

Inspection of a good school: Gunton Primary Academy

Gainsborough Drive, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4LX

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 April 2024

Outcome

Gunton Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Kirsten Stone. This school is part of the Reach2 Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Cathie Paine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Robert. There is also an executive headteacher, Mathew Jordan, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school wants all pupils to experience the best that school life has to offer. Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn and make friends. Pupils like the way that 'everyone is treated fairly'. Teachers praise pupils for their efforts. This boosts pupils' confidence. Staff support pupils who need help to get into the right frame of mind for learning.

Effective routines help lessons to run smoothly. Pupils know what to do and what is expected of them, for example how to set out work neatly and how to move around the class in a calm way. Pupils emulate the kindness shown to them by staff.

Pupils know that reading is very important. Pupils enjoy reading and being read to. Lessons are interesting because the school has given care and attention to the curriculum and the way it is taught.

The school is committed to providing a range of opportunities for pupils to hone their talents, feel part of the community and appreciate nature, for example performing at Lowestoft's First Light Festival, birdwatching and learning how to code at coding club. Well-chosen visitors to the school help pupils to learn about different cultures.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to improve the curriculum. The curriculum sets out, in a logical order, important knowledge and skills for pupils to learn.

Leaders have made sure that the curriculum in the early years sets children up for success in Year 1 and beyond.

Leaders and teachers are highly reflective. For example, they noticed that pupils needed more support to become confident writers. As a result, the school has adopted a new and more systematic way of teaching writing. The trust encourages and facilitates collaboration between local schools in the trust. Staff share their expertise and learn from one another. This positively affects pupils' experiences in lessons. For example, in the early years, teachers focus on teaching important language so that children can think and talk about the world around them.

Teachers know that pupils need to develop fluency in the basics, such as times tables. They help pupils to understand new concepts and important vocabulary. Teachers frequently check pupils' readiness to learn something new. Some teachers are still getting to grips with teaching newer aspects of the curriculum. As a result, their explanations are not always clear. This occasionally affects pupils' ability to remember what is taught.

Children begin learning to read as soon as they join the Reception Year. Staff are well trained in teaching early reading. They carefully check pupils' understanding and ensure that pupils' reading books match the sounds they know. Pupils enjoy the way reading lessons help them to develop confidence. Those who are behind with reading receive extra support and opportunities to practise. Pupils quickly become confident readers. Teachers build on this success by steadily introducing pupils to more complex and varied literature.

The school has changed, for the better, the way it identifies and supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff quickly and accurately pinpoint pupils' needs. Staff work with parents and external professionals to create bespoke pupil plans. Teachers adapt lesson experiences for pupils with SEND, for example by using more picture resources and step-by-step approaches in subjects such as geography.

The school's rules and routines help pupils to behave well in class. As a result, lessons are calm and pupils respect each other's right to learn. Staff meet regularly to agree on ways to adapt support for pupils who have challenging behaviour. This support is effective.

Leaders are proud of the school's provision for pupils' personal development. This includes support for pupils' mental health. Pupils appreciate how staff help them to navigate their feelings and emotions. Subject teaching and assemblies include opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and traditions. Pupils respect and embrace difference.

Leaders' decisions take teachers' workload and well-being into account. Staff are proud to be part of the school's journey of improvement. Staff, including early career teachers, feel they are supported to take their teaching expertise to the next level.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff are still getting to grips with teaching the newer parts of the curriculum. As a result, staff sometimes use imprecise explanations. This occasionally affects pupils' ability to remember what has been taught. Leaders should continue to provide support and training to teachers so that lessons help pupils to understand and remember more.

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 July 2018.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142187
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10323756
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gavin Robert
CEO of the trust	Cathie Paine
Headteacher	Kirsten Stone
Website	www.guntonprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses the services of two alternative provisions. One is unregistered and one is registered.
- The school runs before-school provision on site.
- The school has a Nursery which caters for children aged three and four years old.

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 the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with a trustee, the chair of the local governing body, the deputy director of education, the executive headteacher and the headteacher.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and

looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including evaluations and behaviour records.
- The inspector considered 54 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 25 free-text responses. The inspector also considered 28 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 55 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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