
- Some resources and displays are arranged in a way which makes them inaccessible to children and are, therefore, of limited use in learning.
- Some teaching in the early years is ineffective. Most assessments are inaccurate, and some staff do not use the information gained from observing and assessing children to plan for children's progress. Some adults do not use conversations with children as an opportunity for teaching and learning.
- On the other hand, some teaching in the early years is highly effective. This teaching shows a very good knowledge of how young children learn and develop across the full range of skills.
- All teachers in the early years develop children's social and emotional skills well. Children behave well and show respect for each other and for adults. They happily share and take turns.
- Standards of care, welfare and safeguarding are high.
- Staff make sure that children settle in well, are happy and enjoy school.
- Recent investment in resources for the indoor areas has improved the learning environment.
- Supported by the headteacher, staff are keen to improve and have begun to undertake training related to current weaknesses, including: developing and using the environment; communication and language; and phonics and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	105011
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10045118

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Kelly
Headteacher	Lisa Walsh
Telephone number	0151 645 2170
Website	grovestreetprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@grovestreet.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 June 2014

Information about this school

- Grove Street Primary is larger than the average primary school.
- The number of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is more than double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEND is small in comparison to the national figure.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is higher than national averages.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not or is believed not to be English is lower than the national average.

- The local authority has organised and funded support from a national leader in education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and pupils' learning. Some of these lesson observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at playtimes.
- Inspectors met formally with two groups of pupils. An inspector heard a range of pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, middle and senior leaders, members of the governing body, an officer from the local authority and the school improvement partner, who is a serving headteacher and a national leader in education.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding. They took account of the school's information about pupils' outcomes and scrutinised pupils' books and assessment information.
- Inspectors considered 11 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including nine free-text comments.

Inspection team

Liz Kelly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Atkins	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Gartside	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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