

Godmanchester Primary School

Park Lane, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, PE29 2AG

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and successfully promotes pupils' learning. The school fulfils its aim of high quality education for all.
- Pupils' achievement is good and improving. Attainment is on course to be above average. Pupils' progress is consistently good and for some it is outstanding. The teaching and progress of pupils in reading and mathematics are particular strengths.
- Teaching is typically good with some that is outstanding. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to think about their work and try to improve it themselves. This underpins their excellent attitudes to learning.
- Extra help for students who need it is expertly planned. These pupils making outstanding progress.
- Teachers are generally supported well by committed teaching assistants.
- Pupils' behaviour and relationships are outstanding. They feel very safe and there is clear, mutual respect for other pupils and adults.
- Governors and senior staff have high expectations. They support the headteacher well in checking and improving the quality of teaching. This has been successful in managing staff change and is bringing rapid improvement in pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is as yet outstanding. Teachers sometimes talk for too long and this slows pupils' progress. Teachers do not always make it clear what pupils are learning or why they are learning it.
- Teachers do not consistently challenge the more-able pupils.
- The other adults who support pupils learning do not consistently develop the pupils' language and communication skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 23 lessons. Six of these were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Members of the inspection team listened to pupils read and talked to groups of pupils about their attitudes towards school.
- They looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- The inspectors met with members of staff and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors took into account the 72 responses submitted by parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also to the 37 staff questionnaire responses submitted during the inspection.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation including the school development plan and self-evaluation records, school policies, minutes of governing body meetings and all aspects relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sally Lane

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Litawski

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Godmanchester Primary School converted to become an academy in April 2012. When its predecessor school, also known as Godmanchester Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average, as is the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is below average. This extra government money is provided to the school to help certain groups. In this school it currently applies only to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been a number of changes of staff at all levels, including a new headteacher, who joined the school in September 2012.
- There is a children's centre on the same site as the school, but this is not run by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers do not talk for too long and so allow pupils to move on to their learning tasks more quickly
 - teachers consistently make it clear to pupils what they are learning in each lesson and why they are learning it
 - other adults who support learning are consistently and effectively deployed to support pupils' language and communication skills.
- Make sure that the more-able pupils are challenged in all lessons, so they can make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge in all areas of learning that are broadly in line with those typical for their age. They make good progress because the quality of teaching is consistently good and the environment is exciting and well resourced. Children made good progress in a session on letters and words and the sounds they make (phonics) because they had plenty of opportunity to practise them through the practical, fun activities that had been planned.
- Opportunities to develop language and communication skills are missed in some lessons in the Early Years Foundation stage and other classes across the school, as the other adults who support learning do not always develop this aspect of pupils' learning.
- Pupils of all abilities continue to learn well in response to good teaching in Key Stage 1. Pupils achieved higher than their peers nationally in the national phonics screening check. They become enthusiastic and confident readers. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is typically above average by the end of Year 2.
- Following a strong whole-school focus on mathematics, pupils make good progress and the school's data shows that pupils' attainment is on track to be above nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2. Their learning in mathematics is enriched by a consistent emphasis on practical problem-solving activities. For example, pupils in Year 2 were observed investigating a range of division problems. The wide range of practical activities used, the adult support and guidance given, and well matched resources meant that pupils made good progress.
- Progress accelerates rapidly in Years 5 and 6 through consistently good and often outstanding teaching, with pupils reaching standards above the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium funding make outstanding progress and the gap between them and their peers in school has closed this year, from being nearly two years behind them in 2012. Carefully planned and implemented extra adult support makes sure that these pupils also exceed expected levels of attainment for their peers nationally.
- A well-planned programme of support means disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make outstanding progress. Highly skilled support helps some pupils to overcome emotional and behavioural challenges. School data shows these pupils leave the school approximately a term behind their peers in school.
- Pupils in Year 6 achieved below expected results in 2012. A number of pupils entered the school just prior to the national tests, and some pupils who were in the school for longer had particular circumstances that slowed their Key Stage 2 progress. The school has put into place systems to support such pupils more quickly in future.

The quality of teaching is good

- The new headteacher has introduced effective checks by the senior leadership team to help raise the quality of teaching. This has improved and is now consistently good with some that is outstanding. Teachers generally have high expectations and are committed to improve standards for all pupils.

