

Gorefield Primary School

High Road, Gorefield, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 4NB

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is ineffective.
- Leadership is inadequate solely because leaders and governors have not created a culture of vigilance around child protection.
- Staff are not well informed about the importance of the latest statutory requirements and their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe.
- Leaders' records of monitoring for safeguarding are of poor quality. There is insufficient evidence that leaders take appropriate action to protect vulnerable pupils.
- Other aspects of leadership and management, including in early years, require improvement. Leaders' actions to raise standards in the school are not yet secure or having enough of an impact so that pupils make consistently good progress across the school.
- Leaders' analysis of how well additional funding is used to improve the achievement of pupils is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Leaders have an overly generous view of the quality of provision in the school, most notably about the quality and impact of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Middle leaders are not consistently clear about their roles and responsibilities. Leaders do not hold staff effectively to account for the work they do. There is currently no leadership of the early years.
- Teachers do not use assessment information sharply enough to ensure that pupils make good progress across the school. Many pupils, particularly the most able pupils, do not make the progress that they should.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough about what all pupils are capable of achieving.

The school has the following strengths

- In 2016, children in the early years, and pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2, attained in line with, or above, the national average.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. The attendance of pupils is above the national average and persistent absence is low.
- Leaders' partnership with parents is a real strength of the school.
- Some senior leaders have been effective in maintaining and improving aspects of the education received by pupils such as in upper key stage 2.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently ensure that governors and leaders take action to make safeguarding effective by:
 - reviewing safeguarding policies and processes so that that they are effective, applied rigorously and meet all statutory requirements
 - making sure that all staff use a thorough understanding of their statutory responsibilities to safeguard pupils, and adopt secure practices to be vigilant in all of their work with pupils
 - recording serious incidents precisely and accurately, and ensuring that there is always effective communication between staff and external agencies.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening leaders' evaluation and strategic planning, so that they have a more accurate view about the quality of provision, especially the impact that teaching, learning and assessment are having on pupils' progress
 - ensuring that middle leaders, including within early years, are clear on their roles and responsibilities, and that they are able to evaluate precisely the impact that their work is having on raising standards
 - governors holding leaders to account more rigorously for the impact of additional funding on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - securing confidence and accuracy in the assessments of pupils' learning to inform teaching in all year groups.
- Raise standards in the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and achievement, by:
 - ensuring that teachers make more precise use of assessment information to plan appropriate tasks that are suited to pupils' starting points, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able
 - routinely reviewing pupils' progress from their starting points so that all adults identify quickly where pupils require additional support to catch up
 - making sure that all adults have consistently high expectations and set work that challenges and deepens understanding so that pupils make the progress they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Safeguarding is ineffective. There are significant gaps in the school's procedures to ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders and governors have failed to ensure that all safeguarding policies, practices and procedures are sufficiently effective and consistently adhered to. Pupils have been left vulnerable due a lack of rigour in safeguarding arrangements.
- The culture of safeguarding is not embedded within the school. Leaders, including governors, assume that if staff have been given documents then they read and understand them. This is not the case. Although staff know to report concerns they have about pupils, not all are aware of, or are following, the school's agreed procedures, for doing so.
- A recent safeguarding review carried out by the local authority identified to the school the areas of safeguarding that the inspection team subsequently deemed to be ineffective. However, the extent of these inadequacies was not understood by leaders. Consequently, leaders did not act rigorously enough to ensure that all the weaknesses were tackled.
- Gorefield has been through a period of significant disruption over the past three years, since the previous inspection. It has been a turbulent time, with significant upheaval in leadership and staffing. This has led to instability and a lack of consistency in the actions taken to raise standards.
- Some senior leaders have been effective at maintaining the standards through a period of leadership uncertainty, and this demonstrates some capacity to make improvements. For example, they have ensured that teaching is of good quality in upper key stage 2 and have made improvements in the early years that are having a positive impact on the quality of learning. However, the headteacher and governors have not ensured that leaders in post, including newer leaders, have sufficient opportunity to follow up the various actions that they have taken.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is overgenerous and the school's plans for improvement lack detail and precision. Systems to evaluate school effectiveness are not precise enough to ensure that leaders are routinely held to account for the actions that they take. For example, while different leaders are taking actions to lead the work in the early years, there is no one being held accountable for the difference that this is making to pupils' achievement.
- Leaders are not confident in the accuracy of the assessments that inform them about the progress that pupils are making. Leaders are not using this information when making judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In particular, subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in leading improvements in their subjects, including the monitoring of, and the evaluation of, the quality of teaching. They therefore are unable to provide teachers with the guidance they need to improve their teaching, especially for particular identified groups of pupils, and in specific subjects.
- Leaders do not evaluate well enough the impact or effectiveness of the additional

funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although leaders' use of additional funding for pupils is broadly appropriate, such as extra adult support, training, breakfast club and subsidising trips, it is not evaluated well enough by leaders and governors. Therefore, leaders are unable to say confidently how much it contributes towards improving both the academic and welfare outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Pupils access a broad range of subjects and enjoy the visits and residential trips they experience as part of the curriculum. Pupils said that they have really enjoyed learning about life during the world wars. A few also said that they really enjoyed swimming and their physical education lessons. During the inspection, a celebration of pupils' learning in music was shared with parents. A range of age groups of pupils played a variety of musical instruments, showing that they were skilful at reading music and performing confidently. Pupils are also able to talk about their understanding of the values of democracy, and this is continually embedded within the curriculum.
- Sports funding is used to good effect. Pupils have access to a variety of after-school and lunchtime clubs. Teachers benefit from training that helps to improve physical education lessons. For example, because the school has its own swimming pool, all pupils have the opportunity to swim. Teachers participate in swimming coaching training that ensures that they are confident to teach this skill to pupils.
- Leaders, particularly the headteacher, have worked hard to improve and develop positive partnerships with parents. Consequently, the majority of parents are complimentary about the work of the school.
- The local authority offers a wide variety of support to the school. There have been frequent visits from the local authority adviser, an early years adviser and a specialist teacher to support the new special needs coordinator in her role. This additional support has been effective in improving specific aspects of the school. However, on occasion leaders have not acted quickly enough to make necessary improvements and the local authority have not checked the impact of leaders' actions to ensure that they are sufficiently rigorous.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not ensured that safeguarding is effective. Governors acknowledge and make no excuses for these shortcomings. They take their responsibilities seriously and are planning to rectify the current failings as a matter of urgency.
- Governors carry out regular visits to the school to find out more about aspects such as special educational needs, pupil premium spending and early years provision. From these visits, and the information that they receive, they have been active in challenging leaders about standards in the school. However, they have not consistently followed through on some of their questions, to assure themselves that leaders' analysis is accurate or rigorous. As a result, they have an overgenerous view of the quality of provision in the school.
- Governors have not focused sharply enough on the impact of leaders' actions, particularly the checking of the information they receive. Consequently, while

