

Grange Infants' School

Delamere Drive, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 4XE

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, there has been instability in leadership. This, combined with weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, has led to a decline in the school's effectiveness and, consequently, pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have not ensured that initiatives put in place to raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are implemented consistently across different classes and subjects. As a result, although improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet good.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are leading to rates of pupils' progress that remain too variable. This is especially the case in writing and mathematics. There is also variability in the progress being made by different groups of pupils, such as the most able and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The school's development plans, including those for disadvantaged pupils, lack precision and are not focused on the impact that actions are intended to have on pupils' outcomes. This is limiting the ability of leaders and governors to check the effectiveness of these plans and to hold staff to account with sufficient rigour.
- The quality of early years provision requires improvement. Planned activities do not routinely enable children to demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding above those expected for their age. This weakens the progress of the most able children.
- The school's records of the safeguarding training that leaders have received lack rigour. Governors have not checked that leaders have the level of safeguarding training required for their roles, or when this is due to be updated.

The school has the following strengths

- The head of school leads with passion and determination. She has had a demonstrable impact on the school's culture and staff morale.
- Across the school, pupils read with enjoyment and the skills appropriate for their age. The teaching of phonics is effective.
- Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good. They are courteous and respectful of each other and adults. Attendance is above national comparators.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, consequently, pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and the expectations for their year group
 - teachers implement agreed school policies and practices consistently and accurately
 - teachers routinely use their knowledge of what pupils can do to plan learning that meets their needs
 - teachers and other adults provide low-prior-attaining pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities with appropriate levels of support, including that which is identified in pupils' personal plans.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to check the effectiveness of school policies and practices and their implementation
 - senior leaders provide middle leaders with opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their subjects
 - leaders are rigorous in holding staff to account for the quality of their practice and the impact it is having on pupils' outcomes
 - self-evaluation assesses the quality of provision and the impact it is having on pupils' outcomes
 - leaders link development planning, including that for additional spending, firmly to pupils' outcomes and devise robust systems to evaluate and measure the impact of their actions
 - safeguarding records accurately identify the training that leaders have received and when this needs to be renewed.
- Improve the quality of early years provision, by:
 - making effective use of other adults to support children's learning
 - planning activities for children's independent play that enable the most able to demonstrate understanding, knowledge and skills above those typically expected for their age
 - providing greater opportunities for children to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills in their independent play.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since becoming part of the Grange Federation, there has been significant turbulence in the leadership of the school. This instability has led to weaknesses in the quality of teaching and, ultimately, a decline in pupils' outcomes in both early years and across key stage 1.
- Over time, the work of federation leaders and governors has not had sufficient focus on the quality of provision in the infants' school. Until recently, they have not addressed the decline in standards with the required level of urgency or rigour.
- The head of school has brought much-needed stability, as well as a sense of purpose. She is passionate and dedicated and leads the school with a resolute belief that every pupil, regardless of their background, can and will achieve. Nonetheless, a number of the initiatives that leaders have introduced are not yet implemented consistently across different subjects or year groups. Therefore, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes remain too variable.
- Leaders and governors do not have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is particularly the case with regard to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders are not checking how effectively new initiatives are being implemented in classrooms, or the impact these are having on pupils' outcomes. Where monitoring is taking place, it lacks focus and does not provide leaders with the information they require to hold staff to account.
- The school's improvement plans lack precision. While, in the main, leaders focus on the appropriate areas, the criteria by which success will be measured lack clarity. Additionally, leaders evaluate plans in terms of whether an action has taken place rather than the impact it has had on raising pupils' outcomes. This is slowing the pace of school improvement.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of pupils' attainment in relation to the expectations for their age. They make effective use of this information to identify those who require additional support. However, across the school, there is insufficient focus on the progress pupils are making from their starting points. Expectations are too low, especially for those pupils capable of reaching the higher standards.
- The leaders of English and mathematics are developing their skills and expertise. They have identified what needs to be done to raise standards in their subjects and have put in place an appropriate range of strategies. Senior leaders have not, however, ensured that subject leaders are monitoring how effectively teachers are implementing newly introduced initiatives with sufficient rigour. Similarly, senior leaders are not checking the quality of subject leaders' classroom practice to ensure that these leaders are, themselves, modelling best practice.
- Leaders are making effective use of pupil premium funding to raise outcomes for the school's most vulnerable pupils. The head of school has an accurate understanding of the needs of each pupil and their families. She ensures that support is tailored to meet individual need and is reducing the barriers that pupils face to their learning.
- Leaders use the sport premium funding to develop staff expertise and confidence.

