

Grange Junior School

Grange Drive, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 4JY

Inspection dates

10–11 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have failed to address fundamental weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Pupils are not well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Frequent changes in leadership have had a destabilising effect that has impeded necessary improvements to the school.
- Leaders lack rigour and ambition in holding teachers to account. As a result, the quality of education is poor.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is overly generous and inaccurate. Monitoring has not been sufficiently focused on the right areas of improvement.
- Support for vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils is weak. Consequently, too many of these pupils do not achieve well.
- Leaders do not promote equalities effectively. Too often, boys dominate a range of situations, including breaktimes, which mars the enjoyment or entitlement of girls.
- Leaders have not received the training they need to carry out their roles effectively. They do not currently have the skills or capacity to secure improvement.
- Leaders have failed to secure the confidence of too many parents. Poor communication and concerns about pupils' behaviour are prevalent.
- Teachers do not have high expectations of pupils, including the most able. As a result, pupils fail to progress well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Weaknesses in the curriculum mean pupils are unable to apply what they learn across different subjects. Pupils lack the necessary independence and resilience to solve problems.
- Teachers do not use their assessments of what the pupils know to ensure that teaching builds on pupils' prior learning.
- Teachers do not make timely adjustments to activities to ensure that they meet different pupils' needs. This often prevents pupils from making the strong progress they need to do well.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils mostly conduct themselves well around school and in lessons.
- Teaching in a very small minority of classes is effective.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching to raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including for the most able
 - plan high-quality activities which deepen pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum
 - use information from their assessments precisely to build quickly on pupils' previous learning
 - adjust plans at timely intervals to ensure that activities meet the needs of all pupils in lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of all leaders, including middle leadership and governors, by:
 - holding teachers and other adults stringently to account with rigour and high ambitions for the pupils to succeed
 - re-evaluating and amending strategies for supporting the most vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that information from monitoring and evaluation of teaching is used effectively to raise pupils' achievement.
 - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of those in leadership posts
 - implementing robust and effective professional development to raise the expertise and effectiveness of staff, particularly leaders and teachers
 - improving relationships with parents and carers so that all families feel well supported and that the school listens to their views.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - securing a school ethos and culture for promoting equality, particularly for girls
 - improving pupils' independence and resilience so that they work effectively across different subjects, situations and settings
 - ensuring that pupils' behaviour is consistently good, particularly that of boys at breaktimes.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have taken too long to tackle the weaknesses found at the previous inspection. Their plans and actions have lacked the precision and rigour needed to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, too many pupils are not well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Frequent changes in leadership have acted as a barrier to the school making necessary improvements. For example, successive changes of the executive headteacher have destabilised the leadership team. Too much change has distracted leaders from implementing and following coherent plans for improvement.
- Leaders' judgements of the school's effectiveness are overly generous and inaccurate. This has contributed to the school's decline because it has resulted in leaders not identifying or tackling weaknesses quickly enough.
- Leaders lack rigour and ambition in holding teachers to account. Systematic arrangements such as staff appraisals and meetings to discuss pupils' progress have had too little impact on improving teaching and learning over time.
- The strategies for using additional funding the school receives as part of the pupil premium and for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are weak. They do not contain sufficient detail or precision on what pupils need to do to be successful and in the planned actions to overcome barriers that they face. As a result, these pupils are not making enough progress and persistently underperform.
- Leaders do not promote equality sufficiently. In particular, there are times when girls are marginalised. For example, boys' behaviour dictates activities at breaktimes. The curriculum fails to provide the right encouragement for girls to feel valued and well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have not ensured that middle leadership and subject leadership are effective. Furthermore, ambiguity in leadership roles and responsibilities impede the progress and development of some leaders' work and actions.
- Staff training does not equip school staff with the skills and expertise they need to improve their teaching. For example, leaders' monitoring of teaching concentrates too much on staff's compliance to school policies rather than evaluating the impact that teaching has on improving pupils' learning and outcomes.
- Around half of parents who contributed their views, feel that the school is not well led and managed. These parents express their frustration that poor communication and incidents of bullying are not well handled or resolved quickly enough.
- The curriculum is not well designed or sufficiently evaluated to ensure that pupils make strong progress in the range of subjects. This limits their readiness for future learning. However, there is a diverse range of activities that cover the foundation subjects, as well as extra-curricular clubs, which pupils enjoy.
- Since September 2018, leaders have been receiving external support through the White Horse Federation (WHF). Immediate actions taken to redraft improvement

