

Gusford Community Primary School

Sheldrake Drive, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 9LQ

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across subjects and year groups. As a result, pupils' progress is not consistently good.
- Leaders' work to develop and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding across other curriculum subjects is at an early stage of development. The quality of pupils' experiences across different subjects is typically too varied.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information effectively to plan teaching and learning. This means that pupils do not make the progress they are capable of from their starting points.
- Standards in mathematics, although improving, are still not good enough. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts.

- Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in some subjects. As a result, pupils' work varies between subjects, in both quality and presentation.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Too often, tasks do not challenge them to make the best possible progress.
- Pupils are not being given sufficient opportunity to apply their writing skills in other subjects.
- Leaders have not maintained the good provision for children in the early years. Adults do not use assessment well enough to plan activities that meet the needs of children.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, governors and the trust demonstrate a steadfast determination to improve the school. They understand what needs to be done and are holding staff to account. This is starting to lead to improvements.
- Senior leaders are skilful in their work and are beginning to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Attainment across the school is rising. Newly implemented approaches in teaching and learning are used consistently across the school. These are having a positive impact.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils are well cared for and the school works with external agencies effectively.



Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - continuing to refine and sharpen all leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching to ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good across the school
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all wider curriculum subjects is of a consistently high quality so pupils achieve well in a range of subjects
 - developing the curriculum so it consistently provides a broad range of interesting and demanding learning experiences that build upon pupils' prior knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Develop the consistency of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations across all subjects about what pupils can achieve so that pupils make better progress and show more care about how they present their work
 - teachers use assessment information to plan learning that meets the needs of pupils from their varied starting points, including the most able
 - teachers regularly correct pupils' misconceptions so pupils master basic mathematical concepts and, consequently, make better progress in mathematics
 - pupils are given opportunities to practise their writing in subjects other than English.
- Improve the effectiveness of early years by making sure that all adults use assessment information precisely and routinely to plan opportunities for children to make the best possible progress from their starting points.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since their arrival at Gusford Community Primary School, the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers have made rapid improvements in dealing with weaknesses throughout the school. They acknowledge that there is still more to do particularly in ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently effective but demonstrate determination and resilience in ensuring that standards continue to rise.
- Collectively, senior leaders are an effective team. They are well thought of and respected by staff. All staff are motivated to support continued improvement. They value the training opportunities they access. This was confirmed by the Ofsted staff questionnaire, where staff report feeling proud to work at Gusford. Furthermore, those teachers new to the profession are overwhelmingly positive about the support and development they receive from both school leaders and the trust.
- Since arriving at the school, the headteacher has reviewed provision and wasted no time in ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities. The headteacher is supported well by the skilled senior leadership team. In particular, leaders' 'hands-on' support with planning and teaching is ensuring that teachers are developing and improving their practice.
- Leaders have applied the recommendations of the pupil premium review effectively. Their use of the pupil premium funding is purposeful and more evaluative. It provides carefully considered, individualised support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result of this work, there are clear signs that disadvantaged pupils are starting to catch up with other pupils nationally and make the progress they are capable of.
- Upon their arrival, senior leaders put in place a more reliable assessment system. This is positively transforming teachers' ability to discuss pupils' progress in the information supplied to the school's 'achievement team meetings'. Consequently, this is increasing teachers' understanding of their accountability for the progress all pupils in their class make.
- Both the English and mathematics leaders know precisely what is required to continue the rapid improvement of the subjects they lead. They are knowledgeable and are successfully influencing the development of English and mathematics teaching that is needed to secure better progress for pupils. They are both realistic and accurate in their evaluation that there is more work to be done to monitor but have the skill set and determination to both challenge and support teachers well.
- Leaders use additional funding for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) appropriately. Leaders' well-thought-out provision makes sure that these pupils have targeted and effective support in school. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear understanding about what is needed to further improve the provision for pupils. Leaders have also increased their capacity to improve the quality of teaching for pupils with SEND by recently recruiting an assistant SENCo.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used well. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to take part in sports clubs with specialist



coaching, including during breakfast and lunchtimes. The funding has also been used to train teachers to use resources well in PE lessons. This has, for example, improved the quality of gymnastics because teachers feel more confident accessing and using equipment to support their teaching of gymnastic skills.

