

Inspection of Gotham Primary School

Kegworth Road, Gotham, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG11 0JS

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's mission statement of 'Being the best we can be together!' represents the aspirational ethos and family feeling at Gotham. Staff know the pupils well. Teachers combine care and support with high expectations. Pupils are happy to come to school. They talk positively and enthusiastically about their learning.

Adults teach pupils how to manage their feelings. Pupils know the importance of resilience. As one pupil typically explained, 'We don't ever fail. It's just your first attempt.' Another said, 'I don't get upset by getting one thing wrong. I just want to try again.'

Pupils know the school's rules and routines. Classrooms are positive and peaceful places to learn. Pupils are polite and well-behaved. They know that bullying is not tolerated. 'STOP' signs around the school help pupils to understand what bullying is and how to report it.

Parents and carers appreciate the support and communication they receive from the school. They told inspectors that staff are dedicated, approachable and friendly. One parent, typical of many, said, 'The school is very good at listening to our views and responding.'

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

Gotham is a well-led school. Significant improvements have been made in recent years. Leaders have re-designed the school's curriculum and ensured that it progresses logically. The important knowledge that pupils need to learn is outlined from the early years to Year 6. All subjects set out the words that pupils will learn to widen their vocabulary. This means that teachers are clear about what they are teaching and in what order. Teachers revisit what pupils have learned before. Pupils know why this is important. Pupils in Year 3 told inspectors, 'We do retrieval practice – we go over things from Year 1 and Year 2, so we don't forget.'

Subject leaders have set out what pupils are expected to know and when they are expected to know it. However, some subject leaders have not checked to see if pupils understand and remember the important knowledge that has been planned. This means that some subject leaders are not fully able to measure the effectiveness of their curriculum.

Mathematics is taught consistently well. Teachers present information clearly. Basic skills are prioritised, so that pupils become fluent with numbers. For example, younger children in the Reception class spend time counting, while others practise their times tables. Staff provide mathematical equipment to help pupils understand what they are learning. In Year 2, for example, pupils use clocks to set times of the day. Teachers revisit the mathematical concepts pupils have learned before. Pupils

told inspectors, 'We do a lot of recapping in our lessons so the maths goes from our working memory into our long-term memory.'

Learning to read begins as soon as children start at Gotham in the early years. Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme. Staff have been trained so that phonics is taught consistently well. Teachers regularly check which letters and sounds pupils know. Staff quickly provide more support for anyone who needs extra help. Staff make sure that the books pupils take home are matched to the letters and sounds that they know. Reading, and a love of books, are promoted throughout the school. Pupils enjoy listening to adults read to them.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. The leader for SEND knows the needs of these pupils and makes sure that they receive the support that is planned for them. Teachers make changes to their lessons so that pupils with SEND learn the same things as their classmates. Parents appreciate the support that pupils with SEND receive.

Careful consideration has been given to pupils' personal development. Pupils value diversity and celebrate difference. They told inspectors, 'People should be treated the same way. There is no difference between people. We all have the same rights.' Pupils understand what it means to have healthy relationships. Pupils value the trips and clubs offered at Gotham.

Leaders have procedures in place to monitor and improve rates of absence. Most pupils have high attendance. However, some pupils do not attend as regularly as they need to.

Significant improvements have been made to governance at Gotham. Governors know the school well. They understand its strengths and areas for development. Governors have challenged and supported leaders to make improvements to the curriculum. The impact of additional funding is closely monitored.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have been trained how to spot if a pupil is potentially at risk of harm. They know how to act on concerns about a pupil's welfare. Record-keeping is clear and thorough. Governors make checks on the school's safeguarding procedures.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to stay safe, including when online. Pupils in Year 6 talk positively about their drugs awareness lessons and how these lessons help prepare them for their next stage of learning. Pupils know they can tell a trusted adult in school if they are worried about anything.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders do not check to see if pupils know and understand what has been planned for them to learn. This means that they are not able to fully evaluate the effectiveness of their subject. Leaders should check whether curriculum plans have been implemented effectively and if they are having the intended impact on what pupils know and can do.
- The rate of persistent absence remains too high for a small number of pupils. They miss too much school and this impacts on the progress they could potentially make. Leaders should reconsider the approaches they are taking to assure themselves that they are doing everything they can to reduce the rates of persistent absenteeism.

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	122644
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10227388
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennie Walker
Headteacher	Janette Allen
Website	www.gothamprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and geography. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to subject leaders about the curriculums for history, art and design, computing, design and technology, French and physical education.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders and a sample of teaching and support staff. Inspectors met with the leaders

responsible for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, behaviour, attendance and personal development.

- The lead inspector met with the designated leader for safeguarding to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of safeguarding documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance, and documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in the Reception Year, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Westmoreland

Ofsted Inspector

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