External sports coaches provide pupils with high-quality physical education (PE) lessons and extra-curricular opportunities. However, there is a lack of strategic oversight in the spending of additional funds. For example, leaders have not evaluated the impact that sport premium funding is having on the quality of PE teaching or pupils' outcomes.

- The special educational needs coordinator has a secure understanding of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and their needs. She has put in place individual plans for these pupils which are appropriate and matched to their needs. However, the implementation of these plans or the impact they are having on pupils' outcomes is not monitored. Inspection evidence highlighted that, in some cases, teachers are not providing pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities with the support which has been identified in their plans. This is weakening their progress.
- The head of school has ensured that the curriculum is providing pupils with appropriate learning experiences across a range of subjects. Teachers plan activities which develop both knowledge and skills of pupils. However, over time, leaders have been too slow to react to changes in the 2014 national curriculum. Consequently, they have not adapted the curriculum sufficiently well to take account of the changes and raised expectations. This has led to gaps in pupils' understanding as well as in teachers' subject knowledge.
- Parents and carers are positive about the school. They recognise that there have been previous weaknesses, especially in leadership, but talk highly about how the school is being led currently. Parents were particularly keen to talk about improvements made by the head of school, for example in home/school communications.
- The school has received little external support since the previous inspection. Leaders have commissioned their own reviews to evaluate the school's performance. The local authority has provided light-touch support as a result of the school's previous Ofsted rating. However, a lack of in-depth external scrutiny since the previous inspection has contributed to the decline in the school's performance.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, governors have not addressed a decline in the school's effectiveness with sufficient urgency or rigour. They have not maintained a knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses or kept themselves up to date with best practice. Minutes of governing body meetings show that, within the Grange Federation, the work of governors has not had a sufficient focus on the infants' school.
- Governors have dealt effectively with turbulence in the leadership of the school. This has ensured that there is now stability in leadership and a clear strategic plan for the future. The chair of the governing body has restructured the leadership of the governing body so that it mirrors that of the school. This is enabling governors to gather in-depth knowledge about the school, as well as providing leaders with greater levels of challenge and support.
- Governors' strategic oversight of the spending of additional funds lacks attention to detail and is not compliant with statutory requirements. For example, governors do not have a precise understanding of the impact that specific actions have on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. This limits their ability to evaluate the effectiveness of spending and make informed choices on future provision.

- Individual governors are reflective and determined to do the best they can for the school's pupils. They have carried out an audit of their own strengths and weaknesses and put in place bespoke training to develop their expertise.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say they feel safe in school. This was a view shared by every parent who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The head of school, who is also the designated leader for safeguarding, has made the welfare of pupils a top priority. She has a detailed understanding of pupils' vulnerabilities and goes the extra mile to ensure that these pupils and their families receive the support they require. Work with external agencies is strong. This includes for those pupils who have child protection or child in need plans.
- The head of school has ensured that all staff have received the required level of training. Staff have a secure understanding of their responsibilities. They talk knowledgeably about the different signs of abuse they need to look out for and are clear about what they need to do should they have any concerns.
- Governors have not ensured that there are systems for recording the safeguarding training undertaken by leaders. Additionally, they do not routinely confirm that leaders have the required level of training for their role, for example by asking for certificates. This has resulted in governors being unclear as to what training is in place and when it needs to be renewed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable between different classes and subjects. Observations of learning and evaluations of pupils' books show that teachers are not implementing school policies with accuracy or consistency. Consequently, although improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet good.
- Teachers are not using their knowledge of what pupils can already do to plan learning that meets their needs. This is especially the case for the most able pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. For the most able, not all teachers ensure that the activities pupils complete contain sufficient challenge. For those pupils with additional needs or lower starting points, work is often too difficult and adults do not provide appropriate levels of support. This is weakening the progress of these groups of pupils.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers and other adults have secure subject knowledge and use questioning to explore and deepen pupils' understanding. They make their expectations clear and pupils know what they need to do and how to improve their work. The lack of focused monitoring has meant that this best practice is not identified or replicated across the school.
- Teachers' application of the school's feedback policy is inconsistent and, too often, teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions effectively. This leads to pupils repeating their mistakes, sometimes over a long period of time.
- The school's focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills is proving

