

Inspection of a good school: Gade Valley Primary School

Gadebridge Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP1 3DT

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 July 2022

Outcome

Gade Valley Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Gade Valley Primary School enjoy the many opportunities they have. Pupils talk openly and enthusiastically about how their teachers support them to become better learners by using the school learning behaviours and 'CHAMP' (confident, helpful, attentive, motivated, perseverant) attributes. Pupils regularly and consistently use these attributes of being 'confident, helpful, attentive, motivated and to persevere'. Carefully chosen rewards, such as the Friday 'Golden Ticket' or 'Book of Excellence', motivate pupils further.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. They have positive attitudes towards their learning and this helps them to achieve well. Pupils work hard in lessons. They try their best to meet the high expectations the school has of them. Pupils appreciate the way the staff look after them and treat them with respect. Bullying is rare and, if it does happen, staff quickly resolve it.

Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about the many opportunities they have outside the classroom, such as trips to Harry Potter World or the 'campout' in Year 6. They enjoy enrichment days, such as the outdoor learning 'GOAL' days, which provide pupils with opportunities to solve problems. Older pupils relish the numerous positions of responsibility they have, such as being a librarian. Pupils on the school eco-council represent the school with pride. These opportunities teach pupils how to be responsible and support others. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. Leaders adapted this during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that pupils learned the most important knowledge. As a result, pupils have a secure understanding in the core subjects. For example, in mathematics, pupils are fluent and understand number and calculations. Children in the early years are taught early mathematics effectively. This prepares them well for their next stage of learning.

Staff receive regular training to support them with their teaching of reading. Staff teach the school's phonics scheme consistently. Children in the early years are taught phonics as soon as they start school. Staff identify any pupils who are struggling with their reading. Pupils receive the precise support and help they need to catch up. Pupils speak positively about how this helps them to become more confident readers. Leaders have worked hard to match the school reading books to the sounds pupils know and can decode. This means pupils develop fluency in their reading.

A love of reading is shared throughout the school. Pupils speak articulately and enthusiastically about how much they enjoy reading. Carefully chosen stories used during the 'we read' and 'once upon a time' reading sessions further enhance this enjoyment. 'Golden Ticket' rewards motivate pupils to read regularly at home. Staff use a wide range of diverse stories. This develops pupils' understanding of different authors, genres and cultures. Focused reading assemblies further enhance this understanding.

Leaders have designed the curriculum in the foundation subjects. Pupils typically have a sound recall of knowledge learned. However, in some subjects, leaders have not yet clearly defined the important knowledge which pupils need to learn. They have also not identified how this knowledge will build on what pupils have learned before. Teachers do not always identify misconceptions or gaps in knowledge in these subjects. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they should.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works carefully with staff to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers typically adapt the curriculum well. As a result of this, pupils with SEND learn well and enjoy school. There are occasions where support for pupils with SEND is not precise enough. This means that pupils' misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge are not always identified and rectified.

Pupils consistently show positive behaviour throughout the school. From the very beginning of early years, children learn routines and the behaviours expected of them. Pupils show kindness, caring and tolerance for each other. They develop positive relationships with each other and adults at school. A range of exciting rewards and incentives inspire pupils to display their CHAMP values. Pupils are confident, helpful, attentive, motivated and persevere when they face challenges.

Pupils strive to be positive role models and enjoy the many opportunities on offer for their wider development. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of maintaining the garden and looking after the school rabbit. The school eco-council works alongside leaders to make improvements to the school. Pupils understand different people, cultures and faiths through the curriculum and the diverse literature which is used.

Leaders and governors work with staff to ensure their workload is manageable. Staff feel well supported. Leaders have prioritised engaging the parental community. Parents are kept informed of what their child is learning in school and how well they are performing at school. As a result, almost all parents who responded to the parent survey were positive about the quality of education their children receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Leaders provide staff with regular training so they know how to recognise and respond to the potential signs of abuse. They know the procedures for reporting concerns. Leaders use a range of outside agencies to ensure pupils receive the help they need.

Leaders teach pupils to keep themselves safe. The curriculum and e-safety days ensure that pupils know the potential risks of being online.

Leaders carry out all pre-employment checks on new members of staff. The single central record is comprehensive and up to date. Governors regularly monitor safeguarding procedures in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not identified the important concepts and knowledge pupils need to learn and revisit. As a result, pupils do not know the important content or make connections between learning in these subjects. Leaders must ensure that subject leaders identify and plan the important concepts that need to be taught and revisited across all subjects. They must then check that this is enabling pupils to develop a deep understanding of important knowledge.
- In some areas of the curriculum, including for pupils with SEND, teachers do not always have a precise understanding about what pupils know and can do. Leaders must ensure that teachers know how to precisely identify misconceptions and gaps in knowledge so that pupils are supported to catch up effectively.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2016.

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	117249
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10200346
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Jon Chapman
Headteacher	Daniel Barron
Website	www.gadevalley.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Gade Valley is an average-sized primary school.
- There is an on-site before- and after-school club run by the school.
- The school has a Nursery class for three- and four-year-olds.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.

- The inspector scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school’s record of background checks of adults at the school and a sample of child protection files. The inspector also spoke with governors, leaders and staff about safeguarding practices at the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the SENCo, subject leaders, staff and pupils. They also met with governors and an adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, SEND records, local authority visit notes, school development plans and school policies.
- There were 72 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, that were considered alongside 53 free-text responses.
- There were no responses to the pupil survey. The inspector spoke to pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views and looked at the school’s recent pupil survey results.
- There were 22 responses to the staff survey. The inspector also spoke to staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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