

# The Grove School

Newcastle Road, Market Drayton, Shropshire TF9 1HF

## Inspection dates

5–6 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Too many pupils are not making enough progress in a range of subjects. Overall attainment by the end of Year 11 is not sufficiently high.
- In a number of subjects, pupils do not perform as well as they could be expected to because teaching is not consistently good.
- Leaders promote a culture of high expectations. However, this culture has not translated into good outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers do not make sufficient use of information they gather from pupils' work to provide them with an appropriate level of challenge.
- Pupils are not sufficiently focused on their work. When teaching fails to capture their interest, some pupils are reluctant to engage in the learning activities and become distracted.
- The new faculty directors and their deputies have not yet had a sufficient impact in ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across their respective areas.
- Due to high staff turnover since the previous inspection and challenges recruiting good teachers, improvements in the school have slowed.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is not complacent and she implements necessary changes to develop the quality of teaching and learning. Her actions led to an improvement in outcomes in 2016.
- The headteacher has analysed the causes of the decline in outcomes in 2017 and is addressing them swiftly.
- Governors provide effective challenge and support. They are working closely with leaders to address the issues that affected the school's performance last year.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes are good because learners continue to make good progress and enjoy their education. The sixth form is well led and the quality of teaching is good.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that the most effective practice that exists in the school is replicated across subject areas and across the curriculum
  - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve across all subjects
  - insisting that pupils develop their answers, using accurate terminology
  - using information about pupils' prior learning to provide them with work that matches their ability and accelerates their progress
  - ensuring that pupils are motivated, focused and on task.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
  - encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own learning
  - embedding support strategies for attendance, so that pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, attend school more regularly.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that faculty directors and their deputies have a deeper impact on improving teaching, learning and assessment
  - ensuring that actions taken deliver rapid improvements in outcomes across key stages and across the curriculum
  - continuing to develop close collaboration with other schools to provide teachers with broader opportunities to share their teaching practices and their evaluation of pupils' work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The headteacher and other leaders have not been successful in securing consistent improvements in the school. Some of the headteacher's initial actions had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and outcomes. However, the most recent set of GCSE results shows that this improvement is fragile. She is determined to improve the quality of education and has a clear focus on high expectations of pupils and staff.
- To have more rigorous accountability systems in place, the headteacher has reorganised the senior leadership team and has appointed two new assistant headteachers who are respectively in charge of achievement for disadvantaged students and students' attitudes to learning. She has also created a new faculty structure, with directors and deputy directors who have direct responsibility for the quality of teaching. However, the impact of these new structures is not yet seen in sufficient improvements to teaching.
- Due to unforeseen circumstances, there has been a large turnover of staff over the last two years. Recruiting effective new teachers has proved very difficult for the school. Not all members of staff that left have been replaced. As a result, leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been slowed down and made more difficult to follow up.
- Leaders acknowledge that more needs to be done to secure the initial improvements that were taking place at the time of the previous inspection. This is particularly true for the provision of support for groups of pupils, especially boys, who are at risk of underachieving. Since the start of this academic year, groups who are identified by checks on pupils' progress are the focus of heightened support.
- Senior leaders clearly identify where underachievement occurs and hold teachers to account. However, it is too early to see measurable impact.
- Leaders have well-thought-through strategies to support disadvantaged pupils. The school provides specific help and focused activities, not only to promote academic progress, but also wider opportunities to pupils through the use of the pupil premium funding. Past outcomes show these support activities are having an impact and there has been a trend of diminishing differences in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.
- The school uses the catch-up premium for Year 7 pupils in English and mathematics successfully. There is a rigorous evaluation of pupils' needs when they join the school. The school's data shows that a large proportion of pupils supported by the funding make good progress in their numeracy and literacy skills.
- Funding to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is also used effectively. Pupils are supported by experienced and knowledgeable staff who provide effective individual support. The tracking of the impact of interventions is effective and changes are made according to pupils' evolving needs. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making progress which is in line with that of other pupils.