successful. Pupils are articulate and eager to discuss their learning with each other and with adults. In mathematics, teachers encourage pupils to explain whether they 'support or challenge' each other's work. This is developing their confidence, as well as their ability to reason and think deeply about their mathematics.

- The teaching of reading and phonics is a strength. Pupils are keen readers and apply their knowledge of phonics confidently and accurately. Teachers and other adults use questioning effectively to explore pupils' comprehension and develop higher-order reading skills such as deduction and inference. Teachers have a well-developed understanding of effective phonics teaching. This is leading to a greater proportion of younger pupils reading at, or above, the expectations for their age.
- Teachers ensure that pupils get opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum. The development of pupils' editing skills is leading to pupils producing writing of a good quality, although it is not always clear how much of this has been done independently. In subjects other than English, teachers' expectations for the quality of writing is more variable.
- In mathematics, teachers plan sequences of learning which are logical and sequential. This enables pupils to develop their conceptual understanding. In each lesson, teachers give pupils a choice of challenges which vary in their level of difficulty. While these are matched to pupils' needs, teachers do not give pupils the guidance they require to choose the most appropriate task. For example, during the inspection, some of the most able Year 2 pupils were cutting out coins. They told an inspector that they had chosen this task, not because it was challenging but because 'it looked the most fun'. Additionally, a lower-prior-attaining pupil was attempting a task that was clearly too difficult for her. This was, she said, because she liked to 'challenge herself'. This is weakening the progress of pupils.
- Reasoning activities are not used consistently to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding. In line with school policy, teachers provide all pupils with regular opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and to record their thinking. However, work in pupils' books shows that only the most able pupils are regularly completing these tasks and, when they do, teachers are not ensuring that their responses have the required level of precision.
- The impact of teaching assistants on pupils' outcomes is variable. Where teaching assistants provide one-to-one support for pupils with education, health and care plans, they are highly effective. They demonstrate good skills and have a detailed understanding of each pupil's needs. This leads to these pupils making strong progress towards their personal targets. Teachers do not provide teaching assistants who are not linked to individual pupils with sufficient direction or guidance. As a result, they are less effective in providing lower-prior-attaining pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities with the support they require.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, articulate and exhibit pride in their school. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils feel safe. Those spoken with during the inspection said they had a trusted adult in school. They were confident that should they have a problem it would be dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils say that bullying hardly ever happens.
- Pupils feel they are listened to and that adults respect their opinions. Pupils are proud of the contribution they make to school life. For example, the buddy bench and the clubs that pupils run, such as chess.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the need to stay healthy. They were able to talk to inspectors about the importance of a balanced diet and could describe how to keep themselves safe in the sun. For example, pupils, including those in Reception, explained that they needed to wear a hat, stay in the shade and keep themselves hydrated. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of how to stay safe when working on computers or hand-held devices.
- Leaders have put in place a number of strategies to promote pupils' social and emotional mental health. Initiatives such as the nurture group are proving effective at enabling pupils to identify their emotions and talk about them in a safe, supportive environment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and at break and lunchtimes. The lunch hall is a sociable environment where pupils sit and talk together. Outside, older pupils play with the younger ones and involve them in their games.
- In lessons, pupils generally behave appropriately. They listen attentively to each other and to adults. Pupils show pride in their work and the majority carry out tasks diligently and with high levels of concentration.
- Attendance is above the national average. This is the case for the majority of key groups, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The attendance of some disadvantaged pupils remains below leaders' expectations. Where this is case, leaders, including the 'children's champion', have put in place effective strategies to support these pupils and their families.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, instability in leadership, combined with unresolved weaknesses in the quality of teaching, have led to a decline in pupils' outcomes. This has been the case in early years as well as key stage 1.
- At key stage 1, published assessment information for 2017 showed an improvement in pupils' attainment, especially in reading and writing. Outcomes in mathematics remained below national comparators. This was due to longstanding gaps in pupils' conceptual understanding.

