

Great Gaddesden Church of England Primary School

Church Meadow, Great Gaddesden, Hertfordshire HP1 3BT

Inspection dates	8–9 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher’s determination, drive and highly effective leadership have been central to the school’s improvement. She has been well supported by a highly ambitious governing body.
- Great Gaddesden is a fully inclusive school where all pupils are welcomed and valued. It is an environment where pupils can thrive.
- Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now typically good across the school in all subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing has been well above average for the last two years.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils are enthusiastic and confident learners. They are well prepared for secondary school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum with many enrichment activities for them to enjoy.
- Pupils feel very safe and secure in school. They are knowledgeable about keeping themselves safe in a variety of situations.
- Pupils’ behaviour is exemplary around the school and in lessons. They share good relationships with their peers and adults.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust and effective.
- Children in the early years provision make good progress because teachers plan interesting and challenging activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of boys making accelerated progress across the school is not as high as that of girls.
- Middle leaders’ evaluation of their actions is not precise enough to judge how successfully they are in improving pupils’ progress across the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the leadership of middle leaders by ensuring that they evaluate precisely the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.
- Accelerate the progress of boys across the whole school so that it is in line with that of girls by:
 - using teaching methods that engage and excite boys in their learning
 - developing curriculum topics so that they are more appealing to boys.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has been uncompromising in her drive to improve the school since the last inspection. She has gained the confidence of her staff, who fully support the drive for improvement. As a result, all areas of the school's work have improved since the last inspection.
- Parents and staff have recognised the improvement in the school. The overwhelming majority of parents and staff feel that the school is well led and managed. All parents who expressed a view would recommend the school to others.
- Senior leaders and governors have created a fully inclusive school where all pupils are made to feel secure, valued and supported to achieve their best. As a result, pupils thrive in the school and gain in self-confidence. Pupils leaving at the end of Year 6 are well prepared for the transfer to a large secondary school.
- Leaders track the progress of individual pupils regularly. Pupil progress meetings are used effectively to identify any gaps in an individual's learning so that pupils falling behind can be given personalised support. This could be small-group work, individual support or in-class help.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection due to more effective monitoring of teaching. This is linked to personalised training and support for staff. Teachers are appreciative of the efforts the headteacher has put into helping them improve their teaching through coaching, training and support from the local authority.
- The headteacher and governors use the management of teachers' performance to ensure that they continue to teach effectively. Regular reviews of their progress keep teachers informed about how well they are doing. They are held accountable by school leaders through appraisal objectives that are linked to pupils' progress.
- The school uses the primary sports premium well to develop pupils' health and well-being. Pupils have access to a wide range of sports as part of their curriculum, which includes karate, rounders, street dance and football. Pupils enjoy their sports lessons and enjoy taking part in sports competitions as part of the small schools programme. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit a local secondary school to use its facilities. They told the inspector how much they enjoyed using these facilities as they had access to more space and equipment. Participation in after-school sporting activities has increased in the last year.
- The pupil premium funding is used skilfully to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. As a result, these pupils are making good progress in their learning. Disadvantaged pupils make progress in reading, writing and mathematics at a similar rate to their classmates and pupils nationally.
- There is an emphasis on developing a broad and balanced curriculum. Science, music, art, French, history, geography, religious education and design technology ensure that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding of the world they live in. Pupils also have access to a diverse range of after-school clubs and activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well catered for. Pupils go on trips and visits as wide ranging as local trips to the Buddhist temple to ones further afield, such as day trips to London or France. The school's set of moral values has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and ability to form relationships. Each week, pupils have the opportunity to nominate one another if they feel they have observed fellow pupils demonstrating one of the school's values. During one assembly observed, two pupils received honesty awards.
- School leaders have worked closely with the local authority since the last inspection. It has supported the school by providing support for subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and the early years leader. It has reviewed the school's progress with the headteacher. The local authority recognises the changes that the school has made since the last inspection.
- The school has invested time and training in the development of middle leaders. Their role has developed and they are now actively involved in monitoring the work within their subject areas. All know the strengths and weaknesses within their subject area. Actions have been taken to address the areas of weakness, but in some cases it is too early to see whether they will have a sustained impact on improving standards. Middle leaders now need to be more precise in evaluating the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors ensure that outcomes for pupils are a central focus for their work and inform their decision making. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
 - Governors closely monitor pupils' achievement and are quick to ask questions where subjects are not performing as highly as they expect. They invite subject leaders to talk to them about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. Governors are also linked to subject areas and visit the school during the day to gain first-hand experience of the work of the school.
 - Governors have a good understanding of pupil progress information and the impact of pupil premium and sports funding on pupils' outcomes.
 - Governors are highly ambitious for the school and they have worked well with the headteacher to bring about the improvements in the school. They offer a good level of challenge and support to school leaders.