governors know much about the operational work in the school, they do not fully and accurately know the difference that leaders' work is having on pupils' outcomes and development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is not secure. Checks are carried out to confirm adults' suitability to work with children. However, during the inspection, some aspects of record-keeping were not compliant with statutory requirements. Although this has been rectified, there has been insufficient attention to detail and rigour in the systems. For example, the school holds a number of copies of the single central record and leaders were unsure which was the latest and most up-to-date version. As a result, leaders cannot be securely confident that they are meeting statutory requirements to keep children safe.
- Leaders do not adequately follow up concerns about pupils. Referrals to external agencies are not always timely or appropriately considered. The record-keeping is weak. Equally, leaders have not shown the attention to detail necessary to ensure the safety of pupils.
- The recording of other incidents, which could affect the safety of pupils, is not fully effective. For example, behaviour records are not recorded systematically enough for patterns to be identified and suitable action taken. Records do not enable leaders to evaluate how well they are supporting pupils, particularly those who are more vulnerable.
- Leaders do not follow up after training events to ensure that staff have a secure and detailed knowledge of safeguarding issues and the capacity to apply the training when necessary. Staff are not clear enough about the content of policies and the school's procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Observations of pupils at play and in their classrooms demonstrate that they are happy and enjoy being in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although improving, teaching, learning and assessment are not yet securely good. Leaders acknowledge that some weaker teaching has affected pupils' progress and needs to be remedied to ensure that the pupils who have fallen behind catch up quickly, particularly in English and mathematics.
- On occasions, the level of support offered to pupils prevents them from taking responsibility for their own learning and from developing as self-confident and self-assured learners. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of all pupils, including the most able, are not high enough. Learning activities are, too often, not demanding enough. The most-able have to wait too long before they get started on work that extends their thinking or enables them to deepen their knowledge and understanding. This slows down their progress.

- Teachers do not always take into account the pupils' starting points when planning. For example, in some pupils' books there was little indication that writing skills had progressed when comparing work from September 2016 to the present day. This showed that teaching is not always considering what pupils already know and what their next steps are. Therefore, they do not make the progress that they should.
- Mathematics is generally taught effectively. The work in pupils' books indicates that pupils develop basic mathematics skills well, such as when working with fractions and shape, space and measure. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills to deepen their mathematical understanding. The mathematics leader has identified this as a priority to focus on.
- Pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent across the school. Pupils' books show that they do not have regular opportunities to apply their writing skills across different subjects. Additionally, pupils do not consistently apply their grammar, spelling and punctuation skills in their independent writing. This is not picked up by teachers often enough to ensure that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Consequently, pupils' progress in writing from their starting points is not as rapid as it could be.
- Phonics is taught effectively in Reception and key stage 1. Pupils use their knowledge of sounds well to read and spell unfamiliar words. Their exercise books show that they understand that different letters can make the same sound. They use this to write words and spell them accurately.
- Guided lessons are helping key stage 2 pupils read with confidence and fluency, and understand text. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils accurately demonstrate that they can deduct and infer information in what they read. Pupils said that they enjoy reading and talked enthusiastically about the books they were reading.
- The quality and impact of the support that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive is inconsistent. In all classes, teaching assistants work hard with individual pupils to do their best to help them with their work. However, adults are not always deployed according to pupils' needs. Consequently, the progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make is too variable and often not enough.
- Classrooms are stimulating and mostly well organised. They reflect well most teachers' commitment to supporting the pupils to attain well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Staff actions to ensure that pupils are well cared for when they are in school are effective. Staff and leaders know the pupils and families well. On a day-to-day basis, staff are vigilant and take appropriate action when they have concerns about the welfare of pupils. However, leaders' recording of this information and follow-up is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Pupils say that teachers are kind and helpful

and will sort out their problems. They say that the headteacher is approachable and will listen to their concerns and help them to resolve issues.