- Since the previous inspection, the trust has secured a skilful permanent leadership team and has improved the rigour with which it provides support and challenge to leaders. For example, the trust leads 'academy improvement group' meetings. This is supporting leaders to secure more rapid improvements.
- The headteacher makes use of all opportunities for external support to improve the school. For example, effective use of funding from Ipswich Opportunity Area is contributing towards high-quality leadership training. In addition to this, leaders are participating in peer reviews and these are developing leaders' strategic knowledge, skills and understanding. Other external support such as the work of the school's chosen external 'Aspire' adviser is effective in providing additional support to the headteacher. This is helping her secure more rapid, sustained improvements.
- Pupils have a sound understanding of fundamental British values and talk knowledgeably about how they apply them to their day-to-day life. For example, pupils say they are all equal and show a good understanding of different cultures and religions. This was further evidenced in the work pupils complete based upon the exploration of different religions, including Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism.
- Leaders are monitoring the quality of teaching regularly. They use both external support and internal advice from the trust, identifying areas to develop, evaluating what is needed and implementing actions. This is having a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching. Leaders identify that they need to refine and sharpen this work to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistent and all teachers sustain high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve.
- Much work has been done with parents and carers to improve communication and work in partnership to support pupils at home and in school. Overall, parents value leaders' work and are generally positive about the differences made. One parent summarised the views of the majority, saying, 'I am happy with the direction the school is headed in.'
- Leaders have reviewed the wider curriculum to ensure that all subjects receive full coverage and that there is a clear progression through the skills pupils are taught. They are fully aware that the newly implemented curriculum has not had sufficient time to become embedded and is still in its early stages of making a difference to the progress pupils make across all subject areas. Currently, the quality of pupils' teaching and learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is too varied.

Governance of the school

■ The local governing body (LGB) is well informed about the life of the school, pupils' outcomes, the quality of teaching and the impact of leaders. This is also because — in addition to being well trained — governors visit the school regularly and receive informative, evaluative reports from leaders. The LGB has a wide set of skills and uses them appropriately to ask challenging questions to bring about further improvements.



- The LGB provides both support and challenge to the leadership team. Governors have worked with the headteacher to arrange for external scrutiny to ensure that what they are being told is an accurate reflection of the school's performance.
- Members of the LGB are now more diligent and rigorous in carrying out their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. For example, safeguarding is a standing agenda item in governing body meetings. The governor responsible for overseeing and monitoring safeguarding carries out her role thoroughly, with regular visits and checks so she can report to the LGB each time it meets.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding systems are rigorous and all training is kept up to date. Discrepancies in the checks made to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children which were found at the previous inspection have been eradicated. Leaders have been meticulous in monitoring the implementation of agreed safeguarding procedures and ensuring that all staff follow the agreed procedures. Furthermore, the development of the family engagement team (FET) has strengthened this work.
- There is a securely embedded safeguarding culture across the school. Staff know their pupils very well, and the quality of relationships with pupils is a strength of the school. Staff are well trained and therefore know what to do should they have a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare.
- Leaders including governors ensure that all appropriate checks are made on staff when they are appointed. The school business manager ensures that all appropriate records are kept and maintained. Additionally, the designated safeguarding governor has a clear oversight of this work and routinely checks to ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children.
- Leaders and the FET look after the additional needs of vulnerable pupils and those that face additional hardships in their lives well. They work very closely with external agencies including mental health services and the local authority to ensure that children get the extra help they need to thrive in school.
- Pupils spoken to were unanimous in their view that they feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe, inside and outside school, including when using the internet. Equally, parents feel that the school keeps their children safe and well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment while improving remains variable across different classes in reading, writing, mathematics and the wider curriculum subjects.
- Not all teachers routinely use assessment information well to plan teaching to meet the varying needs of pupils. Teachers do not take enough account of pupils' previous



learning to set high expectations about what they should and could achieve.