 - Governors are very aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe. They regularly check that the school's actions to keep pupils safe are robust.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders ensure that the school is a safe place for pupils and staff. Staff are well trained and according to the latest guidelines and they know how to raise concerns. Governors undertake regular health and safety audits. Leaders are aware of the potential risks caused by sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Evidence in pupils' books, school progress information and direct observations of learning by the inspector indicate that teaching is now good across all subjects.
- Relationships in class are very positive and pupils enjoy learning. They show a resilience and perseverance with their learning. In most lessons, teachers use questions that help them judge pupils' understanding and identify when they need extra support or are ready to be moved on to the next stage in their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in order to provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs or disability. Teaching assistants are well trained and have good subject knowledge.
- Science teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers plan interesting investigations for pupils which excite and enthuse them as well as developing their scientific knowledge and understanding. For example, in one class, pupils were investigating how quickly ice would melt when wrapped in different materials. Pupils were confidently using scientific language such as prediction and fair test. They were able to explain how this linked to the weather and the clothes they might choose on a cold day to keep them warm.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and highlight the achievements of pupils, giving them clear guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils rigorously make the necessary corrections to their work and as a result their standard of work improves over time.
- Reading is well taught throughout the school. As a result of good teaching, pupils are able to use a range of techniques, including their phonics skills (letters and the sounds they make) to read more challenging texts. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2, they have the opportunity to read a wider range of books. Pupils are enthusiastic readers.
- There has been considerable improvement in the teaching of writing since the last inspection. Pupils have the opportunity to write across a range of subjects. Work in pupils' books shows that they learn to write for a variety of reasons; for example, factual information, creative stories and letter writing. Pupils correct their spelling errors, and weekly spelling tests are having a positive impact on improving their ability to spell correctly.
- Mathematics teaching is strong across the school. Basic arithmetic skills are well taught and pupils enjoy the regular times-tables challenges. Pupils' books indicate that some pupils are set problems that require them to apply logical reasoning and to use different methods of calculation to solve them. Pupils have the opportunity to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects such as science and geography.
- Parents agree that teaching is good and that they receive valuable information about their child's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's work. Each child is valued for their individuality by all staff and they encourage all pupils to celebrate their achievements and persevere where they encounter difficulties. As a result, pupils are happy, confident and successful learners.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school because 'teachers take care of you and help you if you have a problem'. They are knowledgeable about keeping themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using modern technology.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying and the difference between 'falling out' with their friends and bullying. They say that disagreements happen but that they are helped to resolve them. All pupils agree that bullying does not happen in the school. They describe the school as 'a big family. We work together and are friends because we know one another'.
- The school works closely with external agencies and families to ensure that pupils with special educational needs or disability receive the level of support they need in order to make progress in all areas of school life. Parents are highly appreciative of this support. One parent described the school as 'going above and beyond in supporting the children and myself'.
- Attendance has improved over the last three years and is now in line with national averages. The school works very well with parents to support pupils who attend less well. This has led to rapid and sustained improvements in the attendance of individual pupils. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has decreased and is currently below average levels.
- All parents who expressed a view feel that their child is well looked after and happy at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is impeccable. Pupils are polite and courteous towards one another and adults. They show genuine concern for one another and older pupils provide excellent role models for the younger pupils.
- Pupils in all year groups have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They settle quickly to work and do not distract their classmates. Pupils help and support one another with their learning without being asked. They listen to teachers, follow instructions and respond immediately to teachers' requests.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are proud of their work and take great care over its presentation.
- The school works closely with parents and agencies to support those pupils who need extra help managing their behaviour, leading to rapid and sustained improvements. The school is quick to seek specialist advice if it has a concern.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and staff agree that pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Progress in reading is good. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected threshold in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been above average for the past two years. Pupils in the current Year 1 are on track to attain similar results. The support given to pupils who fall behind in their reading is timely and effective as pupils soon catch up. The most-able pupils are confident and fluent readers.
- Progress in writing is well above average as almost all pupils make significant progress in their writing by the end of Year 6. Pupils are encouraged to use interesting vocabulary in their writing and they are able to use dictionaries to support both their spelling and vocabulary choices. Standards of punctuation and grammar are improving.
- Progress in mathematics is also improving. Pupils' work shows that they have the opportunity to use different methods of calculation and to learn from their errors. They solve interesting problems and apply their learning in other subjects such as science and geography.
- Pupils are making good progress in a range of other subjects, especially science. Teachers have the same expectations of pupils' work as they do in English and mathematics.

