

Inspection of a good school: Godmanchester Community Academy

Park Lane, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 2AG

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

Godmanchester Community Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value their time at Godmanchester Community Academy. Pupils' school experience is positive. Everyone gets along well. There are rarely any issues with poor behaviour. Pupils consistently follow the 'GCA way' across the school, demonstrating high standards of behaviour, attitudes and respect towards each other and to adults.

Pupils have their 'network' of trusted adults who sort out any problems that might happen. Bullying is not an issue and is taken very seriously if it occurs. Pupils enjoy the challenge of their studies. They listen to each other and take turns. Children in early years learn routines and grow their independence. Outside of lessons, older pupils look out for younger children. Some pupils are 'peer mediators' and so help others to solve any disagreement.

Pupils appreciate and attend the growing number of interesting clubs that are on offer, such as multi-sports or cross-stitch. Pupils take on responsibilities, such as eco-monitors or junior travel ambassadors, to help with safe ways to travel or to improve the school environment. Visitors and trips enrich the school curriculum. Pupils meet people from different backgrounds or cultures and so learn about, for example, a range of religions and perspectives on life.

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

Leaders, with the support of governors and staff, have reviewed and changed the school's curriculum and approach to teaching and learning. Leaders ensure that all pupils access an ambitious curriculum covering the full range of national curriculum subjects. Across each subject area, leaders outline the most important knowledge that they want pupils to know. The curriculum in the Reception Year provides a firm foundation for each subject area. Documentation shows clearly how knowledge builds, year on year, as pupils move through the school.

Teachers and support staff use the curriculum documentation, including the subject 'booklets', to help them to choose activities that support pupils' learning. Overall, teachers pick the most effective activities that allow pupils to learn well and to make secure progress. This, however, is not always the case. Sometimes the activities that teachers select, including from the curriculum booklets, are not always as helpful to pupils as they should be. In these few instances, pupils do not learn as much as they could.

Continued recapping of previous content and checks on learning mean that teachers know what pupils have learned in their lessons. Teachers provide quick, reactive, catch-up activities for any pupils who have a misconception or do not understand an idea. Robust checks later in the school year help teachers to know if learning has really stuck with pupils and what further learning pupils need to help them to progress.

Learning to read is a school priority. Children in early years learn their letters and sounds well. A carefully planned reading curriculum builds on this strong start. Rigorous in-class checks help staff to spot if a pupil falls behind or finds reading tricky. A range of effective interventions, including through the reading club, help weaker readers catch up with their peers. Pupils, and children in the Reception Year, really enjoy the books they experience throughout their time at the school.

The curriculum is adjusted and adapted successfully for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In class, teachers adapt lessons appropriately to cater for the varying needs of pupils. Thoughtful changes to the curriculum ensure that school experiences are accessible for all.

Leaders expect pupils to behave well. Staff apply leaders' chosen approach to managing pupils' behaviour fairly and consistently through the 'GCA way'. Pupils value the rewards for displaying positive behaviour. Consequently, pupils live up to leaders' expectations and have excellent attitudes to school life and learning.

A well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum supports pupils to learn about a range of interesting and relevant topics. Pupils learn, for example, about how to be a good friend or how to keep healthy. The PSHE curriculum threads through different subject areas. In design technology, for example, pupils enjoy using their knowledge to design, cook and eat healthy foods. PSHE lessons are well supported by interesting and engaging books, which help pupils to learn about other cultures and individual differences.

Governors and the trust challenge leaders to ensure that staff workload and well-being is a priority. Staff say that their workload is not an issue. This is because meeting times and training focus on supporting staff to develop the best ways to help pupils learn in the classroom. In addition, leaders ensure that staff have the time and training to check regularly how well pupils learn the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a positive culture of safeguarding. High-quality training supports staff to know how to spot if a pupil is at risk of harm or neglect. Detailed safeguarding information shows prompt actions, by leaders, to manage concerns about vulnerable pupils. Leaders work effectively with a range of agencies to support pupils to get the help they need.

Robust recruitment checks are in place for all staff.

Staff teach pupils well about the different risks they could face in and out of school. As a result, pupils understand how to keep safe online and about other topics such as water safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some activities are not consistently well matched to the intended learning, including in the context of a few of the activities suggested in the new curriculum booklets. This means that, occasionally, when staff select these, pupils do not learn as much as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the training and support needed so that they routinely match activities to help pupils learn effectively. Leaders should then check that this happens systematically, so that the curriculum is implemented well in all aspects.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 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.

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	138029
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10255214
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	396
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Brian Message
Headteachers	Richard Bakker and Tess Fielden
Website	www.godmanchestercommunity.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 July 2017 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has two co-headteachers in place.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school joined ACES academies trust in September 2020.

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 the following subjects: reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector visited lessons and looked at a range of curriculum documentation and pupils' work across other subjects, including science, design technology, geography and PSHE.

- The inspector spoke with a range of pupils from different year groups over both days of the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body and the trust. This included the chief executive officer and the chair of the trust board.
- The inspector visited the breakfast club before the start of the school day.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the gate about their experiences of the school.
- The inspector met with a range of leaders across both days of inspection, including the school's special educational needs coordinator and the trust lead for special educational needs.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the school's safeguarding leaders. He scrutinised training records and looked closely at safeguarding systems, processes and records. Across both days of inspection, he spoke with pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the 97 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 97 free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered the 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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