- Adults ensure that pupils know about how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils are able to explain how to keep personal information safe and what to do if they come across inappropriate content.
- The breakfast club is well run and provides a selection of activities on different days. It provides pupils with a positive start to their school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When teaching fails to engage pupils, some of them spend time chatting to each other and, on occasion, display some disruptive behaviour. This affects the learning of other pupils and pupils told inspectors, 'It happens a lot and it is boring waiting'. There are times when a few pupils talk over the teacher, or answer back inappropriately and do not listen to what is said.
- There are many pupils who are friendly, helpful and polite. In general, they play well together and mostly move around the school safely and sensibly.
- Where teaching is more effective, pupils respond to teachers' instructions and need few reminders to settle to work. Pupils listen carefully and, consequently, achieve better.
- The large majority of parents who responded to the online survey or who spoke to inspectors are confident that their children are safe, happy and well cared for in school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Current progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school is variable. This is as a result of inconsistent and weaker teaching over time in specific areas.
- Too many pupils, including the most able, are not currently making the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because learning activities are often planned without knowing, or considering, the pupils' starting points. Additionally, there is lack of challenge for the most able pupils.
- In 2016, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check was below the national average. This year, more pupils are likely to meet the expected standard in phonics. This is because teachers are now more confident in teaching phonics and the phonics leader is supporting identified pupils so they receive effective additional help.
- The progress of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is variable over time. For pupils currently in the school, support is not always as effective as it could be to ensure that they make good enough progress from their various starting points.
- There have been too few disadvantaged pupils in the school to make a reliable judgement about how their achievement compares with other pupils nationally. Those disadvantaged pupils in the school, including the most able, attain as well as their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. However, leaders' evaluation of the

progress that disadvantaged pupils make is significantly flawed as they are unable to evaluate fully the impact that the additional funding is having on their outcomes.

- Evidence in pupils' books shows that pupils make variable progress in a wide range of subjects, as well as English and mathematics. In subjects such as science, geography and history, some teachers' expectations of what pupils ought to be able to do are too low.
- In 2016, the proportion of key stage 1 pupils who attained the expected standard and greater depth was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Generally, pupils are adequately prepared for the next stages in their education. In key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2016 national assessments was in line with, or above, the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who attained the higher standard in reading and mathematics was below the national average.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- There is a lack of assigned leadership or strategic overview of the early years and senior leaders are not effectively monitoring the provision. This is resulting in an absence of focus on identified improvements and, consequently, insufficient support for staff.
- Children at Gorefield enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. However, the school's targets in the early years are not sufficiently ambitious to accelerate children's progress more rapidly so that they achieve as well as they could.
- Despite weaknesses in leadership, the teachers and adults work hard to ensure that children are provided with opportunities to develop, explore and investigate. Evidence in the 'learning journeys' shows that pupils do make progress, but that this is not sharply evaluated by leaders to make timely enough interventions for all children.
- There is an appropriate balance of activities indoors and outside. Both areas are well equipped with good-quality resources in a spacious environment, and the work to improve the outside area has made a big difference to the opportunities available to the children. This is helping adults to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the children effectively.
- Although senior leaders in the main school have not ensured that safeguarding is effective, staff in the early years have ensured that their systems are more robust in monitoring, identifying, supporting and recording concerns about the very youngest children in the school. As a result, children are kept safe in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	110634
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10031435

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Bruce
Headteacher	John Starling
Telephone number	01945 870321
Website	www.gorefield.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	head@gorefield.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-size primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes during the second day of the inspection. During this time, inspectors spoke to pupils and looked at their exercise books.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to children and pupils at break and lunchtime as they played in the playground.
- An inspector met with a group of pupils and spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school on the second day of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 20 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and comments made by 18 parents using the free-text service.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the leader of phonics, the special educational needs coordinator and the pupil premium leader. The lead inspector also met with two representatives of the local authority, one of whom was the primary adviser and the other the adviser who carried out the recent safeguarding review.
- The lead inspector spoke to many members of staff, including the secretary who maintains the single central record, about safeguarding in particular, and took account of the staff responses in the governors' very recent staff survey.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, published information about pupils' attainment and progress, and the school's records about pupils' current achievement. Inspectors looked at a varied selection of pupils' work, as well as any records that leaders had on the quality of teaching. The lead inspector considered evidence of the school's management of teachers' performance and staff's continuing professional development. She also scrutinised the school's website and the minutes of meetings of the governing body and committee minutes.
- A wide range of documents was evaluated regarding the school's safeguarding arrangements. These included the child protection policy, records of risks assessments carried out on school visits, accident logs and records of actions taken to protect children at risk of harm.

Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Paul Copping

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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