- The progress of pupils with special educational needs or disability has improved. As a result of well-targeted support, these pupils are now making more rapid progress.
- The most-able pupils are making at least good progress in almost all subjects as they are being given work that deepens their understanding and knowledge.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is small, so it is not possible to comment on how the attainment of Year 6 pupils compares with national figures without the risk of identifying them. School progress information and pupils' work show that disadvantaged pupils in the school are making good progress across a range of subjects.
- School progress records and results from national tests show that boys are making good progress in most subjects. However, their progress from Reception Year to the end of Key Stage 2 is not always as rapid as that of girls.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years leader has successfully improved the provision since the last inspection. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas that still need improvement. As a result, teaching has improved and outcomes for children have improved.
- The school makes good arrangements to support children starting their Nursery and Reception Year at the school. Home visits, discussions with parents and opportunities for parents and children to visit the setting ensure that staff have a good awareness of the children before they start.
- Teaching is good because adults ensure that children are given stimulating and challenging activities to maintain their interest and enthusiasm. For example, in a phonics session, a group of children were digging in sand to find real and nonsense words. When told that one was missing, they kept looking for it. One child pronounced, 'I'm not giving up until I've found it'.
- Adults ask questions that make children think about their learning and lead them to deepen their understanding. For example, a group of children playing in the water were able to work out the reasons why one tray of water was frozen and the other wasn't as a result of adults asking probing questions.
- Children's behaviour is good. They work well together, sharing equipment, taking turns and helping one another with their learning. Children listen attentively to adults and one another and follow instructions immediately. They are developing the good learning behaviours required for Key Stage 1.
- In this well-run provision, adults keep accurate records of what the children can do and use the information to plan activities that promote good progress. Parents are invited to contribute to their child's learning journal and are able to access these electronically.
- Children make good progress from their different starting points because teaching is effective. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception Year is now above average. As a result, they are well prepared to start Key Stage 1.
- Children work in a safe environment and are taught how to work safely.

School details

Unique reference number	117433
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10001905

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Wilkinson
Headteacher	Nikki Comer
Telephone number	01442 255734
Website	www.greatgaddesden.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@greatgaddesden.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from a White British background and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-aged classes from Nursery to Year 6.
- The early years provision provides part-time Nursery education and full-time education for children in the Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in each class. She visited eight lessons to observe learning. The headteacher accompanied the inspector for four of these observations. The inspector, accompanied by the headteacher, visited classes to talk to pupils about their work and to review work in pupils' books. A work scrutiny of all subjects was also carried out.
- The inspector listened to a group of Year 2 and Year 3 pupils read and talked to them about their reading. She also talked to pupils from Years 5 and 6 about their reading experiences.
- The inspector visited two assemblies.
- A formal discussion was held with a group of pupils, along with informal conversations with others at break- and lunchtime.
- A range of documents was examined, including the school's analysis of its own work and its improvement plan, information on pupils' academic progress, and documents relating to the quality of teaching, staff training, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the early years leader, English, mathematics and science leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and three members of the governing body. The inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. She also spoke with a number of parents informally at the start and end of the school day.
- The views expressed in questionnaires returned by 10 members of the school staff were considered.

Inspection team

Caroline Parry, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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