

Gunton Primary Academy

Gainsborough Drive, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4LX

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have high aspirations for their pupils. They are determined that all pupils will succeed and achieve well.
- Leaders' own evaluation of the school is accurate; they know their school well. This means that they identify the correct actions to take to improve the school further.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They use questioning well to make pupils think hard about their work, especially in mathematics.
- Leaders have taken swift and appropriate action to address the underperformance at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Pupils, especially girls, are now making stronger progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They work well together and are rightly proud of their school.
- Leaders have fully secured the values of 'grow, persevere and aspire' throughout the school. These, along with the school's well-established learning skills, known as 'learning dispositions', ensure that the school is a nurturing environment for pupils.
- Governors are effective. They know the school well and do not shy away from holding leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. As a result, outcomes are good.
- Leaders have thought hard about the intent of the curriculum. It is broad, balanced and enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils speak with great enthusiasm about the curriculum.
- Teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils in subjects such as history and geography. This means that they do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders' work to make an accurate assessment of pupils' attainment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is still developing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress. However, leaders do not check carefully enough on the impact that specific interventions have on pupils' progress.
- Good leadership of the early years ensures that children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well and are well prepared for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the rigorous and accurate assessment found in English, mathematics and science is applied to other subjects
 - ensuring that leaders sharply evaluate the effectiveness of 'learning plans' to make sure the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities precisely meets their needs.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by consistently providing work which challenges the most able pupils, to ensure that they make the progress of which they are capable, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have taken effective action to bring about improvements since the school became an academy in October 2015. They have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This means that they take the correct actions to bring about further improvement.
- Leaders have taken swift and effective steps to address the below-average progress in mathematics at the end of key stage 2, along with the underperformance of girls, in 2017. Consequently, the progress that current pupils make in mathematics is now strong. Inspection evidence shows that girls now achieve as well as boys.
- The core values of 'grow, persevere and aspire', along with the school's 'learning dispositions', are highly visible. This results in a culture of high aspiration and opportunity for all. For instance, four pupils recently had plays they had written performed at the local Marina Theatre, while three pupils in key stage 2 won prizes in the world haiku competition.
- Members of staff who have responsibility for leading subjects are passionate and highly committed to their work. They have clear plans in place to continue to drive further improvements in their area of responsibility.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and exciting for pupils. Leaders have thought hard about the intent of the curriculum. Pupils know more and remember more as they move through the school because learning builds upon their previous knowledge. The carefully planned learning skills make sure that pupils can be reflective, resilient and learn with others.
- Although pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects, the assessment of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is not fully developed. Consequently, teachers do not consistently plan work in these subjects to meet the needs of pupils precisely, especially the most able.
- The leadership of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective and pupils make good progress. Funding is well used and the recently introduced 'learning plans' show clearly the additional support that pupils receive. However, leaders do not check carefully enough on the difference that the additional support makes to pupils' progress. This means that work is not always precisely matched to the needs of these pupils.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is spent effectively. The PE leader has increased the number of pupils who attend extra-curricular sporting clubs, along with the number of pupils who take part in inter-school competitions. These include football, rounders, dodgeball, hockey and yoga. During the inspection, the school held its annual sports day, which was well attended by parents and grandparents.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively. Leaders know their pupils well and identify the barriers to their learning and social development. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.

Pupils have a good understanding of different cultures, in particular Japanese culture, because this forms part of the key stage 2 curriculum. Lessons and assemblies give pupils the opportunity to learn about, and reflect on, a range of religions and beliefs. Pupils are tolerant of others and well prepared for a life in modern Britain.

- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Almost all say that pupils are happy, safe and well looked after in school. Inspectors agree. One parent told an inspector, 'The school's child-centred approach is something I find very reassuring,' and another said, 'I am extremely pleased with the education my child receives.'
- The academy trust has provided effective support for the school. Advisors make regular visits to check leaders' evaluations and to provide professional development for teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong. Governors know the school well and make regular visits to monitor their areas of responsibility. During these visits, they do not just take leaders' assertions at face value. They visit classrooms and talk to pupils and staff to check for themselves.
- Governors do not shy away from holding leaders to account for the progress that pupils make. For example, they ensure that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is well spent and challenge leaders to make sure that this group of pupils receive the support that they need.
- Governors regularly reflect on their effectiveness and the quality of their work. They make sure that they have a range of skills on the governing body to allow them to carry out their roles well.
- Governors carry out all of their statutory duties, including making checks to ensure that pupils are kept safe in school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of vigilance at Gunton Primary Academy. Staff are well trained, understand their responsibilities and know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil.
- School leaders are meticulous in carrying out checks when recruiting new staff. They keep detailed records of these checks and fulfil all statutory duties.
- The designated leads for safeguarding are trained and keep detailed records. When needed, they make referrals to other agencies and follow these up with rigour. Consequently, there is a strong culture of safeguarding in this school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of pupils. Pupils work hard in lessons and have very positive attitudes towards learning. As a result, current pupils have made good progress over time.