- The needs of the most able pupils are not consistently being met. Although teachers provide a range of 'bronze', 'silver', 'gold' and 'platinum' challenges, teachers do not routinely check whether these pupils are accessing the right level of challenge or when they are ready to achieve more in their learning.
- Pupils do not receive sufficient opportunity to develop, practise and extend their knowledge and understanding in mathematics. Teachers do not consistently spot and deal with pupils' misconceptions sufficiently well. Consequently, this is preventing pupils from building up a secure understanding of basic mathematical concepts and, therefore, too many pupils do not make good progress over time.
- The standard of writing in English has improved across the school. In English lessons, pupils learn how to organise their writing for different purposes and audiences and use appropriate grammar and punctuation. However, pupils' application of this knowledge is not consistent and the transfer of these writing skills is not evident in other curriculum subjects. Additionally, teachers' expectations of the quality of writing in curriculum subjects is not high enough. Consequently, in these cases, pupils' progress in writing weakens.
- There is an inconsistency in teachers' expectations of what pupils achieve in subjects other than mathematics and English. Here, the quality of teaching and learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is too varied. Consequently, pupils are not being given maximum opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding to show that they can achieve well throughout the wider curriculum.
- The teaching of phonics is ensuring that pupils develop their reading skills well. Pupils in early years and key stage 1 use their understanding of letters and the sounds that they make to accurately work out unfamiliar words. Pupils who read to inspectors were proficient in their reading and were able to apply their phonics knowledge well.
- Teachers effectively promote and encourage reading. Reading is a regular occurrence across the school, with an emphasis on enjoyment. School leaders have set clear expectations about regular reading at home. These are shared with parents. Pupils spoken to during the inspection say how they enjoy reading books regularly and they make increasing progress as a result.
- Leaders make sure that teachers' planning is focused on ensuring that pupils catch up from their starting points and supports the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND. This is successfully helping these pupils to make better progress than previously.
- Staff have established positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils show respect and demonstrate that they want to learn in lessons. Pupils routinely use the consistent prompts and reminders displayed in classrooms to help them with their learning. Teachers celebrate and promote achievement through displays of the pupils' work especially their writing and a high level of praise and encouragement.



Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good and a strength of the school. Throughout the school, pupils are polite, courteous, friendly and welcoming. Pupils show respect and take care of each other.
- Relationships among pupils and between teachers and pupils are of high quality. Adults promote caring, trusting relationships with pupils and between pupils. These are raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Adults provide positive role models and, for the school's most vulnerable pupils, these ensure that pupils are increasingly more able to sustain a positive experience at school.
- Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and keen to answer questions to show what they know. Pupils are developing a love of learning. Where expectations are high, this is increasingly the case. It is only when pupils are not quite sure what they should be learning that some become disengaged. Additionally, when teachers' expectations are lower, some pupils do not try their best, particularly in subjects other than English.

Behaviour

- Behaviour is good. Pupils are very clear about what is expected of them and respond appropriately. Pupils consider behaving well to be very important. The school's behaviour systems have been reviewed and refined. Pupils are fully aware of how to behave and the consequences of poor behaviour. Pupils say that behaviour is good throughout the school. They also feel they can turn to any adult at the school and know their concerns will be dealt with.
- The school is a well-organised, tidy and calm environment. The conduct of pupils around the school site including during play and lunchtime periods is good. Pupils are respectful and polite to adults.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. Learning is very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils report that, on the rare occasions it is, teachers deal with it quickly. Even when the quality of teaching does not meet their needs, pupils generally remain well mannered and compliant.
- The small number of pupils who have the potential to exhibit challenging behaviour are well supported to manage their behaviour, both inside and outside the classroom. Adults working with these pupils develop positive relationships with them. Adults' calm, nurturing manner helps pupils to understand and uphold the behaviour expectations. Consequently, exclusions have reduced and those pupils at risk of exclusion are better prepared to be successful in their learning.
- Following decisive action by leaders, pupils are attending school more routinely. Additionally, persistent absence is reducing. The FET has worked hard with pupils and families to support attendance and has had notable success. This is particularly the case in improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Part of the FET's work has been to ensure that parents know the value of attending school regularly. This



focus starts early with Nursery so that children from a young age develop good habits of attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Although, across the school, outcomes have improved over time, standards across the key stages and subjects are not yet consistently good.
- In key stage 1, the 2018 unchecked outcomes show that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was just below the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining greater depth was also below the national average.
- Key stage 2 attainment outcomes in 2018 were below the national average in reading and mathematics, but above average in writing. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards was below the national average in reading and mathematics. It was below average at greater depth in writing. However, these outcomes show an improving trend over time.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in combined reading, writing and mathematics improved. The 2018 outcome for this measure although still below the national average was a significant improvement on previous years. Most significantly, the key stage 2 outcomes in 2018 showed that there was an improvement in the progress pupils made separately in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have identified specific needs in the current Year 6 cohort. The steps they have taken to address these are being positively reflected in the current assessment information. Leaders have identified that, in key stage 2, some pupils' progress is still not strong enough to close gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills from key stage 1. Inspection evidence shows that current Year 6 pupils are making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared to previous years.
- Carefully considered spending of additional funding ensures that the emotional, social and behavioural needs as well as the academic needs of pupils with SEND are met well. These pupils are progressing better from their starting points because of individualised support. Although improving, over time, the progress made by this group of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics remains variable.
- As a result of the previous quality of mathematics teaching, pupils have gaps in their mathematical understanding. Teachers are now focusing on filling these and are developing pupils' fluency and confidence with number problems. However, leaders identify that this is still a work in progress to secure greater consistency so that all pupils achieve well in mathematics.
- For the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been improving. In both 2017 and 2018, it was above the national average. Pupils in Year 1 continue to benefit from a systematic approach to the teaching of skills in phonics.
- Over time, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has trailed behind that of other pupils in the school and of other pupils nationally. Evidence from the inspection shows that disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress across the school are improving.



