

Great Bowden Academy: A Church of England Primary School

Gunnsbrook Close, Great Bowden, Market Harborough, LE16 7HZ

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not Previously Inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress and reach very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outstanding teaching means that pupils make extremely rapid progress from Years 1 to 6.
- Teachers use their excellent knowledge of what pupils can already do to plan work which is very well matched to pupils' different abilities.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and leads to good achievement.
- Teachers use their exceptional questioning skills extremely well to check on pupils' learning and to make sure that pupils are stretched. They then adapt the level of work to accelerate progress further.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils gives them an excellent understanding of how to improve their work.
- Outstanding literacy and mathematical skills are developed throughout the school day and through a wide and exciting range of subjects.
- Pupils enjoy celebrating the success of others, and appreciate the rewards offered when they do well. They are very proud of their academy and their achievements.
- Pupils are highly motivated and concentrate well through a wide range of opportunities to work on their own, with a partner and in teams.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes make an outstanding contribution to their learning. They talk with great enthusiasm about their work.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and enjoy a high level of care and support.
- Parents express a very high level of satisfaction and confidence in the work of the school.
- The inspiration and drive of the headteacher and governors have ensured that leaders at all levels are focused on continuously raising standards. Staff are highly committed to the aims of the academy.
- Governors have an exceptional understanding of the strengths and areas to develop within the academy. They are extremely skilled in checking its work and holding staff to account.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes and visited 14 lessons accompanied by the headteacher.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, parents, the headteacher, other staff, and governors.
- The inspector took account of letters from parents, and the 58 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. She also took account of the academy's records of parent surveys, and the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector listened to pupils read, looked at their work, and had discussions with groups of pupils and individuals about their learning.
- The inspector checked the school's evaluation of its work, performance management procedures, records of achievement, the improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, and records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds.
- Great Bowden Academy converted to become an academy in December 2012 and is managed by its governing body. When its predecessor school, Great Bowden Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2010, it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average, and this is also the case for the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding (those known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education and is supporting other schools locally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it is also outstanding by making sure that children are given activities that help them to build on what they know and can do, and which further extend their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has ensured that all staff, governors and leaders are fully committed to achieving the academy's vision of enabling every pupil to reach the highest standards. They have high expectations of staff and pupils and this has enabled pupils to make rapid progress and reach high standards.
- Leaders use a wide range of educational research and draw on examples of best practice to develop staff and speed up learning. For example, writers' workshop activities for pupils have helped to raise standards of writing and enthusiasm for this process of improving their work.
- Appraisal judgements about teachers' success are based on pupils' progress, and there is a high level of discussion about teaching and learning among teachers and leaders.
- Systems to check pupils' progress are used very effectively by leaders to identify strengths and what needs to improve, and in making plans for improvement. The success of these developments is judged by pupils' rates of progress.
- Leaders have developed extensive communication with parents and opportunities to share pupils' work and achievements. The academy's website gives a great deal of detail about how children learn in school and there are regular updates through social media. Progress reports are sent to parents each term, and consultation opportunities are given high priority, with generous time allocations. During the inspection, many parents highlighted reporting procedures as a strength of the school.
- Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven through all subjects, displayed in pupils' growing sense of responsibility, excitement in learning, understanding and tolerance of difference. The academy's core values set key expectations of everyone. Pupils measure themselves against these standards and are proud of their achievements.
- The subjects studied are combined in topics which are vibrant and exciting. English and mathematics skills are brought to life for the pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 developed their writing through acting out the experience of responding to a siren and moving to an air-raid shelter, discussing how it felt and what they needed to take with them.
- The commitment towards equal opportunities for all pupils is demonstrated in the outstanding progress made by all groups. Funding is used to pay for additional staff and equipment and it has been effective in ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a wide range of skills to their roles, and undertake effective training to support them in all aspects of their work. They are highly committed to excellence in all aspects of the academy and have engaged in extensive self-evaluation of their own performance. They set very ambitious targets for staff performance, have rigorous systems for checking progress and holding staff to account, including in making salary decisions. All judgements are made against pupils' achievement. Governors use their extensive involvement and monitoring in school to identify appropriate priority areas for development, build action plans, and check progress against these rigorously. Finance is matched to improvement plans and carefully managed and monitored. Governors ensure that the academy makes excellent use of extra funding, such as the pupil premium and the additional school sports funding, and monitor their impact well. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' outstanding behaviour and attitudes help them to make outstanding progress. They are highly committed to their work, persevere when they find difficulties, and do their best in all lessons. They present their work carefully and show commitment to improvement.

