

Inspection of a good school: Great Bardfield Primary School

Braintree Road, Great Bardfield, Braintree, Essex CM7 4RN

Inspection date: 23 February 2022

Outcome

Great Bardfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Great Bardfield Primary School, pupils are proud of their school and live up to the well-established school values. Pupils appreciate the school's positive ethos. They feel both safe and happy.

Pupils care for each other remarkably well during lessons and playtimes. From an early age, they learn how to listen to and respect what others say. During wider discussions, such as whole-school assembly, pupils contribute their views articulately and sensitively. Bullying is very rare. When pupils are worried about relationships, or feel bullied, they and their parents are confident that staff help and make things better. One pupil told us that the school is like a 'caring family'.

Pupils know the importance of learning. They do their best to learn well and demonstrate the school values of resilience and resourcefulness when facing difficulties. Pupils behave well and support each other with their learning.

Pupils readily take up positions of responsibility at the school. For example, older pupils help lead assembly, serve as dinner monitors and lead play on the playground for the children in Reception.

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

There has been much change in the school recently. In February 2022, a week before the inspection, leaders reduced the class number from six to five. Prior to this there had also been some staff changes. Governors, leaders and staff have managed these changes well. They have focused, and continue to focus, on the right things to ensure they remain prioritised on high-quality education and care for pupils in the school. Some parents, while positive about their children's experience, are concerned about this new arrangement. Leaders are continuing to work with parents and families to address any concerns they may have.

The curriculum is well considered and delivered by staff. Leaders provide clear guidance to staff about what pupils must learn and when they should learn it. Staff regularly check how well pupils are learning. Teachers quickly identify and help pupils who do not understand something so that they do not fall behind. Teachers typically use information from these checks to plan appropriate learning activities. On occasion, however, staff do not make sure that pupils have all the knowledge they need to apply to more complex learning activities. When this happens, pupils do not learn all the knowledge that leaders intend, and pupils' responses to answers are less well developed.

Governors, leaders, staff and pupils place great importance on ensuring pupils learn how to read and enjoy reading. Leaders have trained staff well in their chosen programme and have made sure that all staff use their approach to phonics as expected. Children in Reception learn quickly what they need to start reading. They love reading and proudly demonstrate when they learn new words and sounds. As pupils get older, they continue to love reading. Leaders provide sophisticated texts, from a range of genres, which the pupils benefit from and enjoy. They ensure staff support pupils who find reading difficult or need extra help so that they can read confidently.

Leaders and staff effectively support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders make sure that staff know each pupil's needs and work with families to help these pupils find solutions to the challenges they face. Leaders work well with appropriate agencies to ensure that needs are accurately identified, and appropriate provision put in place.

In line with the school values, pupils respect each other by behaving well in lessons so that they can learn without distraction. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are uncommon. Leaders support staff well so that those pupils who might otherwise find it hard maintain acceptable behaviour in lessons and during playtimes. Pupils who find it difficult to concentrate understand and use the strategies staff provide. This makes a positive difference. In Reception, staff quickly establish high expectations for children's behaviour and they quickly learn the school's values.

Governors and leaders aim for pupils to become 'citizens of the world'. The curriculum for personal development is well developed and prepares pupils to live happily alongside those with different lifestyles to their own. All the pupils who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally. This is evident in the pupils' conduct.

Governors and leaders have created an ethos where staff work as a strong team, in pupils' best interests. Every member of staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. Leaders have worked well with staff to make sure workload is reasonable.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that ensuring staff prepare pupils with the background knowledge needed to complete learning activities may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff and governors at the school have the necessary training to carry out their safeguarding duties effectively. They understand the risks pupils face and are on the lookout for signs of harm. Staff know what to do and act appropriately when they are worried about a pupil's safety or well-being.

Pupils learn about the risks they face when at school, at home, in the community and online. Pupils feel confident that the adults at school are willing and able to help if pupils have concerns.

Leaders ensure that background checks of adults are undertaken to determine if they are suitable to work with children.

Governors check that leaders and staff carry out their safeguarding duties effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, pupils do not know the background knowledge needed to complete some learning activities successfully. As a result, sometimes pupils do not learn what is intended. Teachers must ensure that pupils have the knowledge needed to take on successfully more-complex learning activities.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	114835
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10211099
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Tillotson
Headteacher	Alison Kerrell
Website	www.greatbardfieldprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- During January 2022, half of the school's pupils and staff were absent from school due to COVID-19.
- In February 2022, governors and leaders changed the class structure from six to five classes with mixed-age groups.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors spoke to leaders and staff and looked at records about safeguarding, the school roll, the behaviour of pupils, the provision for pupils' personal development and leaders' approach to managing the workload of staff.

Inspection team

Al Mistrano, lead inspector

Duncan Ramsey

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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