

Inspection of Gusford Community Primary School

Sheldrake Drive, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 9LQ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have noticed how Gusford has improved recently. They are happy. Pupils want to attend school and feel safe doing so. Pupils say that the school's values, such as kindness, honesty and respect, help them to get along together. They are proud of their school. Many parents agree and comment positively about the improvement brought about by recent changes.

Pupils behave well. The three 'rights', to learn, to be safe and to have respect, thread through all aspects of school life. This creates a calm and positive environment. Everyone understands and follows the rules. These expectations help pupils to work hard in class.

Pupils say that bullying is rare in their school. They know that staff are there to help them. Pupils are confident that if they have any concerns, then adults will look after them.

Over time, pupils have not benefited from an ambitious curriculum. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge and often struggle to remember what they have learned in the past. New leaders have now ensured that all subjects are well planned. It is helping pupils to become more successful in their learning.

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

Recent changes to the school leadership have had a positive effect in a short time. New leaders have established a collaborative team spirit among all staff. They have worked together to bring about needed improvement to the school.

Leaders have ensured that all subjects are well planned. Their curriculum programmes make clear the things pupils need to know and remember. Staff make use of questions to check what pupils remember during the lesson. Some curriculum plans are in their early stages of implementation. Teachers have not developed the expertise they need to deliver all subjects well. In these subjects, teachers do not make connections to what pupils already know. This limits what pupils remember.

Leaders use a consistent approach to check and assess how well their curriculum intentions are working. Where curriculum plans are well established, subject leaders have made refinements to improve pupils' learning. This has not been possible across every subject. Some subject leaders are new to their role. They are receiving training to help develop their knowledge and skills of leadership.

Previously, the curriculum in the early years did not support children to achieve well. Leaders have taken prompt action. They have clarified what children need to learn. Children benefit from carefully planned activities. Positive relationships with adults help to build children's confidence. Many have settled well at school in a short space of time. However, the curriculum is in its early stages of implementation. Staff have

not received all the training to support children's learning in all areas of learning. This especially applies to developing children's communication and language skills.

The new leadership team has been quick to identify weaknesses in the teaching of early reading. All staff are now fully trained to teach phonics. Children start learning phonics as soon as they start in Reception. Books are well matched to the sounds pupils are learning. However, the legacy of weaker teaching means that some older pupils are not learning to read quickly enough. Leaders have introduced extra support for those who find reading difficult. It is still too early to see how quickly pupils are catching up with their reading.

Leaders quickly identify needs that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) may have. Teachers make effective use of pupils' individual plans to help them take part in class. However, not all teachers adapt their learning plans successfully, especially where curriculum plans are new. This limits what pupils with SEND achieve because they do not access the same knowledge as their peers.

Pupils value the new systems to reward good behaviour. They are keen to demonstrate the school's values to earn golden tickets. Pupils cooperate well together, whether in class or outside on the playground.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils have opportunities to become active citizens through different roles and responsibilities. Participation in residential trips promotes pupils' confidence and resilience. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and value differences in one another. As one pupil said to inspectors, 'This school respects our differences.'

Governors and the trust have worked alongside new leaders to improve the quality of education. They have not shied away from making important decisions. Governors use their knowledge of the school to challenge school leaders. This is helping the school to improve rapidly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safety and welfare of pupils are high priorities for leaders. Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are alert to any signs of abuse. They understand how to report their concerns. Leaders take appropriate steps to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the help they need.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe through their lessons. For example, they understand the possible dangers when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have only recently introduced their curriculum programmes for some subjects. Teachers do not have the expertise to deliver these programmes effectively. This means that they do not understand how to help pupils connect their learning to what they already know, including those pupils with SEND. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive the professional development to build their subject knowledge and to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- The legacy of weaker teaching has led to gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge. Those pupils who find it difficult to read are not catching up quickly enough. This is because they are not confident in using their phonics to read accurately. Leaders should ensure that the additional help provided for these pupils is working effectively so that more pupils are reading confidently by the end of key stage 1.
- The early years provision has experienced recent changes in staffing. Plans for the early years curriculum are new and in the early stages of implementation. Children have not had the benefit of experiencing these new approaches and, in the past, were not well prepared for Year 1. Leaders must provide staff with training so that they understand how best to support children's development, especially with their communication and language skills.

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.

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	139803
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10241100
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	558
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bob Dool
Headteacher	Heather Madsen (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.gusfordprimary.net
Date of previous inspection	18 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The head of school took up post in April 2022.
- The head of school is supported by an executive headteacher from the Active Learning Trust, appointed in April 2022.
- The school makes use of two alternative provisions, First Base and PLOT.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the head of school, the executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were held with the school's designated leaders for safeguarding and with staff from the family engagement team.

- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the assistant director for primary learning and three members of the local governance board, including the chair and vice-chair.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's work to safeguard pupils. This included records of actions taken relating to concerns about pupils' safety. The school's single central record, which includes the recruitment checks made on staff, was scrutinised.
- Inspectors checked a range of documentation, including school improvement plans, self-evaluation documents and school records for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally on the playground at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 37 free-text comments from parents. Inspectors also reviewed the 31 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses from the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Fordham	Ofsted Inspector
Tim McLoughlin	Ofsted Inspector
Ania Vaughan	Ofsted Inspector

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