

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Grovelands Community Primary School

Dunbar Drive, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 3UW

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 June 2025

Outcome

Grovelands Community Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this school's welcoming and supportive environment. They embrace the school's high expectations, which are instilled from the start of the Nursery Year. Historic published data in key stage 2 does not reflect how well pupils are now achieving. Current pupils are learning well and making good progress through the planned curriculum. They achieve well and are ready for the next stage in their education.

Relationships between pupils and staff are full of mutual respect. Staff establish clear behaviour routines that are consistently upheld throughout the day. Pupils behave well, conducting themselves with calmness, consideration and responsibility in lessons and around the school. Pupils engage in learning enthusiastically, collaborate effectively with their peers and strive to meet the school's high standards for behaviour.

Staff are proactive in building pupils' confidence, arranging activities such as taking part in performances, fundraising for charities and visiting the local senior citizens' centre. The school builds pupils' aspirations by linking their interests to possible future career choices. Pupils trust their teachers implicitly, knowing they can turn to them for guidance and support or simply to share a worry. They learn the importance of treating everyone with kindness and fairness, creating a school environment where all feel welcomed and valued.

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

The school has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum that incorporates pupils' interests and features of the local area. Children get off to an excellent start in the school's nursery. They enjoy exploring and learning through the nursery's stimulating

environment and are well prepared for the Reception Year. The most important knowledge and skills are precisely set out in many curriculum subjects. The school has further refined the reading, writing and mathematics curriculum. Staff know precisely what pupils must understand in these subjects. Staff have secure subject knowledge. They model new ideas well. Staff notice any gaps in pupils' understanding and support them to catch up quickly. As a result, pupils now progress through the curriculum from the early years to Year 6 securely in these subjects.

In some of the wider curriculum subjects, the most important knowledge has not been precisely identified. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their understanding in these subjects and do not achieve as well as they could. Additionally, in some wider curriculum subjects, the work that pupils are given is sometimes too easy or too hard. Adaptations to teaching or resources are not designed well enough in every wider curriculum subject for pupils to access the learning or understand it in greater depth.

The school has well-established systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Ambitions are high for pupils with SEND, who access the same curriculum as their peers.

Reading is prioritised and taught well. As soon as children start in the Nursery Year, they develop listening and communication skills through hearing stories, songs and rhymes. In the Reception Year, children learn the sounds that letters make and take pride in writing them independently. Staff quickly identify any pupils who need support with reading and help them to keep up in lessons or to catch up through additional teaching in small groups. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of high-quality books by different authors to encourage strong independent reading habits. By the end of Year 2 most pupils are confident readers, ready for key stage 2.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are equipped with the skills to identify and manage their emotions effectively. This helps them to develop strong behaviour for learning, and they focus well during lessons.

The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. Outdoor learning is embedded meaningfully within the curriculum, with hands-on experiences such as animal and plant care at the school's farm. Enrichment activities, including educational trips and guest visits, provide valuable real-world insights that deepen pupils' academic understanding. The school's diverse range of extracurricular activities contributes to pupils' social development, strengthening friendships and building confidence.

The school does everything it can to improve pupils' attendance. Proactive interventions support pupils at risk of absenteeism well. The school helps families to overcome any barriers to pupils' attendance.

The school prioritises pupils and invests in initiatives that will benefit pupils most. The school makes sure that staff are well equipped to achieve the school's ambitious vision. Governors carry out their statutory duties well. They support staff well-being. The school ensures that changes to working practice do not increase staff's workload.

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 wider curriculum subjects, the most important knowledge has not been clearly identified. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their understanding, and they do not progress through the curriculum as securely as they could. The school should ensure that staff know precisely what to teach in the foundation subjects so that pupils achieve equally highly across the whole curriculum.
- Sometimes, in wider curriculum subjects, the work that pupils are given is too easy or too hard. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should support staff to develop activities and adaptations to teaching that enable pupils to access the curriculum or learn at greater depth.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2020.

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	114393
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10379745
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	699
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Gietzen
Executive Headteacher	Jon Goulding
Website	www.grovelands-school.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers nursery provision for children from the age of two years.
- The school has an additional resource provision for up to 17 pupils with autistic spectrum condition.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school and other senior leaders. They also met with representatives from the local governing body and the local authority.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors met with groups of staff. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gillian Lovatt-Young

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025