Consequently, the difference between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally is diminishing.

■ The most recent school assessment information shows that a higher proportion of current Year 6 pupils are likely to reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, they are now being better prepared for the next stage of their education than pupils previously.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Despite leaders' dedication, the quality of teaching and learning is not ensuring that children make good progress from their starting points. While planning is in place to identify priorities, the good provision at the previous inspection has not been fully sustained.
- Leaders report that children start in the early years with knowledge and abilities that are lower than those typical for their age. Inspection evidence confirms this to be accurate. Over time, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has been improving. However, it is still just below the national average. Furthermore, inspection evidence shows that current children are making inconsistent progress from their different starting points, due to the variable quality of teaching, learning and the use of assessment.
- Assessments of children's learning are regularly undertaken. However, teachers do not consistently ensure that the information they gather is used to plan and provide activities and opportunities that develop learning to the full. As a result, children do not routinely make good progress.
- The indoor and outside environment potentially provide a wide range of independent and directed activities to enable children to develop and practise their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, the activities planned are not specific enough to consistently meet children's needs from their starting points, taking into account the prior assessment information.
- Children in early years are confident in their environment. They demonstrate that they are ready to learn and show signs of wanting to do more. Children enthusiastically talked to inspectors and were inquisitive and eager to carry out tasks. For example, children were very keen to share the model menorahs they were making as part of their work linked to Hanukkah. They were able to talk about how they made them and the decisions they made to improve them.
- Children respond positively to adults, and their relationships with adults are trusting and respectful. Routines are well established and children behave appropriately. This contributes to ensuring that children feel happy and confident in talking about their learning and wanting to do well.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and welfare requirements are met. Staff have received appropriate training and the environment is safe and secure.



School details

Unique reference number 139803

Local authority Suffolk

Inspection number 10054997

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 597

Appropriate authority Board of trustees

Chair Marilyn Toft

Headteacher Claire Claydon

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Website www.gusford.suffolk.sch.uk

Email address admin@gusfordprimary.net

Date of previous inspection 22 March 2017

Information about this school

- Gusford Community Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school became part of the Active Learning Academy Trust in September 2013. The Active Learning Trust board has put an LGB in place to oversee leadership within the school. The role of the LGB is to have delegated responsibility for strategic direction, hold the school to account for educational performance and oversee the financial performance and compliance of the school. There is a chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2017. The deputy headteacher and one assistant headteacher started at Gusford in January 2018 and another assistant headteacher began more recently in September 2018.
- The school receives additional support from Ipswich Opportunity Area funding and a National Association of Head Teachers Aspire adviser.



- Many staff changes have taken place since the previous inspection. A high proportion of the teachers are new to the school within the last 18 months.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND support is just above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not, or believed not to be, English is below the national average.



Information about this inspection

- Learning was observed in all classes by more than one inspector. The majority of learning was observed jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the two assistant headteachers. Additionally, pupils joined an inspector for a walk around the school to discuss the school's work. Leaders also joined inspectors to scrutinise a wide range of children's and pupils' books.
- Inspectors talked with pupils throughout the inspection to ascertain their views about their school experience and met with a group of pupils from the school council. One inspector heard pupils read and two others joined staff and pupils in school assemblies.
- The lead inspector spoke to the Active Learning Trust CEO and the trust's school improvement director in a telephone conference call and met with a trust representative. Additionally, the lead inspector held a telephone conversation with another trust representative who works closely with the school. A separate meeting was held with members of the LGB, including the chair and vice-chair.
- Inspectors met and worked closely with all senior leaders who also hold roles leading assessment, English, mathematics and the curriculum. In addition, the lead inspector met the school business manager to talk about the checks made to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work, small-group work and a sports event that was happening during the second day of the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the FET team to discuss safeguarding, attendance and aspects of pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the end of the school day. In addition to this, inspectors took account of 87 responses to the Ofsted free-text system and 86 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of the school's most recent parent survey.
- Inspectors took account of 57 responses to the staff questionnaire and spoke with a cross-section of staff including teachers new to the teaching profession to discuss their views of the school and how they have been supported.
- The inspectors looked at a full range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, school evaluation and improvement plans, information about teachers' performance and external views of the school. They reviewed the contents of the school's website and closely scrutinised records relating to behaviour, exclusions, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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