

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Guilden Morden CofE Primary Academy

Pound Green, Guilden Morden, Nr Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 0JZ

Inspection date: 28 January 2025

Outcome

Guilden Morden CofE Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sonia Singh. This school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-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 (CEO), Adrian Ball and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Jackson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Guilden Morden is a small, welcoming school with a family atmosphere, where pupils are well cared for and kept safe. From the very start in the pre-school, pupils follow clear routines which help them to feel secure and able to thrive. Pupils are typically very polite and respectful towards each other and staff. However, the less considerate behaviour of a very small minority of pupils occasionally makes school less enjoyable for a few pupils.

Pupils participate in their lessons enthusiastically. Even the very youngest children show sustained concentration and stamina in their learning. Most pupils aim to meet teachers' high expectations for their achievement, and to attain the standards expected of them as they progress through the school.

Pupils are well prepared for their lives beyond Guilden Morden. For example, a visit from a Paralympian inspired them to learn that there are no limits to what they can achieve. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe through working with visitors, such as road safety and police officers. Many pupils value opportunities to take a lead in the school, whether as a mentor to younger pupils or as a school councillor. Pupils are particularly keen on the clubs that are on offer, and many attend these.

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

The school has implemented an ambitious curriculum that effectively meets the needs of pupils. Leaders have worked especially hard to adapt the curriculum for mixed-age teaching, including for the early years. This has resulted in pupils' knowledge building successfully across different subjects, whichever year group they are in. Pupils remember most of what they are taught and are often able to make connections with past learning. In the early years and key stage 1, the school ensures that pupils learn early English and mathematics knowledge thoroughly, so that they are well-prepared for the key stage 2 curriculum.

Leaders are dedicated to ensuring that reading is a strength across the school. Younger pupils quickly learn the sounds they need to decode words. They are confident to apply their knowledge when they meet unfamiliar words. Pupils have numerous opportunities to practise their reading in school and learn to read fluently. Well-trained staff watch for any misconceptions in lessons and give pupils the prompt help they need. Pupils therefore progress well through the early reading curriculum. Pupils love reading and are keen to talk about the books they study in class, such as Peter Rabbit in key stage 1.

In the early years, children, including the youngest, engage well in their learning and develop curiosity about the world around them. Staff design purposeful activities to ensure that children learn what they should, such as new words like 'fossil' when exploring the world of dinosaurs. Children are happy and settled.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge in the subjects they teach. They know exactly what they want pupils to learn in each lesson. This helps them to check effectively for errors and provide prompt, direct feedback to help pupils keep up. Teachers present new information clearly and use skilful questioning to extend pupils' thinking. In this way, pupils progress well through the curriculum.

Staff appreciate the high-quality training leaders provide, including effective support for subject leaders in checking where improvements in the school's provision are needed. Teachers recognise that careful management of their workload by the school enables them to carry out their roles effectively.

Leaders are determined to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have full access to the curriculum, both in and beyond lessons. Teachers use pupils' clear individual learning targets to help them adapt learning activities. This ensures that pupils with SEND learn what they need.

Pupils' conduct across the school is nearly always positive. Most behave well in lessons and work hard. Despite this positive picture, a few pupils complain of unacceptable behaviour, such as name-calling. They feel that, while the school deals with any concerns raised, the issues still recur.

The school has worked hard to ensure that families understand the importance of pupils attending school regularly. Most pupils attend school each day and attendance is demonstrably improving.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well, successfully implementing a clear vision for the way in which pupils should learn about life beyond the school. For example, the curriculum is centred around a carefully chosen reading list, designed to engage pupils in worlds beyond their own. Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and cultures, including participating in visits to places of worship.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's behaviour policy does not provide clear enough guidance on addressing unacceptable behaviour, such as name-calling. As a result, although incidents are addressed when they occur, a few pupils feel that some issues persist. The school needs to clarify its behaviour policy and ensure it is applied consistently to prevent unacceptable behaviour from recurring.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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	142811
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10345426
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Jackson
CEO of the trust	Adrian Ball
Headteacher	Sonia Singh
Website	guildenmorden.demat.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher is new since the previous inspection and took up post in November 2020.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school runs its own before- and after-school clubs.
- The most recent inspection of the school's religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, was carried out in February 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due within eight years.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held discussions with two governors, including the chair, and the CEO of the trust.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and educational directors of the trust.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lesson visits and breaktimes and talked with them to understand their views 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 that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Judith Sumner, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jess Pearce

Ofsted Inspector

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