

Gusford Community Primary School

Sheldrake Drive, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 9LQ

Inspection dates

22–23 March 2017

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including the governing body, have not secured sufficient improvement since the previous inspection. While there have been some helpful developments over the last two years, the impact is not yet consistently strong and teaching continues to be too variable.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and make learning fun and engaging but do not provide consistently strong challenge for the most able so that more reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is not consistently good across the school, especially for the most able.
- Pupils' attainment is below average in science. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and leaders do not ensure that science is taught well enough.
- Leaders do not ensure that the pupil premium is used well enough to help disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with other pupils nationally.
- Pre-appointment checks for staff are not carried out thoroughly enough. Senior leaders have not acted quickly to address some missing information that the trust had previously identified.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are demonstrating the capacity to make improvements. They have strengthened pupils' behaviour, accelerated progress in the early years and improved the teaching of phonics and reading.
- The senior leadership team, governors and trustees are doing the right things to build on these recent improvements. They are tackling the remaining weaknesses with determination.
- Pupils are proud of the school and are good ambassadors for its work. Their behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and courteous and they develop good attitudes towards learning.
- Children are taught well in the early years and make good progress. The rich and exciting environment supports good learning.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Attainment has been rising and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop creativity in art and music and to take part in sporting activities.
- Teachers make good use of visits and visitors to bring subjects alive and to make learning enjoyable.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the school follows its own policies for pre-employment checks when appointing staff
 - ensuring rigorous monitoring by leaders, including the governing body, of safeguarding procedures so that inconsistencies in practice are identified and dealt with quickly.
- Improve teaching and pupils' progress in key stages 1 and 2 by:
 - using the pupil premium more effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils in different year groups
 - ensuring that teachers always expect enough of the most able pupils and plan work that challenges them
 - raising teachers' expectations in science and allowing enough time for science topics to be studied in sufficient depth.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not been meticulous in monitoring the implementation of agreed safeguarding procedures. The school does not follow the policies of the academy trust in this area of its work. There are well-defined procedures for recording potential safeguarding issues, but responsibility for checking that everything is being recorded accurately is less clear. Consequently, there are some discrepancies in the school's records. For example, the school's procedures for recording responses to very occasional racial incidents are not always followed properly by staff.
- In many other aspects of the school's work leaders have secured good improvements since the previous inspection. The dedication of the headteacher and the rest of the senior leadership team has transformed the school's culture over the last two years. Pupils now demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviour. They talk enthusiastically about all aspects of the school's work and are keen to learn.
- Leaders are doing the right things to improve outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching. Their development planning is rightly focused on raising attainment and improving teaching and there has been a good pace to recent changes. Leaders are being supported well by the academy trust to ensure that recent improvements are sustained and built on. Teachers are set challenging targets to improve and leaders follow these up diligently. However, the impact of this is not consistently strong across the school and teaching continues to be too variable.
- Leaders, including subject leaders in English and mathematics, have improved their use of information on pupils' progress since the previous inspection. This means that they are able to respond much more quickly than in the past to dips in progress as soon as they arise. Leaders have taken effective action in the current year to improve pupils' attainment in reading after a dip in results in the national tests in 2016. The strategies to do this have been well considered and have helped to improve the teaching of reading, as well as pupils' attitudes towards reading.
- The school is not using the pupil premium funding to good effect. It is not having sufficient impact on helping to raise academic outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. A very large proportion of the funding is allocated to employing staff to support the social and emotional development of pupils. While this has had a very positive effect in areas such as pupils' attendance and the school's engagement with parents, there is too little focus on improving academic outcomes for the disadvantaged pupils across the school.
- The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is enriched well by a good number of clubs and visits that are linked well to learning in class. However, the curriculum includes too little opportunity for science to be taught in sufficient depth. Consequently, pupils' attainment in science was below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2016.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum promotes art, music and sport well. The primary physical education and sport premium has resulted in a significant increase in participation in physical activity, as well as improving the skills of teachers. Sports coaches work with pupils at lunchtimes and this has helped to improve lunchtime behaviour greatly.

- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Activities both in and out of lessons contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school life and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers model this in their own interactions with each other and pupils. A recent project on developing 'young leaders' is helping pupils to develop an understanding of the part they can play in the wider community. Pupils learn to respect and tolerate the beliefs of others and learn the importance of perseverance and resilience when they are working.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not monitored closely enough the implementation of safeguarding procedures in regard to staff recruitment. They are, however, thorough in checking other aspects of the school's work to safeguard pupils. Governors oversee child protection procedures diligently.
- Governors fully understand their responsibilities to review the use of the pupil premium and they talk about it regularly in meetings. In the last year, they have greatly increased their challenge to other leaders over the effectiveness of its use. Following this, they already have plans to amend how it is spent in the future and to ensure that they are more forensic in checking its impact.
- Governors are kept well informed about the school's provision by the headteacher. They have also established good systems to check for themselves how well the school is performing in comparison with others. Based on this monitoring, they challenge leaders to make improvements where they are needed. For example, they are very clear about what assessment information shows. Where they have identified potential underachievement in the current year, they have challenged leaders robustly to ensure that it is addressed.
- Governors know where teaching is especially strong and how the school continues to improve it. Their systems for rewarding good teaching through performance management are thorough and well understood by teachers.
- Governors check carefully the use of specific funding for special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that it is helping to support pupils properly. This additional funding is used effectively to ensure good progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff know the pupils and their families well. They provide good support to vulnerable pupils and their families.
- The school has established robust systems to follow up concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The school liaises well with external agencies to ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep pupils safe. They keep appropriate records of concerns and the actions taken.
- In their safeguarding audit, the trust found that there were gaps in references for some employed members of staff. Senior leaders did not act quickly enough to address

these gaps. However, other pre-employment safeguarding checks are completed and recorded appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it has not been good enough over time to enable pupils to fulfil their potential. While there is a quickly improving picture now, there is still too much inconsistency, resulting in pupils making uneven progress across the school in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers do not provide enough challenge for most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to ensure that they make rapid progress over time. Sometimes, the most able have nothing to do when they have finished a task and teachers do not spot this quickly enough to move learning on. Some work for the most able pupils is undemanding and results in them marking time rather than extending their skills when working in English, mathematics and science.
- Across the school, teachers do not demand enough of pupils when they are studying science topics. Pupils often complete the same piece of work whatever their ability, slowing progress. Teaching does not cover topics in sufficient detail to move learning on quickly.
- There are strengths to teaching across the school. Teachers foster a positive atmosphere for learning in their classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to concentrate, work hard and support one another as they learn. This helps them to learn that sometimes you improve your understanding, as one pupil commented, 'by making mistakes'.
- Teachers get on well with their pupils and have high expectations of how they should behave. Staff apply behaviour policies consistently, with praise used well to boost pupils' confidence. Across the school, teachers enable pupils to work without fear of failure because they respond sensitively when mistakes are made.
- The teaching of reading has improved in the current year. Teachers have benefited from training and support in this area. They now provide good challenge to pupils, helping them to improve skills more quickly than in the past. Pupils have developed more positive attitudes towards reading and are keen to share books with visitors.
- In key stage 1, phonics is taught well. Learning is fun and engaging and is supported well by teachers' good subject knowledge.
- Teaching assistants are deployed successfully to support and promote learning. They work well with individuals and groups to promote positive attitudes and behaviour. They work effectively with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, giving them good support and challenge.
- Teaching is especially strong in Year 6, where teachers have particularly high expectations. A range of assessments ensure a clear focus on identifying and then tackling gaps in pupils' knowledge. In mathematics, teachers expect pupils to tackle problems systematically and to explain their thinking, helping them to improve skills quickly.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that staff resolve quickly any worries they may have, with one commenting, 'We trust the teachers and they trust us.'
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to keep themselves safe. They talk knowledgeably about road safety and e-safety. They know what they should do if someone calls them names or is unkind to them, be it face-to-face or on social media.
- When talking about bullying, pupils report that it does happen sometimes but is dealt with well by staff. School records confirm this.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are greatly improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are very happy at school. They enjoy their work and are proud of their achievements. Older pupils, in particular, take great care with their work so that it is well presented.
- Pupils have good aspirations for life after school. They appreciate the opportunity to learn about career options by taking part in 'World of Work' days, when they hear talks from professionals such as lawyers, engineers and midwives. They say that this is teaching them to 'aim high'.
- Pupils keenly take responsibility. They feel that their views are valued and that they are able to contribute to school improvement. For example, school councillors have recently been carrying out a survey about improving attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. The headteacher and the senior leadership team have focused strongly on improving pupils' behaviour since the previous inspection. Their record-keeping of poor behaviour is thorough and shows that incidents are becoming increasingly rare.
- The school is a calm and orderly place. School rules are well understood by pupils. They are very clear that staff apply rules fairly and consistently. Pupils report that this has helped to improve behaviour over the last two years.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and get on well together. They are very enthusiastic about their work, particularly when they are fully challenged. They respond quickly to adults' instructions and learn to persevere when faced with demanding work. However, pupils sometimes lose focus when teaching does not engage them fully.
- Leaders are successfully improving the attendance of pupils and figures for the current school year are around average for most significant groups, including disadvantaged pupils. The family engagement team continues to work with outside agencies to support the small but increasing proportion of pupils who still do not attend the school regularly enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because progress is not consistently strong across the school in English, mathematics and science.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2 do not make sufficiently rapid progress to help them attain as well as other pupils nationally by the end of Year 6. While their progress has improved in the current school year, school data shows that it is sometimes slower, compared to other pupils nationally, and it continues to be too inconsistent across the school.
- The progress of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is too uneven. Too few pupils reach the higher levels in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. The disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress in Year 6, where expectations are particularly high, but this is not consistently strong across the school.
- Pupils do not develop skills, knowledge and understanding in science quickly enough. Too little time is allocated to teaching the subject. Work covered is not always sufficient to deepen understanding, especially for the most able pupils.
- Leaders are focusing strongly on improving outcomes for pupils across the school. Pupils' books confirm that there is an improving picture in most parts of the school and some aspects of outcomes, such as pupils' progress in phonics, are already good, reflecting the impact of recent initiatives.
- Pupils' attainment has been rising in phonics over the last three years due to changes in the way that skills are taught. The proportion reaching the expected level in the national screening check at the end of Year 1 has doubled over that time and was only slightly below the national average in 2016, reflecting good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils produce good-quality artwork. Their work is celebrated in displays around school, with pupils showing a good range of skills. Pupils enjoy talking about their artwork to visitors, explaining clearly the processes they have been using.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities now make good progress when given tailored support outside lessons. The pupils are also benefiting from the overall improvement in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and their progress, while still uneven, is improving quickly.
- The school responded decisively at the start of this academic year to improve progress in reading after there was a sharp fall in attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2016. Consequently, pupils' progress is improving quickly in the current school year. Pupils are now enthusiastic readers. They read frequently to adults and are developing good skills. The most able pupils in Year 6 read with expression and good understanding. The less able use a range of strategies, including their phonics knowledge, to read unknown words.