- Teachers plan activities in a wide range of topics, such as the Romans, where pupils use the school's own grounds to find and research artefacts. Teachers skilfully link together subjects that interest pupils greatly. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage also enjoy a breadth of stimulating practical activities, as seen in their very well-presented learning journals, which also show their good progress.
- Group activities are developed very effectively in all classes, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils are extremely well supported by caring adults, skilled in raising pupils' self-confidence. The other adults who support learning play a strong part in the teaching of phonics and reading, and supporting pupils when using the school's wide range of resources and computers.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding, there is excitement and challenge. For example, pupils in Year 3 were predicting what was going to happen next in a story and why. They created their own descriptions and used high-quality words to create their stories. They were clear about the skills and knowledge they were learning. The more-able pupils were fully challenged and made excellent progress.
- Where teaching is not as strong, teachers sometimes talk for too long and pupils do not have enough time to tackle the tasks set for them. This means they make slower progress. Teachers do not always make sure the pupils know exactly what it is they are learning and why they are learning. Sometimes the more-able pupils are not fully challenged and so do not make the progress of which they are capable.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Attitudes to learning are of the highest standard across the school. In all the lessons seen, pupils' behaviour was at least good and in many it was outstanding.
- The pupils work happily and pleasantly together. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 act as positive examples to younger pupils. Even where teaching was not as strong pupils continued to do their best and maintained concentration and a real desire to learn.
- Everyone involved in the school are unreservedly positive about both behaviour and safety. Teachers responding to the inspection questionnaire were highly positive about behaviour in school. Pupils also stated they felt that behaviour in school was excellent.
- Behaviour outside lessons is exemplary. Pupils of all ages play together at break and lunchtimes, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They share games and activities with ease and with a genuine sense of enjoyment. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 pupils were proud of the various responsibilities they had across the school, such as looking after the younger pupils at lunch time.
- The very strong family and community feel of the school can be felt in everything that the school does. Pupils clearly enjoy school and this is supported by parents and carers, and is shown in the pupils' above-average attendance.
- The school is fully committed to tackling discrimination in all its forms. The school behaviour records show no bullying or racist incidents have taken place recently. There have also been no exclusions. Pupils, when asked, show that they understand different forms of bullying, but pupils say there is no bullying in school and they are clear about how to stay safe on the internet.

- Safety in all its aspects is very well managed by the school. Pupils feel safe and understand different ways of keeping themselves safe. As one pupil stated, 'We feel safe in school because the teachers look after us.' They value the help and support the adults in the school give them.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has given first-rate leadership to establish a vision and clear direction for the school since his appointment. Supported by senior and middle leaders, he has earned the full support of staff, parents and carers, governors and pupils.
- Since the school became an academy, improvements have been made through effective evaluation of the school's work and strategic planning, supported by governing body. Staff have worked effectively in teams to tackle weaknesses in teaching and achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics. These successes indicate the school has good capacity to improve further.
- Teaching is carefully monitored by leaders and teachers are given feedback about areas for development. High-quality training and coaching programmes support teachers' individual needs. Teachers' targets are based on their performance and the progress of pupils. Pay increases are linked to teachers' achieving their targets for raising pupils' achievement.
- The subjects taught and the very wide range of enrichment activities meet pupils' needs and foster a love of learning. The school is about to embark on a review of provision, because, quite rightly, it wants its pupils to secure greater independence in their own learning. There are carefully planned opportunities for pupils to learn about, and celebrate, their own and other cultures. They are taught to respect the values, beliefs and ways of living of others. Discrimination is not tolerated and all pupils are given opportunities to do their best.
- As an academy the school uses external support effectively to provide independent moderation of its work and to provide support to its teachers and leadership team.
- Partnerships with parents, carers and the local community are excellent. The school's 'open door' policy is greatly appreciated by parents and carers, who feel informed about, and involved in, their children's learning. Channels of communication with parents and carers have been expanded recently to include emails and fortnightly newsletters. Parents and carers are pleased with the improvements in the school's work made in the school over the past twelve months. The vast majority of parents and carers who completed the Parent View survey said they would recommend the school to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is deeply committed to providing pupils with an education that will bring them opportunities and fulfilment. It reflects on its own performance and governors attend well-targeted training, sharing the expertise gained with the rest of the governing body. Governors are good at supporting and challenging the school. They recognise the importance of comparing its performance with that of other schools nationally and are sharpening this aspect of their work. Frequent visits to the school give governors an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and pupils' achievement. Governors have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and are rigorous in linking any salary increases to the progress made by pupils, teaching quality and responsibilities. They have made positive decisions over the use of the pupil premium funding, especially through the development of extra support for vulnerable pupils. They check the impact on pupils' progress carefully to ensure best use of this funding.

The governing body makes sure that all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138029
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	412324

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Mackay
Headteacher	Rod Warsap
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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