

Inspection of a good school: Great Wakering Primary Academy

High Street, Great Wakering, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS3 0EJ

Inspection dates:

3–4 October 2019

Outcome

Great Wakering Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and teachers make sure that the work pupils do is challenging and interesting. Pupils are often very interested in what they learn. They spoke to me with enthusiasm about their enjoyment of reading and of mathematics. In lessons, pupils pay attention and work hard.

Pupils are kind to each other. Bullying is rare and pupils respect each other's individuality. One pupil captured the views of many, saying, 'Nobody thinks about it because we are all friends and it doesn't matter.' Another commented, 'Life would be boring if we were all the same.'

There are lots of extra-curricular activities to get involved in. Leaders have made sure that everyone can take part in these. Leaders provide activities at different times of the day so that pupils who find it hard to stay after school can participate. They have changed the type of artistic production the school runs to make sure that all pupils are included.

Parents and carers and staff share the positive attitudes towards the school indicated by pupils. In Ofsted's surveys of their views, most parents and staff responded positively to all the questions they were asked. A theme in the responses of parents was how caring and supportive they found the school to be.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They focus on ensuring that all pupils have the essential literacy and numeracy skills they need.

Leaders have established a common approach to teaching phonics that is understood by staff in all year groups. Leaders and teachers make sure phonics is taught well. Staff build on this well by teaching reading skills as pupils progress through the year groups. They supplement this by making sure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to read.

There is a clear structure for teaching mathematics. Teachers use the same mathematics techniques as each other so that pupils do not become confused. Leaders make sure that teachers know which topics they need to cover over what timescale. Teachers retain the flexibility to adapt their plans, based on their assessment of how well pupils are learning. Pupils' understanding of mathematics develops well over time.

Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils learn a lot across a wide range of subjects. Over time, pupils have learned about important historical events and people, for instance. However, until recently, less thought has been given to how the subjects are planned and taught. Pupils knowledge of these subject areas is not as strong as their understanding of mathematics or English.

Staff cater well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have the same high expectations for the pupils as they do for others. Leaders have a clear process for identifying pupils' needs. They provide appropriate support. This includes high-quality teaching, the use of additional resources and skilful guidance from adults. Leaders check on how well the support they provide is working. They make changes if it is not working well.

Ofsted's surveys show that parents and staff think behaviour is a strength of the school. This strength was evident throughout the inspection. Pupils behave well. In lessons, they settle quickly to their work. They listen, respond and join in politely. They make good use of their time to learn. In their free time, pupils play well together.

The school's curriculum effectively promotes pupils' understanding of the wider world. Financial responsibility, personal safety, independence, community responsibilities and diversity are all taught across all year groups. The wide range of clubs and activities, alongside the increasing range of trips, helps to further broaden pupils' experience.

Children in early years learn well across the different areas of early learning. Adults quickly establish routines that ensure children make the most of their time in Reception. Children are involved in activities that absorb their attention and develop their understanding of the world around them. Leaders ensure that time is used effectively with a mixture of adult-led activities and activities that children choose themselves. Children learn and explore, showing confidence and a keenness to discuss what they are doing.

Leaders take care over the well-being of staff. Staff appreciate this. Staff commented on how the high level of organisation from senior leaders helps them to manage their own workload. They appreciate being involved in decision making. All staff who responded to Ofsted's survey of their views say that the school is led and managed well and that they feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a good understanding of relevant safeguarding issues. They make sure that their training, and that of staff, are kept up to date. They monitor concerns about pupils,

liaising with external agencies as appropriate to protect pupils from harm.

Bullying is rare and, if it does happen, pupils are confident it will be dealt with well. Pupils feel safe and they have someone to talk to if they are worried about something.

There were some minor administrative errors in recruitment and vetting records, which were identified at the start of the inspection. These were put right during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' knowledge of subjects other than English and mathematics is not as strong as it is of English and mathematics. This is because, in the past, planning for these subjects has been less focused on the way pupils progress through the curriculum and on how teachers ensure that pupils remember and build on key knowledge. Leaders should ensure that their new approaches to teaching the broader curriculum secure in pupils a deep and lasting understanding and application of what they are taught.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Great Woking Primary School, to be good.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143978
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10112156
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Smith
Headteacher	Jennifer Burdett (Head of school) Hayley O'Dea (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.greatwaking.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened as Great Waking Primary Academy in 2017. It replaced Great Waking Primary School.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, accompanied by the head of school, I visited classes in all year groups, looking in detail at reading, mathematics and history. I met with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- I spoke with the head of school, the executive headteacher (who is also the chief executive officer of the trust), and trustees. I reviewed safeguarding documentation and considered leaders' evaluation of the school.
- I considered the 60 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 60 responses to the free-text option. I also took into account the responses of the 29 staff who completed Ofsted's survey of staff views. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils' views.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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