

Inspection of Grove Church of England School

North Drive, Grove, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 7PW

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Donna Blake. This school is part of The Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anne Dellar, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kathy Winrow.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this friendly and welcoming school. They like being part of a close community where everyone knows each other. The school's Christian values of love, respect and resilience are at the heart of this. Pupils demonstrate these through their considerate conduct around school. At playtimes, they share equipment and seek to involve others in their games. Pupils appreciate the warm relationships they have with staff. They feel confident about sharing any worries.

The school champions success. Weekly assemblies recognise individual achievements and contributions. Pupils are proud to receive awards that motivate them to try their best. Pupils benefit from the broad range of enrichment activities. They are encouraged to try new things, and many enjoy attending after-school clubs. Pupils value the shared experiences provided by different trips or visiting speakers.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. However, the curriculum in some subjects does not support pupils in knowing and remembering more. There is variation in how well teaching supports pupils' learning. While the school is taking rapid, impactful action to address these issues, currently, pupils are not achieving as well as they could.

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

The school is purposefully developing the wider curriculum. In some subjects, important knowledge is not arranged so that it supports pupils to build secure understanding. This hinders their learning over time. In the early years, the curriculum is strong, with carefully considered steps developing children's knowledge and skills. As a result, they are well prepared for key stage 1.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. However, there are variations across subjects in how well teaching develops pupils' understanding. In some foundation subjects, teachers' explanations of new ideas do not always focus on important knowledge. Sometimes, the methods teachers use to check pupils' understanding and recall do not work well. This leaves pupils with misconceptions, and they can struggle to remember earlier learning. Across subjects, when teachers do identify areas of weaker knowledge, this is not always addressed with pupils. As a result, pupils continue to have gaps in their knowledge.

There is a sharp focus on reading. Children learn phonics from the start of Reception. Anyone struggling is quickly identified and promptly receives targeted support so that they catch up quickly. The love of reading is prioritised across the school. Pupils reflect this, talking enthusiastically about the books they are currently reading.

The individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified clearly in Pupil Profiles. Teaching assistants draw on these effectively, applying specific strategies to support pupils with more complex SEND. However, teachers do not always identify when pupils with SEND require further adaptation of explanations or learning activities. Where this happens, it hinders pupils' achievement.

Pupils' attendance is a high priority. The school is taking robust action to improve the attendance of individuals who miss a lot of school. Pupils' absence is tracked closely, with effective action being taken in cases where absence increases. This approach is bearing fruit in reducing the number of pupils who are regularly absent.

Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of behaviour. This begins in the early years, when children learn important routines that help them learn. Pupils know the rules well and uphold them keenly around the school. Across lessons, behaviour is calm and orderly. Pupils focus on completing learning activities and willingly share their ideas in discussions. Older pupils act as role models, helping others whenever possible.

The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. The school broadens pupils' horizons, encouraging them to be curious about local and national issues. Pupils explore their views about these and enjoy helping to make a difference through their community projects. The school strongly promotes pupils' well-being. They learn different ways to manage their emotions, support others and keep safe. Pupils learn how to contribute to the school community, from small acts of kindness to leadership roles. These include being part of the school council where they help shape changes in the school.

The school is taking effective action to improve curriculum thinking and teaching. The multi-academy trust is working closely with the school, providing targeted support that helps drive improvement. Governors robustly challenge the progress made with this. Staff understand the need for changes and appreciate efforts to keep their workload manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not support pupils in building secure knowledge over time. This means pupils do not develop or retain an understanding of the important knowledge in these subjects. The school needs to ensure that, in these subjects, the order in which important knowledge is taught and revisited supports pupils in knowing and remembering more over time.
- In some subjects, there is variation in how well teaching develops pupils' understanding or supports them to retain knowledge. This means pupils do not always develop a secure understanding of new ideas and struggle to recall important earlier learning. The school needs to embed its chosen pedagogical approaches so that these support pupils in developing and retaining secure understanding.
- When teachers identify areas where pupils have weaker knowledge, this is not always being addressed. This means that pupils can continue to apply incorrect thinking. The school needs to ensure that when pupils have incorrect understanding, this is corrected by teachers across all subjects.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140474
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10341767
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kathy Winrow
CEO of the trust	Anne Dellar
Headteacher	Donna Blake
Website	www.groveprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxford. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2024.
- The governing body manages before-school childcare provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, subject leaders, and teachers. The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing board, the trust's chief executive officer, and the chair of the board of trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also looked at the curriculums in writing and computing.
- The inspectors observed break and lunchtime activities.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school. They looked at the school development plan.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Phillip Blagg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Hillyard

Ofsted Inspector

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