

Little Gaddesden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Road, Little Gaddesden, Berkhamsted, HP4 1NX

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school has successfully built on its strengths and has made considerable improvements since the last inspection.
- Children in Reception have a successful start to school and make outstanding progress. This continues in other years and by the end of Year 6, attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- High quality teaching is the key to pupils' success. It is enthusiastic, engaging, stimulating and promotes rapid learning. Teachers expect all pupils to do their very best and pupils rise to the challenge.
- Pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills well to different subjects. They are successful in applying skills and working in teams to solve problems.
- Pupils show enthusiasm and determination in tackling the challenging and interesting work provided.
- Behaviour is often impeccable in lessons, in assembly and around the school. Attendance is above average.
- Highly effective procedures ensure that pupils feel extremely safe and very well cared for.
- By the time they leave, pupils are confident and mature learners who are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The headteacher, key leaders, staff and governors work extremely well as a team in promoting high achievement, outstanding teaching and very positive behaviour.
- Leadership and teaching expertise is used well to support other schools.
- Exciting activities, including clubs and visits, enhance pupils' learning and experiences.
- The school has established effective partnerships with parents and the community.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons. Many of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 55 responses to the online survey (Parent View) plus the results of the school's own survey.
- Questionnaires from 13 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspector examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and the school's improvement planning.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- Very few pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, known to be eligible for free school meals or from service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who leave and join the school partway through the year is higher than average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the sharing of leadership and outstanding teaching skills with other schools, as identified in development planning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has improved from good to outstanding. High quality teaching and an exciting curriculum have contributed considerably to the improvements.
- All groups of pupils make at least good progress, regardless of their starting points, and many make exceptional progress. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children's attainment on entry to Reception varies. Year groups usually enter with knowledge and skills typical for their age but sometimes higher. There have been improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage and children make outstanding progress.
- During the last three years, attainment by the end of Year 2 has been well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because of high quality teaching and the well-chosen support they receive.
- Too few pupils were supported by pupil premium in Year 6 in 2013 to comment on their attainment without potentially identifying individuals. Nevertheless, high quality teaching and well-focused support help to ensure that those eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in speaking and listening. This is because they are encouraged to discuss their learning and express their ideas and opinions. Many pupils are articulate and confident speakers.
- In all years, pupils enjoy reading. In Reception, children made very good gains in consolidating and extending their letter sounds. In Year 3 and 4, pupils applied their reading skills extremely well to find information about the Yanomami people of Brazil.
- Pupils' writing is very well developed. They write stories, poems and factual accounts. Their writing is clear and often creative and imaginative. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are accurate. Pupils take care and pride in the presentation of their written work. Handwriting is consistently good. Pupils apply their writing skills very well to different subjects. For example, in their Victorian studies, Year 5 and 6 wrote a diary extract in the role of a pupil in school. Others wrote a speech for Lord Shaftesbury about the abuse of children in the workplace.
- In mathematics, pupils consolidate and extend their calculations skills extremely well. They apply investigative skills to solve challenging problems. In Year 1 and 2, pupils named common three-dimensional shapes. Using mathematical vocabulary, they correctly described the properties of each shape. Most able pupils used practical apparatus to construct more complex shapes.
- Pupils in Year 5 and 6 made outstanding progress in designing and constructing a safety helmet. They worked very well in small teams. They modified their designs as the model progressed. They made first-class presentations to the class in describing the purpose of their helmet and explaining the challenges and successes they experienced in construction.
- Pupils are successfully developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through the school's

physical education programme and the additional sporting activities offered. They enjoy and participate well in sporting activities such as fencing, football, hockey, street dance and tag rugby.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- High quality teaching is a key factor contributing to pupils' outstanding progress and the well-above-average standards. All parents who completed the online survey agreed or strongly agreed that their children were well taught. Teachers expect pupils to do their very best and the pupils respond extremely well to these high expectations.
- Teachers inspire and motivate the pupils through their enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge. They share the purpose of the lesson effectively so that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Explanations and demonstrations are extremely clear and informative, and pupils make new gains in their learning. Teachers pose questions skilfully to challenge the pupils' thinking and to check that they understand new work.
- Pupils were full of praise about their teachers and assistants. They remarked, 'Teachers make things easy to understand,' 'When we are stuck, teachers help us' and 'Teaching assistants are really helpful.'
- Teachers make very good use of the information about pupils' attainment to plan their teaching and to ensure that work is suitably challenging and interesting for different groups of pupils. As a result, pupils are challenged, fully engaged in their learning and make exceptional gains in acquiring knowledge, deepening their understanding and applying skills.
- Essential skills, including phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are effectively taught through a clear and structured programme. The teaching of writing is highly successful. Teachers select exciting topics which inspire pupils to write. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss the topic and share their ideas for writing. Teachers demonstrate successful writing techniques to the class. Pupils show high levels of concentration and write quality pieces. In mathematics, teachers extend pupils' calculation skills and provide challenging investigative and problem-solving activities.
- Visiting specialist teachers of music, physical education and technology further enhance the school's outstanding teaching. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 made rapid progress in learning and playing different chords on the ukelele. They benefited from the teacher's expertise and first-class demonstrations.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is of a high quality. These pupils also receive well-chosen guidance and support from teaching assistants.
- All pupils are set clear learning targets for reading, writing and mathematics so they know what they are aiming for. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is constructive and helpful. Good work is acknowledged and praised, and constructive comments help pupils to improve. Target setting, marking and clear oral feedback from adults help to ensure that pupils know how to improve their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils learn and develop in an extremely positive and welcoming school environment. As one