- Leaders have reviewed and redesigned the curriculum to make it more relevant to the pupils. They have introduced more flexibility, with more choices for pupils of different abilities with the introduction of more practical subjects. There is an appropriate range and balance of subjects to suit pupils' preferences and abilities. These changes were accompanied by a move to a two-year key stage 3 and three-year key stage 4 to address issues with motivation in Year 9. There is also a range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits to enrich the learning experience of pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well catered for through the curriculum, especially in the humanities subjects and in religious education. Assemblies and special events, as well as visits organised throughout the year, promote key values. Pupils have a good understanding of tolerance and respect for the rule of law, and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils receive comprehensive and impartial careers guidance. Most pupils have high aspirations and the vast majority proceed to appropriate education or training when leaving the school.
- The local authority supports the school effectively. Support for mathematics has had a positive impact and the continued work with weaker subjects is beneficial. Also beneficial is the school's participation in the Market Drayton Learning Partnership, which allows for a smoother transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are committed and skilled. However, they did not sufficiently question leaders' actions when issues with pupils' progress were identified in the run up to the GCSE examinations in 2017. This is not typical of the governors' usual sound grasp of progress data.
- There is a good balance of skills within the governing body. They have structures in place to gain first-hand knowledge of the quality of education the school provides. They keep up with developments in education. Link governors regularly visit the school to check with subject leaders and faculty directors that progress against the improvement plan's targets are being met.
- Governors take responsibility for their own training and this allows them to take a full part in the strategic direction of the school. They ensure that arrangements for managing the performance of leaders and teachers are fair, transparent and consistent with the school's improvement agenda. They monitor the impact of additional funding, including the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. They ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are in place and that leaders promote an effective culture of safeguarding.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff receive regular training and are informed of their duty of care. They are provided with the necessary guidance to be vigilant and empowered to support pupils who may be at risk. Records meet statutory requirements. The school works well with outside agencies, when required, to support pupils and their families. Pupils are taught to

identify and avoid risks, including those related to the use of the internet and social media. They are also made aware of the risks of radicalisation through the 'Prevent' duty programme.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching varies too much to support consistent high achievement. These fluctuations in the quality of teaching occur not only between subjects, but also within subject areas, especially where the turnover of staff is high. There is some effective teaching in the school, especially in physical education and, increasingly, in mathematics.
- The fact that, in some lessons, expectations are not in line with the culture leaders are trying to develop leads to some pupils lacking resilience and positive attitudes to learning. As a result, lesson time is not used productively because some pupils are slow to work independently and get easily distracted. In the worst cases, this can lead to low-level disruption that affects all pupils' learning.
- Teachers test pupils' skills and knowledge on a regular basis and set homework to provide further practice. However, teachers do not routinely use this information to plan activities that correspond to pupils' abilities. There are, therefore, occasions when the work pupils have to do in lessons is either too hard or too easy for them and does not allow them to make the progress they should make.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and often ask searching questions. However, they do not consistently insist on pupils developing their answers, using accurate terminology.
- Teachers do not always check that what they have explained was understood by all pupils before they ask them to complete a task. Consequently, some pupils are attempting to do work with having only a vague idea of what they are supposed to achieve.
- The new faculty structure and increased collaboration with other schools is starting to lead to a more rigorous testing of pupils' progress. Teachers compare the results of the tests they give pupils with colleagues from other schools to ensure that their evaluation of progress meets similar standards. Faculty directors are then required to check that the information gathered on pupils' progress is accurate. This practice encourages teachers to be more reflective and accountable for the progress of their pupils.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Some parents, and pupils, have reservations about the schools' ability to deal with issues that affect pupils' well-being. Although records show that all issues are dealt with effectively, leaders have failed to convince a minority of parents that the school promotes the welfare of their children effectively enough.

- While a majority of pupils want to learn, there is still a number of pupils who are not showing sufficient resilience and personal drive to learn. These pupils become distracted in lessons and do not sufficiently focus on their work.
- Pupils are confident and polite. The vast majority are proud of their school. Many pupils take part in extra-curricular activities and are involved in aspects of the school community. For example, some Year 10 pupils are supporting Year 8 pupils with their work in mathematics. Some pupils volunteer as 'anti-bullying ambassadors'.
- Pupils are clear about what constitutes bullying and know that they have to report it if it happens. They know which members of staff they need to approach if they have concerns. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in a range of situations. Pupils are aware that their community is very different from large urban multi-cultural communities. They are very receptive to the message of respect and tolerance for other faiths and cultures communicated in some subjects and in assemblies.
- The small number of pupils who attend an alternative provision instead of studying in the school are well looked after. The school's links with the alternative provision are strong and the progress, attendance, behaviour and welfare of pupils are closely monitored.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable and there are occasions when pupils get distracted, low-level disruption occurs and lesson time is not used productively.
- In discussions with inspectors, pupils said that there were occasions when their learning had been disrupted by other pupils. Some pupils complained that the high turnover of teachers had resulted in poor behaviour in some subjects. This is a complaint echoed by some parents.
- Attendance figures have improved over time, but issues remain, especially with the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which is still below the national average. The school follows up attendance issues rigorously. Leaders are developing the work they do with the five local authorities that pupils come from to deal with poor attendance. This work is still to have a sustained impact on improving attendance figures.
- The conduct of pupils around school and during breaktimes and lunchtimes is positive. Pupils are polite and show respect to each other and to adults. The school atmosphere is orderly and pupils get on well with each other.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Provisional results for the 2017 GCSE examinations show that the overall progress and attainment of pupils who left the main school in Year 11 were below the national averages. Progress was well below average in English and the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) core academic subjects at key stage 4. Progress in mathematics was below average, but not significantly.

