

Inspection of a good school: Great Gidding CofE Primary School

Main Street, Great Gidding, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 5NX

Inspection dates:

16 November 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Great Gidding pupils are polite, caring, and enthusiastic. They rise to the expectations that teachers have of them. Pupils try hard to be respectful, resourceful and responsible. They show this when, for example, they help to set up assemblies and put equipment away at the end of play. Older pupils look after younger pupils at break time.

Most pupils behave well. They are eager to share their ideas. A few do not behave as they should in class. When this happens, they respond to teachers' instructions promptly, most of the time.

Pupils enjoy learning about different subjects, but they often struggle with more complicated tasks in lessons. This is because the basic knowledge they need for these tasks is not secure enough.

Pupils are safe and cared for. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that their teachers will sort it out if it happens. They say there is always an adult to speak with.

Pupils get involved in activities that take place at different times of the year, such as art, sports, and drumming clubs. They build self-confidence on class residential trips. Pupils love to celebrate each other's achievements in special assemblies.

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

Leaders and teachers have worked together to bring about improvements to the curriculum. They have made sure that it is better suited to the mixed-aged classes in the school. The curriculum is designed to complement leaders' vision of 'growing great learners'.

Leaders have set out what they want pupils to know and remember in each subject. The curriculum is sequenced well, identifying how previous knowledge unlocks new learning. For example, in geography, teachers plan for pupils to make links between different climates and knowledge of lines of latitude.

Leaders and teachers rightly place a high priority on teaching pupils how to read. In all classes, pupils read at different points throughout the school day. Teachers read interesting books to pupils regularly. They read in ways that capture pupils' imaginations. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite stories. In Reception, shared books introduce children to new vocabulary.

Children learn phonics from the start of Reception. Teachers teach the phonics programme well. The books that teachers use to help pupils learn to read are chosen well. This helps pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to learn to read at a speedy rate. Readers who once struggled are proud to show the books they can now read.

The strengths seen in the teaching of reading are not consistently evident in other subjects. Teachers do not always select lesson activities that focus pupils' thinking squarely on key knowledge. Too often, teachers move pupils on to the next topic before pupils are secure in the knowledge they need. When, for instance, pupils try to solve problems in mathematics, they do not always remember the times tables facts they need. In Reception, children occasionally find activities confusing. This happens when teachers do not spend enough time practising the basics with them.

Historically, teachers have received patchy information about the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, teaching has not been adapted consistently well. Some pupils with SEND receive less precise levels of support than others. Since their appointment, current interim leaders and governors have acted quickly to secure a SEND specialist teacher for the school. The right support is now starting to be put in place for pupils. Because this work only began recently, significant improvements have not been seen at this stage.

The current interim headteacher has also simplified the school rules about behaviour. This made it easier for pupils to remember them. Staff apply these rules appropriately. As a result, teachers more frequently pick up on occasional disruption. Pupils refer to these rules when they explain why their behaviour was not acceptable. Although pupils largely behave well, leaders and teachers know that there is more to do to secure consistently positive behaviour.

Leaders and teachers support pupils' wider development effectively. Assemblies focus on the school's values and prompt pupils to think about important topics, such as anti-bullying and the work of charities. Leaders have gradually reintroduced several clubs and trips. As a small school, all pupils visit the theatre together. Classes have visits to places of worship. Pupils are respectful of different ways of living. They talk accurately about different cultures and beliefs held by people in society.

The work environment is very supportive. Staff have effective support to manage their workload. They are very proud to be part of the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders act rapidly to secure the right level of support for vulnerable pupils and families who need it. They work well with external agencies when appropriate.

Staff know how to spot safeguarding concerns. They know how to follow these up appropriately. Leaders check that staff know what they need to about safeguarding pupils. Leaders make sure that the curriculum includes information about how to stay safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Leaders and managers have made the necessary pre-appointment checks on staff. Governors check the single central record of these checks to make sure it is accurate and up to date.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In too many subjects, teachers do not ensure that pupils practise key knowledge until they are fluent. This means that those pupils who most need to be secure in crucial component knowledge struggle unnecessarily to complete complex tasks. Leaders should ensure that teachers thoroughly teach the most important knowledge and concepts that pupils need before they move on to new content.
- Leaders do not consistently provide teachers with up-to-date information about pupils with SEND to inform their teaching choices. This means that teaching to support these pupils is not as precise as it should be. Leaders should ensure that teachers have, and use, detailed information about pupils with SEND to adapt their teaching appropriately.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in 11–12 October 2017.

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	110813
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10255253
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	George Hayes
Headteacher	Deboragh Bowles
Website	www.greatgidding.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 – 12 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The interim headteacher joined the school in October 2022. The previous headteacher left in July 2022. Another interim headteacher was in place until October 2022.
- The interim chair of the governing body joined the school in September 2022.
- The interim headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and a teacher is also the deputy designated safeguarding lead.
- A specialist SEND teacher from the local authority has coordinated SEND provision since October 2022.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- This is a Church of England school which also receives denominational (section 48) inspections. The last section 48 inspection took place in September 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due within the next two years.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors spoke to the interim headteacher, teachers, staff, pupils, and the interim chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and geography. This included discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons in these subjects and looked at pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders and pupils about, and looked at documentation for, music, religious education, personal, social and health education, and science.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including school policies.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, staff, leaders, managers and a governor about the school and its safeguarding arrangements. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central register and examined the record of employment checks on staff. Inspectors looked at safeguarding case files to evaluate safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. There were no responses to the staff or pupil inspection surveys.

Inspection team

Richard Kueh, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Shan Oswald

Ofsted Inspector

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