priorities are starting to tackle some of the identified weaknesses quickly. However, it is too early to see notable improvements to whole-school effectiveness.

- Leaders ensure that there is a suitable range of activities and opportunities to deepen pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the school's involvement in the 'Young Carers' initiative has led to national accreditation. As a result, pupils have avenues to learn about the importance of British values, including tolerance and respect.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed to work in the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been sufficiently probing or stringent in holding leaders to account. They have been too accepting of the evaluations and judgements made by senior leaders. Consequently, the school has failed to make the rapid and sustained improvements needed to improve the quality of education.
- Governors' actions, including their monitoring visits and checks, are not well planned to bring about the desired impact. Their actions are not rigorous or focused on addressing the fundamental issues in the school. As a result, improvements are too slow or fragile.
- Over time, governors have failed to gain the knowledge they need to challenge leaders successfully. The most recent minutes of their meetings show that they are now starting to ask more pertinent questions but, so far, there is limited impact.
- Governors have been too slow to recognise the serious flaws in the school. They did commission external reviews. However, these failed to provide governors with the help and evaluation of the school's performance they needed to understand the gravity of the school's situation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are diligent in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Adults understand and know what to do should they have a concern.
- Leaders are rigorous in their safeguarding duties. Leaders ensure that concerns are referred swiftly to the appropriate authorities to safeguard pupils. They follow advice and challenge other professional agencies when they feel this is necessary. As a result, vulnerable pupils receive timely intervention and support when this is needed.
- The school's processes and systems for safeguarding are fit for purpose. However, at the point of the inspection some administrative records and policies were not up to date.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and trust staff. They know how to stay safe in different situations and settings. For example, how to report suspicious activity when working online and to withhold personal information about themselves.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not have high expectations of pupils, including the most able. As a result, they do not stretch pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics. This also leaves too many pupils under-prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers fail to ensure that pupils apply their skills, knowledge and understanding effectively across the curriculum. Pupils are often overly dependent on adult direction and guidance. This reduces pupils' ability to work on their own to solve problems in varied contexts and situations.
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' prior learning well enough. Sometimes teachers plan work that is too easy or too hard. Teachers do not consider or identify quickly enough pupils' individual needs to enable them to achieve well. This restricts the progress that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and lower-achieving pupils make.
- Pupils do not consistently understand the purpose of a lesson or concepts taught. This means pupils do not know when they are successful or what they need to learn next. This is a further barrier to pupils' learning and enjoyment in lessons.
- Teachers and additional adults do not have sufficiently strong subject knowledge to intervene or adjust activities to meet pupils' specific needs. For example, pupils who have an education, health and care plan do not benefit from having reasonable adjustments made to their work. This significantly impairs pupils' rates of progress.
- The teaching of reading lacks precision and clarity. Teachers do not plan frequent opportunities for pupils to be able to practise and develop their reading skills. Consequently, those pupils who find reading difficult are not well supported to make the progress they need to catch up.
- Teachers correctly identify pupils who need additional support. Some tailored 'catch-up' programmes are beginning to work well. However, some adults leading interventions have weak subject knowledge. This hinders the progress that some pupils make.
- In a very small minority of classes, the quality of teaching is strong. In these cases, teachers make accurate assessments and use information appropriately to adapt activities to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning and make tangible progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils lack the resilience they need to be effective learners. They find it difficult to transfer skills and knowledge between subjects. This further slows pupils' progress and their ability to make wider links across the curriculum.