said, 'Everyone is kind and we all help each other.'

- Almost all parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, rightly agreed that their children were safe and well looked after. They also stated that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.
- Children in Reception settle very well because of the first-rate teaching and the high quality relationships established with adults. They are excited about school and learn and play extremely well together.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Throughout the school, they show enthusiasm and a strong desire for learning. Their extremely positive attitudes to learning and their frequently exemplary behaviour contribute to powerful learning. The school's records of incidents show that behaviour is consistently of a high standard and serious incidents are very rare.
- Pupils are courteous, friendly and considerate. They relate extremely well to adults and to their classmates. In lessons, pupils support each other and work very well in pairs or small groups when required. Through their studies, they have acquired a good understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Clear and robust procedures ensure that pupils are safe and protected. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe at school and that they are very well looked after by the staff.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including persistent name-calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying. They stated that bullying is very rare and has no place in their school.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and the exciting activities provided. Parents are very supportive and attendance levels are above average.
- By the time pupils leave Little Gaddesden, they are confident and enthusiastic learners who are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, key subject leaders, staff and governors show considerable ambition, determination and enthusiasm in promoting high achievement, outstanding teaching and very positive behaviour for pupils.
- The experienced headteacher has built a strong team of staff and fostered a professional culture of continuous improvement. The headteacher and staff have high aspirations and all strive to ensure that all pupils learn and develop as well as they can. One teacher commented, 'Fantastic peer support and a privilege to be part of the team.'
- The checking of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching is accurate and thorough. As a result, leaders and governors have a clear overview of the school's performance. The findings are used well to inform planning and action to bring about improvements.
- The role of subject leaders has been extended since the last inspection. All are fully engaged in analysing pupils' attainment and progress, checking pupils' work, developing teaching and

improving their areas of responsibility.

- The development of high quality teaching and learning is at the heart of the school's success. Teaching is regularly checked by the headteacher, subject leaders and external consultants. There are effective and thorough procedures for the appraisal of staff performance. Targets to improve teachers' practice and skills are clearly identified. Effective support and training are provided where needed.
- The headteacher and teaching force possess considerable leadership and teaching skills. The sharing of this expertise within the school has contributed to consistency in practice. The headteacher effectively supports other schools and headteachers. Teachers have provided coaching and support to other local teachers. The local authority and school are keen to extend the support to other schools.
- The local authority provides an improvement partner to support and challenge the school. This person has a clear and accurate view of the school's performance and has made a valuable contribution to school improvement. She has been particularly effective in helping governors to know how well the school is doing.
- The curriculum provides exciting activities and promotes high achievement and strong personal development for pupils. There are no signs of discrimination in the school and all pupils have access to the activities provided. They appreciate the additional clubs and educational visits provided. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well.
- The recently allocated primary sports funding has been used well to extend pupils' physical and sporting activities. For example, a visiting specialist physical education teacher provides high quality coaching for pupils and extends the skills of the staff. The grant is also used to fund participation in local sporting events.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to raise achievement of eligible pupils. One-to-one tuition and effective support are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Very positive partnerships have been established with parents. Parent View and the school's own survey indicate that parents are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is outstanding. The members of the governing body bring useful experience and skills to the school. They show a very clear understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. Governors receive accurate reports about teaching from the headteacher and the improvement partner. They have a good understanding of the arrangements for managing staff performance and ensure that promotion and pay awards are based on pupils' progress. Governors check how the pupil premium is spent and question the impact of this funding on the progress of eligible pupils. Governors have attended useful courses to improve their effectiveness. They make sure all safeguarding procedures meet national requirements.

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	117443
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	431257

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicholas Crispin
Headteacher	Charis Geoghegan
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2009
Telephone number	01442 842464
Fax number	01442 842464
Email address	admin@littlegaddesden.herts.sch.uk;

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