

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



14 December 2017

Mrs Bernadette Ash
Headteacher
The Grove Primary School
Oakfield Lane
The Grove
Consett
County Durham
DH8 8AP

Dear Mrs Ash

Short inspection of The Grove Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The newly formed leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team have developed an ethos of high expectations of everyone within school. This is reflected in the aspirations of pupils, who spoke extremely positively about what their school has to offer them. As one pupil said, 'We work hard and learn to be resilient and independent in our learning so we can get good jobs for our families.' Pupils' career aspirations range from lawyer to superhero footballer! You and your team share a strong sense of purpose in your commitment to achieve the very best for all of your pupils. You have a clear vision for the school which is fully supported by governors, parents and staff. Overwhelmingly, staff responses show that they are proud to be part of The Grove Primary School and that the school is well led and managed. The changes that you have implemented are recognised to be having a very positive impact not only on pupils' well-being but also on their learning. As one parent said, 'My daughter has flourished here academically and personally.'

You and your leadership team have taken decisive action to address areas for improvement within school, including those from the previous inspection. For example, by reviewing the use of additional support in lessons, pupils are now receiving guidance that immediately addresses their needs and enables them to make strong progress. Teaching assistants are carefully focused on key groups of pupils, providing targeted support and challenge which makes sure that all are making appropriate progress. Due to the high quality of the work of teaching

assistants in classrooms, it is often difficult to spot who is the teacher and who is the assistant. Through developing the opportunities for staff to work together to share the good practice that is evident in school, you have ensured that the quality of teaching is at least good. However, you do recognise that further opportunities to share this good practice are needed to have even greater impact on pupils' positive outcomes.

Pupils make good progress in school from entry into the early years through to leaving at the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve good outcomes in key stage 1 across the curriculum and attainment at the expected standard was above the national average in 2017. However, you and your staff are aware that the proportion reaching greater depth at key stage 1, in maths in particular, needs to increase further. In key stage 2, reading and mathematics progress has been in the top 20% nationally over the last two years. Despite strong progress in key stage 2, the proportion exceeding the expected standard in writing and mathematics was below the national average. Action is already under way to address this.

You have a committed team of governors who speak passionately about making sure that all pupils and their families are cared for and supported by the school. The governing body has a range of skills that are used appropriately to support the school. Governors do recognise that they must continue to develop their skills base and regularly access the training provided by the local authority. They have an accurate view of the good quality of teaching and learning within the school and recognise the need to further share this expertise among all staff. In addition, governors recognise the changes you have introduced and the positive impact they are having on the quality of learning and outcomes for all pupils. For example, further strengthening the rigorous systems of monitoring and evaluation helps to make sure that pupils continue to receive good-quality teaching.

Your team's commitment to pupils' academic development is matched in their commitment to supporting pupils' social and emotional well-being. Pupils have pride in their school and want to come to school on a regular basis. Positive learning behaviour is modelled by all adults in school. Consequently, pupils have a clear understanding of how best to apply themselves and learn, not only in school but also when they are older and in work. Pupils behave in a very positive way. They are encouraged to develop their skills in supporting each other, for example, through the use of Year 6 buddies who aim to resolve arguments and concerns. All pupils spoken to by me appreciate what The Grove Primary School offers them, from 'hard work and challenging lessons' to 'friendships'.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team maintain a rigorous and constant focus upon the welfare of pupils at all times. The school's safeguarding processes are of a good quality and reflect a culture where actions to ensure pupils' safety run through everything the school does. Thorough checks are carried out on all staff working within school and visitors are carefully monitored. You and your team closely monitor all vulnerable pupils in school and support and guidance is provided quickly and effectively. Close

links are maintained with external agencies to ensure support for pupils' welfare. You are tenacious in following up concerns and ensuring that the right level of support is in place for pupils and their families.

Pupils feel safe and well supported in school. Pupils of all ages speak confidently about being able to approach any adult within school if they had any concerns or worries. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online, both within school and at home. Through the curriculum and additional activities, pupils are given a good range of opportunities to explore their understanding of being safe and how they can keep each other safe.

Inspection findings

- Children make a good start to their learning in the early years. They make good progress from starting points that are below those typical for their age when they begin in Nursery. There are careful procedures in place in the early years to make sure that children make the most progress possible and that the curriculum meets their needs and interests. Leaders and teachers in the early years have developed a range of approaches and new strategies to extend children's learning. For example, a 'VIP' area is in place for Reception children, where more challenging tasks are introduced, including 'superhero phonics' and 'supersize construction'. Currently a good number of children are now exceeding the early learning goals. However, leaders are still aware of the need to continue to increase the proportion of children who are reaching a good level of development to be in line with national figures.
- Pupils achieve good outcomes in mathematics in key stage 1 because teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. This extends into key stage 2 and contributes well to pupils achieving strong outcomes in this subject. Evidence in books shows that pupils have many opportunities to build their fluency in basic number work before quickly moving on to reasoning and problem-solving tasks. Teachers provide pupils with increasingly demanding mathematical problems, which deepen pupils' understanding and develop their skills of reasoning soundly.
- At key stage 1, the percentage of pupils currently working at greater depth in mathematics is increasing due to the challenging tasks they are tackling in lessons. Leaders, however, are aware of the need to increase further the percentage of pupils working at this standard.
- Leaders have a detailed understanding of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Procedures are in place for early identification of pupils' needs and high-quality support is provided by the school and through accessing support from outside agencies. Pupils have access to a tailored curriculum that addresses their needs but also staff ensure that they have every opportunity to take part in all areas of the curriculum. Every classroom is clearly inclusive, and this is reflected in how pupils positively respond to and support each other's learning. Current evidence indicates that as a result, most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are making strong progress across subjects because of high-quality teaching and learning and a curriculum that addresses pupils'

individual needs. Pupils' progress is thoroughly tracked and reviewed regularly, and summaries of progress are shared with staff and governors. Regular moderation within school and with external partners lends an accuracy to school tracking information. Teachers challenge pupils' learning in key stage 2 using careful questioning in both written and verbal feedback. Pupils are regularly challenged to 'prove' their answers and explain how they reached an outcome by providing supporting evidence. You and your staff are aware of the need to increase further the number of pupils achieving at a greater depth.

- Leaders and teachers closely track the progress of disadvantaged pupils within school and have a clear understanding of the specific strategies that will help them improve. Careful planning is put in place that shows how pupils will be supported, targets set and then the impact of the teacher's actions evaluated. Additional funding is used in school to provide extra time within the classroom to support their needs. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are currently making good progress and in 2017, they made better progress in writing than their peers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further increase the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years
- increase the proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth in key stages 1 and 2
- further embed the systems used within school to share good practice in teaching and learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Durham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Vernon
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and members of your senior leadership team as well as your pastoral support worker. I held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked to pupils in lessons and at breaktimes. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. I also met with the school improvement advisor from the local authority. I undertook lesson observations with you. I also looked at pupils' work in books from the current academic year. I examined the school improvement plan as well as other documents, including action plans, assessment information, behaviour and pupil tracking data. I examined safeguarding documents, including the record of security and suitability checks on

staff. I also took into account the 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 13 free-text responses from parents. I also considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.