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use questioning effectively to make pupils think hard about their work. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher regularly asked pupils to explain the reasons for their answers when solving problems. Consequently, their ability to articulate their reasoning is strong.
- The school's well-developed 'learning dispositions' mean that in lessons pupils know how to work together effectively. They are able to reflect on what they do well or need to do to improve, keep going when they are challenged and use their imagination. Pupils in all year groups could explain to inspectors how these 'learning dispositions' help them to learn.
- Modern foreign languages are taught well. This is because teachers carefully plan lessons to help pupils make links with previous learning. Consequently, pupils remember more new vocabulary over time. Pupils in Year 6 could remember, and speak, Japanese vocabulary they had been taught at the start of the academic year. Not only do pupils deepen their knowledge of vocabulary, they also have a good appreciation of Japanese culture, in particular the festival of Tanabata.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils. They provide guidance, but do not allow pupils to become over-reliant on them. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teaching assistant worked with a small group of pupils recapping key concepts. Once pupils were clear, they were able to work independently.
- When teachers use assessment of pupils' prior knowledge well to plan lessons, the work provides appropriate challenge. However, some of the most able pupils in the school are not consistently challenged well enough, so their learning time is not maximised. This means that they do not make as much progress as they should, especially in subjects such as history and geography.
- There is consistency in the application of writing in a range of subjects, especially in science and religious education. Teachers have the same high expectation of handwriting, sentence structure, punctuation and content as they do in English lessons. Pupils write for a range of different purposes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured learners. This is because they have a very secure awareness of their learning skills. One pupil told an inspector, 'It's enjoyable to face a new challenge and satisfying to complete it.'
- Adults know pupils extremely well and there is a sharp focus on assessing and meeting pupils' social and emotional needs. Pupils who reintegrate into the school from pupil referral units attend and behave well because of the highly effective support through the school's 'Thrive' provision.
- Leaders' work to reduce the number of pupils who receive fixed-term exclusions has been very successful. Pupils who have previously been excluded now have their needs well met. This provision is effective because adults know their pupils well and offer appropriate and timely support to prevent issues from escalating.

- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that bullying is rare. One pupil told an inspector, 'I always feel safe; I know where teachers are if I need them.'
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe when using the internet and mobile devices. They have regular e-safety sessions within the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of privacy settings when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- Pupils work well together and are proud of their school. They are punctual and pupils in key stage 2 conduct themselves in an exemplary manner in lessons.
- Pupils behave well during lunchtime. There is a friendly atmosphere in the playground, with pupils of different ages playing together. A pupil in Year 4 told an inspector, 'People are friendly. You get the odd argument, but adults will help sort it. It never drags on.'
- Pupils show respect for the achievement of others and are quick to point out when their peers have been successful.
- Sometimes in Years 1 and 2, when teachers do not plan lessons to fully meet the needs of pupils, there are incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The work of current pupils in school demonstrates that they are making strong progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Assessment information and work in pupils' books show that the majority of pupils at the end of key stage 1 are working at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This was also the case in 2017.
- In 2017, progress for pupils at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average in reading and mathematics. Leaders took decisive action and current pupils are now making stronger progress. Work in pupils' books shows that the majority of pupils are working at the expected standard by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make strong progress in science. This is because assessment information is used well to provide challenge for pupils to develop scientific knowledge, along with investigative skills. Work in pupils' books shows that they develop a wide scientific vocabulary as they move through the school.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above the national average in 2017. The majority of current Year 1 pupils demonstrate a good phonetic knowledge and read confidently. This is because phonics is taught well in the early years and key stage 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress because they are provided with the right level of support and challenge.
- Pupils have well-developed spoken skills. They are articulate and express themselves clearly, both to adults and other pupils.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their various starting points. However, because 'learning plans' do not always precisely meet the needs of some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, some pupils do not make consistently strong progress.
- Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. They are confident, reflective and articulate. One Year 6 pupil told an inspector that he was 'definitely ready for secondary school'.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding typical for children of their age. They make good progress through the Nursery and Reception Years and in 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was above the national average. The school's assessment information indicates that this is the case in 2018.
- The learning environment in the Nursery and Reception classrooms is stimulating and purposeful. Children show high levels of independence in the early years, because adults have high expectations and routines are well established.
- Adults work well to promote positive relationships between children. They are able to work together well, share resources and support one another. For example, while working in the outdoor forest area, three children in the Nursery class worked together to carry a large branch they wanted to use to create a model of a sea spider.
- Adults are highly effective in promoting children's language development. They model accurate language use and ask skilful questions to develop children's ideas and thoughts.
- The early years leader is accurate in his evaluation. He has clear plans in place to further improve the provision.
- Parents are informed about their child's progress through the school's chosen online 'learning journey' and they speak positively about the early years provision. One parent told an inspector, 'The early years team is amazing. My child has positively flourished this year.'
- Children behave exceptionally well. There is a highly nurturing culture, all welfare requirements are met and children are safe.
- Adults provide children with a wide range of real-life experiences to enrich the curriculum. For instance, a recent visit from the local coastguard taught children how to stay safe while at the beach. Children also had the opportunity to explore the coastguard's van and ask questions about the equipment they could see.

School details

Unique reference number	142187
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10052618

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Julie Hall
Headteacher	Matthew Jordan
Telephone number	01502 584661
Website	www.gunton.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	office4gunton@yahoo.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Gunton Primary Academy is a larger than average-sized primary school and converted to an academy in October 2015. The school is part of REAch2 Academy Trust, which is the main governing body with legal and strategic responsibilities for all REAch2 schools. The local governing body focuses on the day-to-day responsibilities. The school does not have provision for two-year-olds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A small number of pupils access alternative provision at First Base pupil referral unit and at The Landing, at The Attic pupil referral unit.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning across all year groups.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the school business manager, other leaders, the regional director of the academy trust and a group of four governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors assessed the quality of pupils' work by scrutinising a range of written work in subjects across the curriculum. They also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils during the inspection to discuss various aspects of the school.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' achievement, and records of the school's safeguarding arrangements and of the governing body's work.
- Inspectors spoke to parents in the playground at the start of the inspection. Account was also taken of the 118 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and of the 59 parents who left comments on the Parent View free-text service. The lead inspector also took account of one letter written directly to him by a parent.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joanna Pedlow	Ofsted Inspector
Marianick Ellender-Gele	Her Majesty's Inspector

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