- Pupils across the age range have a very high level of trust in staff because of the very caring and supportive relationships between staff and pupils. They are exceptionally polite and show a great deal of respect for all adults, their classmates and the wider community. They understand that some pupils need greater support, and they are eager to help and take responsibility.
- Records show that disruption to lessons is very rare because pupils are highly motivated to learn and make progress. The academy's reward systems celebrates these attitudes, and pupils respond extremely well to praise. They move about the school and play in the yard sensibly with care and consideration for others. Older pupils give a great deal of support to those who are younger.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school, its calm and purposeful atmosphere, and of their achievements. They greatly enjoy the range of exciting learning activities and the sports and clubs outside lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding processes meet statutory requirements and effective policies and practices are followed by all staff and pupils.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and understand the different forms that bullying can take, including those which involve mobile phones and the internet. They say that there is very rarely any bullying and the staff would deal with it quickly if it occurred.
- Staff, pupils and those parents who met with the inspector said that behaviour is outstanding and that pupils are cared for kept safe.
- Attendance is in line with that nationally, and there are policies in place to support any pupil who has difficulties in this area.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Staff know their pupils extremely well and, in Years 1 to 6, they use their excellent understanding of what pupils can already do to plan very high-quality and exciting learning activities with a high level of challenge.
- Teachers check pupils' progress carefully, using regular tests and through exceptionally skilled questioning. so that they change the activities to support or stretch pupils to learn even more. This ensures that all children, including the most able, make very rapid progress and staff are able to judge the effectiveness of their work.
- In lessons, staff set very high expectations of all children so that there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere across the school based on high levels of respect and pride in achievement.
- In Years 1 to 6, excellent marking and feedback by teachers help pupils to know how to improve their work as they move on to new learning. This makes an excellent contribution to their understanding and to their developing skills.
- Homework makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress. It includes a weekly focus on reading, number and spelling skills, and also a more formal piece of work related to the class topic.
- Staff build warm and caring relationships with pupils and use the rewards system well so that pupils commit themselves to learning and make outstanding progress in most year groups.
- Teachers plan exciting topics which bring learning across subjects together in real-life situations. Pupils find this very exciting and are determined to do their best. Reading, writing and mathematics skills are developed well through these topics because teachers set high levels of challenge.
- Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning and development by providing practice in skills or breaking down tasks for pupils with special educational needs, and in delivering extra

learning sessions.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make outstanding progress and reach exceptionally high standards.
- Pupils in Year 1 make rapid progress in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). In 2014, they achieved levels well above those nationally in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make outstanding progress because their work is well matched to their abilities and teachers have very high expectations. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their reading, understand what they read and know how to find information.
- In 2014, pupils in Year 2 achieved standards in reading, writing and mathematics which were well above those nationally. They were one and a half terms ahead in reading, two terms ahead in mathematics and three terms ahead in writing.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make outstanding progress. In 2014, Year 6 pupils reached standards which were well above average in English and mathematics because there has been a continuous focus on high levels of challenge for all pupils. They were around two terms ahead of pupils nationally in English and mathematics.
- The academy's tracking data and work in pupils' books show that exceptional progress continues across a wide range of subjects. This is because pupils have a very clear understanding of what they are learning and of how to improve their work.
- Work in all subjects is based upon each pupil's learning needs. Their reading, writing and mathematical skills are developed extremely well through the wide range of topics studied.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress because tracking data and work in lessons is used to check on how well they are learning and to adapt their tasks.
- The achievement of pupils receiving support from the pupil premium cannot be compared with their peers in school or others nationally because the number of eligible pupils in the academy is very small.
- The most-able pupils make rapid progress through the school and reach outstanding standards by the end of Year 6. Their work shows the way in which very challenging tasks, involving investigation and problem solving, motivate and inspire them to do their very best.

The early years provision

is good

- Because of the small number of children who join the academy, the level of attainment on entry varies from year to year. Children make good progress in Reception so that their skills and knowledge are in line with those typical for their age when they enter Year 1.
- Good teaching helps children in the Reception class to make good progress. Staff use their good understanding of children's past achievements and what they need to learn next in each area of learning. Children make particularly strong progress in reading and writing because their learning is supported by nurturing relationships and careful tracking. They enter Key Stage 1 with very positive attitudes, developing skills, and enthusiasm for learning.
- The pace of progress in Reception is not yet as rapid as in other year groups in school. This is because there is not always enough challenge to stretch children so that they can reach the highest possible

standards.

- Behaviour and attitudes in the Reception class are good and help children to focus on their work and make good progress. Staff work effectively to engage parents with their children's learning so that children come happily into school and are ready to focus on their learning.
- Leaders have ensured that there are effective systems for staff to check the level of attainment of children starting in the Reception class, and then to plan work which will enable them to progress rapidly. They check the quality of teaching regularly in order to identify areas which can be improved.

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	138359
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	448651

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Trotter
Headteacher	Stefanie Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	Not Previously Inspected
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