- Assessment information for pupils currently in the school is stronger again. Data for pupils at the end of Year 2 indicates that in reading, writing and mathematics the proportions of pupils working at the expected standard are on track to be at least in line with national averages. Similarly, the proportions working above these expectations are on track to exceed national averages. Inspection evidence supports the school's judgements.
- While the attainment of pupils in Year 2 shows improvement, the work in pupils' writing and mathematics books shows that a number of children are still not making the strong progress they are capable of. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, lower-prior-attaining pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. There are also large differences in the progress being made by pupils in different classes.
- The actions of the head of school in reducing barriers to learning are resulting in improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, although the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils require improvement they are in line with other pupils in the school.
- In Year 1, phonics outcomes continue to rise in line with the quality of teaching. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard is higher than in previous years and is set to be above the national average.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics pupils acquire knowledge and skills in line with expectations for the age. As a result, they are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of provision in the early years is not yet good. Teachers do not ensure that the activities they plan for children's independent learning are linked closely enough to the early years curriculum. For example, while many of the activities are engaging and exciting, they lack purpose and do not enable children to demonstrate or practise skills from across different areas of learning. Additionally, teaching assistants are not well directed. This is weakening children's progress, especially that of the most able.
- The leadership of early years is not sufficiently strong. Leaders do not have an accurate view of the quality of provision. They have not identified key weaknesses and, as a result, have not put in place the required improvements or training. For example, leaders have not ensured that adults working in early years have the knowledge or skills required to support and develop children's learning.
- The majority of children join the school with knowledge and skills broadly in line with those typical for their age. A number of children have skills above this level. During their time in the Reception Year, children make progress so that the proportion reaching a good level of development is slightly above the national average.
- Over the past three years, the proportions of children exceeding the early learning goals in reading, writing and mathematics have been below national averages. This has not represented strong progress from children's starting points. Proportions are set to be higher this year. Nonetheless, observations of learning and evaluations of children's work, demonstrate that rates of progress are not yet strong. This is particularly the

case for the most able children.

- A number of children demonstrate levels of concentration and resilience below those found typically for their age. Teachers provide a balance of activities which children choose for themselves, but many of these do not hold children's focus for long. Consequently, children flit from activity to activity, which weakens their learning.
- In adult-led activities, teachers demonstrate high expectations and develop children's reading, writing and mathematics skills through small-group sessions. These are well planned and matched to children's needs. However, teachers do not routinely provide children with opportunities to practise these skills through their independent play.
- Teachers and other adults foster positive relationships with children. Similarly, children show care and consideration towards each other. Children are well behaved and enjoy the activities planned.
- Parents are positive about the early years provision. They say that transitions into the school are well managed and that parents are kept well informed. Parents feel that they receive regular information about their children's progress and how they can support learning at home.
- All adults ensure that children are kept safe and welfare requirements are met. Adults establish clear routines which children follow readily.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 126208 |
| Local authority | Swindon |
| Inspection number | 10033163 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 249 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Chris Speller |
| Head of school | Louise Dance |
| Executive headteacher | Louise Seavill |
| Telephone number | 01793 822357 |
| Website | www.grangefederation.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@grangefederation.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6–7 February 2007 |

Information about this school

- Grange Infants' School is a larger-than-average-sized infant school. There are nine classes – three per year group.
- The school is part of the Grange Federation, together with Grange Junior School. Each school is led by a head of school and they share an executive headteacher and governing body.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national

average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below that found nationally.

- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out as a result of Ofsted's risk assessment procedures for exempt schools. This process identified that standards since the previous inspection had declined.
- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. A number of these visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- Discussions were held with school leaders; staff; members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body; and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents during the inspection and took account of 33 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Steph Matthews | Ofsted Inspector |
| Paula Marsh | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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