- The majority of pupils say that they feel safe. The school is typically harmonious and orderly. However, some pupils have concerns about boisterous behaviour at breaktimes or feel that staff do not deal with incidents of bullying quickly. On occasions, these can have an unsettling effect on pupils' enjoyment.
- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to take part in the running of its day-to-day business. For example, pupils enjoy having responsibilities, such as being school councillors or young carers. They recognise how these roles are fundamental to improving the daily experience and lives of other pupils and those around them.
- Pupils enjoy having their achievements celebrated, such as when they receive a certificate for being a 'lead learner'. This helps pupils to know what positive attitudes and good learning habits look like. As a result, most pupils settle quickly into lessons and are learning how to cooperate with each other to accomplish tasks.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' transition and movement at the start and end of the school day are not consistently well managed. These weaknesses create tension and mar the start of the school day for some pupils.
- Pupils are typically polite and respectful towards each other. Many pupils conduct themselves well around school. However, there are occasions when boys dominate social situations, which restricts the enjoyment of others, particularly girls.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders have worked effectively to reduce the proportions of pupils who are persistently absent. However, the rates of absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are too high and remain above the national average.
- The number of pupil exclusions has reduced. Following an exclusion, leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate care and guidance. This helps pupils to reintegrate quickly.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Despite improvements in 2018, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics remains poor, including that of current pupils. The progress of specific groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, remains too weak.
- In 2017, the school was in the lowest 5% for progress in mathematics and writing. In 2018, pupils' progress remains poor, particularly in writing.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved but is still too low. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Work in current pupils' books confirms that writing standards are poor. Teachers' expectations of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are not high enough. This

leads to sub-standard outcomes seen in pupils' independent writing across the range of subjects, for example in science books.

- In mathematics, pupils' reasoning and understanding of core concepts such as place value are not secure. Teachers fail to tackle pupils' misconceptions. Consequently, pupils' progress stalls.
- Pupils are able to read text fluently and with speed over the page. However, they do not have the breadth of vocabulary that is expected of them. This hinders their understanding and enjoyment of reading. In particular, lower-achieving pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities do not receive the support they need and so find it difficult to read well.
- The achievement of girls at the school compared to girls' achievement nationally is poor, particularly in mathematics. Current work in books shows that too many girls fail to gain ground quickly. Furthermore, the most able girls are not making sufficient progress to reach the highest standards.
- Lower-achieving boys are slow to catch up in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are now identifying pupils who are at risk of under-achievement. However, the impact of new initiatives is yet to be seen.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do not make consistently strong progress. As a result, their progress is too inconsistent across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' handwriting has improved well. Pupils take pride in presenting written work for display and publication. They edit and improve their writing and typically write neatly, legibly and with fluency.

School details

Unique reference number	126207
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10053207

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Speller
Head of school	Tracy Knight
Telephone number	01793 822405
Website	www.grangefederation.co.uk
Email address	admin@grangefederation.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 March 2016

Information about this school

- Grange Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The school is part of the Grange Federation, which also includes Grange Infant school. The governing body runs both schools.
- The school is subject to an academy order. It is due to be sponsored shortly by the WHF.
- The interim executive headteacher is also the chief executive officer (CEO) of the WHF.

- The school was judged as requiring improvement in its previous two full inspections, which were in March 2016 and January 2014.
- Information relating to the Equalities Act 2010 is not found or updated on the school's website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons in all classes across the school. They were sometimes accompanied by the head of school.
- Discussions took place with the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, and subject leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with the CEO of the WHF and a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors gained the views of pupils throughout the inspection, including during discussions at breaktimes.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books to establish the current quality of work and standards of current pupils in books.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 5 and 6. They also scrutinised pupils' reading records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and parents to seek their views of the school. They considered the 45 responses to Parent View and the corresponding free-texts comments. They took into account information from staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents which included minutes of meetings, executive headteacher reports, reports of governors' visits to the school, school improvement plans and information relating to behaviour, safety and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ben Jordan	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Marsh	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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