

Inspection of Great Denham Primary School

Greenkeepers Road, Great Denham, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK40 4GG

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are excited to attend this vibrant school. They participate in a wide and interesting set of activities that greatly enhance school life. Participation in these activities means that pupils are inspired to learn. Through these opportunities and skilled teaching, pupils' knowledge develops very well. They are exceptionally well prepared for secondary school and life in modern Britain.

Pupils behave exceptionally well and work hard to uphold the school's values. If they are successful, they wear their reward badges with great pride.

Pupils work hard in lessons. They focus really well on their learning tasks because staff make them relevant and important. For example, pupils often take part in activities that teach them about being helpful in the community. This includes community events, such as the local Remembrance services, of which the school is an integral part.

Due to the supportive and positive relationships between staff and pupils, pupils know that all the adults in the school will help them and keep them safe.

Pupils are clear about how others should be valued. They know that we are all different and that this is positive. Many pupils enjoy raising money for others. This means they learn to show compassion and understanding.

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

The school has an ambitious and well-structured curriculum further enriched by wider opportunities. The knowledge and skills pupils learn are well-sequenced and build towards understanding more complex knowledge. The school chooses to use a project-based approach to learning, which begins in the early years and develops in complexity as the pupils get older. The school checks to ensure that this approach fits the national curriculum and develops pupils' knowledge precisely. Staff present learning through tasks that engage and are relevant. Staff have strong subject knowledge. They design activities that inspire and build up knowledge securely. As a result, pupils remember their learning and achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils love to read. The school sparks an interest in books even before pupils can read. It develops pupils' knowledge through engaging, book-themed experiences. For example, the school plans for pupils to have relevant and real-life experiences that relate to the class book before reading it. Pupils also explore themes and grammar in the texts they read. Pupils' writing has a clear purpose, for example by writing poems to read to the community. As a result, reading and writing are relevant, and pupils understand why they are important life skills.

Pupils learn to read as soon as they start school. In Nursery, most children can identify the first sounds in simple words. This prepares them well for their learning in Reception. The daily phonics sessions are effective. Staff have strong subject

knowledge and model the sounds very clearly to pupils. This is important as it means that pupils learn to say sounds accurately. Pupils use this knowledge to read new and unfamiliar words. Pupils who are not fluent readers have effective, targeted support. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from highly effective teaching and support. Staff know pupils' individual needs. This means that they plan support that is precise, meets pupils' needs and helps pupils with SEND to make strong progress. For example, some pupils with SEND read parts of books prior to the whole-class reading sessions. They can talk through themes and learn new and unfamiliar words. This preparation helps them learn the same curriculum as their peers successfully. The school also provides high-quality pastoral support to any pupils who need this.

The school's personal development programme is broad and of exceptional quality. This means that pupils can develop their talents and interests. There is a particular emphasis on music and sport, which contributes to the provision. The school also prioritises activities that develop pupils' knowledge of the wider world. These activities are well-considered, exciting and effective. They weave across the whole curriculum. Pupil leadership is strong and pupils are proud of their impact. They understand their contribution well, including when raising money for charity.

Children in the early years behave excellently. This is because they have learned and understood the school rules and routines. They get on well with each other and are beginning to develop resilience. They are well-prepared for the next stage of learning. This positive start continues as pupils move through the school. Older pupils develop even more independence and positive attitudes. This means they know it is important to behave well even when they are not instructed or are on their own.

Leaders, governors and staff share the same goals and visions. A well-developed leadership programme creates this cohesion. Staff are well-supported through effective training and are enabled to be leaders of their own subjects or school development areas. Staff know they can ask for guidance and will get support should they need it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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	135996
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10323700
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	613
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hannah Harwood
Headteacher	Denise Burgess
Website	www.greatdenhamprimary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers of education.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils.

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.
- 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, including attendance, which puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, physical education, humanities and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors gathered further evidence about the quality of education in computing and writing by meeting with leaders and looking at pupils' work.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents provided by the school, including development plans and the school's self-evaluation form.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers and curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Some inspectors talked to parents at the school gate before school.
- The inspectors considered the 256 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the 139 free-text responses. They also considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. The inspectors also spoke to pupils to obtain their views.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
David Turner	Ofsted Inspector
Amy Luu	Ofsted Inspector
Michele Geddes	Ofsted Inspector

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