

Inspection of Granta School

Cambridge Road, Linton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB21 4NN

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early Years

Insufficient evidence

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy spending time together and include everyone in their play or social time. Pupils enthusiastically talk or sign about who their friends are and what they like doing together. They enjoy school. Parents agree with this, many describe how their child has thrived here.

Pupils' well-being is held in the highest importance. Pupils are safe and well looked after. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Many staff changes and absences have meant that improvements in the quality of education have not happened quickly enough. As a result, pupils have not been taught as well as they should have been. Some pupils are not engaged in learning too much of the time. This means that those pupils have not learned as well as they should.

Pupils benefit from a wide-ranging curriculum, enjoying regular swimming and cookery. They are prepared well to be as independent as possible as they move towards adult life. Many pupils leave with qualifications that help them gain college placements. For those with more complex needs, teaching enables pupils to learn clear communication skills.

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

The school knows that the current complete curriculum is not good enough. It is lacking in detail. It does not ensure that pupils of the same age get similar experiences. It does not make sure that year-on-year, pupils can build new learning on what has come before. The school has begun the overhaul of the curriculum. For subjects such as English and personal, social and health education (PSHE), the plans in place are now of good quality. It is clearer to teachers what they should teach and when.

The pace at which the school has been able to review and improve the quality of education has been impeded by significant staff changes and absences. As a result, senior leaders' actions to secure school improvement have been slowed. There have not been enough opportunities to work with staff on improving their teaching skills. Teaching in some classes is highly effective. Where this is the case, pupils learn well. However, this is not often enough the case.

Where there has been a focus on ways of teaching, for example phonics, this is consistently delivered across the school. All pupils who are able to, read daily and are taught phonics if needed. This means that many leave with good reading skills. However, other approaches to teaching reading, for example the way teachers make use of books and stories, are not always done to a high standard. The books available for pupils to read for pleasure are not well organised or appealing to choose from.

Teachers know pupils well. They set regular, appropriate targets for each pupil to help them address their own particular special educational needs and/or disabilities

(SEND). Detailed scripts and procedures help different members of staff to support pupils to communicate and help with any health-related needs. As a result, pupils with complex needs learn to sign or indicate their preferences well.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school had a high level of challenging and disruptive behaviour. Behaviour has improved significantly since. Pupils are generally well behaved and in their classrooms. Some staff are highly skilled at engaging all pupils in a class in learning. They make subtle adaptations for pupils throughout lessons. Due to the staff turnover, this is not the case for all. There are too often pupils who are not engaged in learning. Some staff do not know how to get pupils involved in the lesson or activity. Some staff are not as skilled as others in resolving conflicts and disagreements.

Pupils benefit from the strong PSHE programme. They learn about different ways of life. Pupils discuss and debate difficult questions. They can express their opinions. The school makes sure all pupils access drama and music experiences. Pupils go on regular trips out. Students in the sixth form learn how to travel independently. Students are prepared well to move on to college or other placements. Pupils are well supported to develop tolerance to different foods and eat healthily.

Leaders know the school well and are clear on what must change to improve. The governing body has recruited more governors with relevant experience to help them better support and challenge school leaders. The school has reviewed many aspects of staff recruitment and retention, which is now resulting in a more stable staff body.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not contain enough guidance for teachers on what they should teach and when. This means that pupils do not necessarily learn all of what they need or have different experiences over time. The school needs to ensure that the work on developing a complete, quality curriculum is completed and implemented.
- The quality of teaching about books and stories varies throughout the school. This means that not all pupils have the same opportunities to be enthused by stories or rhyme. The school needs to ensure that staff have the expertise and resources to teach these aspects of the curriculum well.
- Some staff are not as experienced and/or skilled as others in working with pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils are spending too much time not engaged with learning or activities. The school needs to ensure that staff have appropriate training, and can use this, to re-engage pupils.

- There has not been enough recent leadership capacity to facilitate rapid school improvement. This means that the quality of education has not improved as fast as it needs to. The school needs to ensure that there is sufficient leadership capacity to improve the school further.

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	134937
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10288483
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Ilott
Headteacher	Sarah Crouch
Website	www.granta.cambs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 November 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2023.
- The school is registered for pupils aged two to 19. At the time of the inspection, there were no children accessing the Nursery provision.
- A separate judgement was not made for early years as there are fewer than five children accessing this provision.
- The school has a satellite site used by some students in Years 12 to 14. This is at The Hive, Granta School, Little Abington, Cambridge CB21 6BQ.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils have a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism.
- The school does not use any alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders. They met with members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language (including early reading), understanding of the world, digital literacy and science. For each subject, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors visited a range of other subject lessons and looked at a wide range of curriculum plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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 inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted pupil, parent and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

Ashley Best-White

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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