- In 2016, GCSE results showed that there were improvements overall compared to 2015. There was clear improvement, with an increase in the proportion of pupils making progress in English, mathematics and the EBacc subjects.
- Some middle-ability pupils performed less well than pupils of similar abilities nationally. Middle- and higher-ability disadvantaged pupils achieved, on average, half a grade below average in English and mathematics, which was an improvement on 2015. Pupils who left the main school at the end of Year 11 in 2016 made progress that was broadly in line with the national average. The progress and attainment of the most able pupils were also broadly in line with pupils of similar abilities nationally.
- Leaders were aware that there were issues with the progress of some groups of pupils, especially boys, in the run up to the 2017 GCSE examinations. Intervention and support were put in place, but did not prevent the drop in examination results that happened.
- Following up on these issues, leaders are taking strong actions to ensure that outcomes for all groups of pupils improve rapidly. There are more rigorous systems in place to check pupils' progress and to ensure that information on progress is reliable. Faculty directors, their deputies and progress leaders are tasked to ensure that signs of underachievement are identified and addressed as early as possible.
- The progress of the most able pupils has not been an issue historically. The school has a policy to set pupils by ability in key stage 4 in most core subjects. It was clear, during the inspection, that work in the top sets was challenging and that the most able pupils were responding positively to the challenge. Focus on the most able pupils was less convincing in mixed-ability classes.
- The school's current information on pupils' progress shows that, overall, pupils at key stage 3 and key stage 4 are making progress which is in line with what can be reasonably expected. For those who are not, there is effective support in place.
- The current progress of disadvantaged pupils, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is in line with that of other pupils.
- Pupils who attend the alternative provision are well supported to make progress from their starting points.

## **16 to 19 study programmes**

**Good**

- The 16 to 19 programmes of study are good because they are well led, teaching is effective and learners have positive attitudes to learning. The 16 to 19 programmes leader provides strong direction and monitors closely the effectiveness of the provision.
- Progress and attainment in the sixth form continue to improve. In 2016, GCE A-level results were in line with national averages, and the progress made in the applied general GCE was significantly above average.
- Provisional results for 2017 show that the overall GCE progress score was in line with the national average and the applied general GCE score was well above average. The sustained excellent attainment in the applied general GCE was acknowledged by an award letter from the Department for Education (DfE).

- Learners are well looked after in the sixth form. There is a wide range of courses for learners to choose from. The school dedicates a lot of resources to ensure that support and guidance meet the needs of the learners. They enjoy small class sizes. As a result, the retention rate in the 16 to 19 programmes is high.
- Teaching is effective because teachers have good subject knowledge and know the learners well. However, the large turnover of staff that affects the main school also has an impact, albeit in a more limited way, on the 16 to 19 programmes of study. Some learners feel that they did not have the continuity in teaching they would have liked in some subjects.
- Learners enjoy all aspects of the 16 to 19 provision. They talk of having a 'sense of friendly community' and are overwhelmingly positive about what the school does to support their learning and well-being.
- Safeguarding is effective. Learners have a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education that covers topics ranging from drugs and alcohol to risks of radicalisation.
- There is a range of opportunities available for the development of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The development of social skills and employability is effective. Learners receive impartial careers advice. They have high aspirations, which is reflected in their attitudes to learning.
- The vast majority of learners complete the course they started. Almost all proceed to higher education, apprenticeships or employment.



## School details

Unique reference number	123580
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10037166

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	895
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Ingham
Headteacher	Mrs Sonia Taylor
Telephone number	01630 652121
Website	<a href="http://www.grove-school.co.uk/">www.grove-school.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@groveschool.net">office@groveschool.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	7–8 October 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is slightly smaller than an average-sized secondary school. In December 2014, it became part of the Market Drayton Learning Partnership, a cooperative trust with Market Drayton Junior School and Market Drayton Infant School. Each school retains its own governing body.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is below average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of pupils have taken up full-time placements at the local authority's Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2014.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 42 lessons. Some observation was done jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited tutor time, and observed students' conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers, governors, a representative of the local authority, and the director of education for Shropshire local authority.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils, including learners on the 16 to 19 study programmes, and spoke with many more informally. An inspector listened to pupils read in Year 7.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons. They also looked at information on pupils' progress and current levels of achievement.
- Inspectors scrutinised various documents, both electronically and on paper, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plan, and the documents used to check the quality of teaching. They looked at reports to parents and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils. Inspectors discussed the national examination results of pupils and learners in 2016 and 2017 with leaders and governors.
- The inspection team took into account the 57 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and the school's own record of parental surveys. Inspectors also considered the 74 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Lockett	Ofsted Inspector
Lois Kelly	Ofsted Inspector

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