Early years provision

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have significantly improved since the previous inspection. Children are now being prepared well, both socially and academically, for their move to Year 1.
- When children start school in either the Nursery or Reception Year, few are working at a typical level of development for their age. Effective teaching means that they make good progress across the early years provision. Attainment has been rising over the last three years and, in 2016, the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year was close to the national average, reflecting good progress over time.
- Adults work together closely to ensure that there is a happy atmosphere as children learn. Work is made exciting and engaging by, for example, linking work around a central theme. When learning about 'spring', children in the Reception classes write labels for the garden, use their creativity to make daffodils and learn about comparative language when ordering flowers by size.
- Throughout the school day, adults focus strongly on teaching children about the importance of good behaviour. The children learn to behave well and to work together. They are well supervised and staff are diligent in ensuring that children learn about potential dangers in order to take responsibility for their own safety.
- There are good systems for assessing children's prior learning. Adults make good use of this information to plan work that captures children's interests and builds on what they already know.
- Early numeracy and literacy skills, including phonics, are taught well. At group times, there are good levels of challenge for all, including the most able. When children are working individually, adults often interact well and usually provide good levels of support. However, children who have grasped a concept and are ready for the next steps in their learning are not always moved on sufficiently quickly.
- Adults make good use of the outdoor area to support children's learning. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, outdoor work is carefully planned to provide opportunities for children to work under the guidance of an adult or to explore ideas for themselves.
- Leaders provide good training opportunities for staff to improve their skills so that initiatives, such as the recently introduced online assessment system, are understood and used successfully.
- Leaders have a good amount of information about children's progress and they analyse this thoroughly to check where they may need to make changes. For example, at the end of last year, the early years leader identified that children had made slower progress in creative development. To tackle this, the curriculum has been successfully adapted and children's creative skills are improving more quickly than in the past.
- Disadvantaged children make the same good progress as others because they are taught well. However, the gap between their attainment and that of other children nationally continues to be too large. As elsewhere in the school, planning for how to use the pupil premium is not precise enough for leaders to be sure that it is always having the right impact on both academic and social development. The pupil premium

review on the website does not identify clearly how the early years pupil premium is being used to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children.

- Adults use their online assessment system to keep parents well informed about their children's learning. Parents appreciate the accessibility of staff as it means that any minor concerns can be resolved quickly. They are happy with the provision, typically making comments such as 'Teachers have helped my child to feel comfortable, welcomed and happy' and 'My child attends the school nursery and has made great progress since starting in September.'

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139803 |
| Local authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 10026125 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| 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 | 624 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Marylyn Toft |
| Headteacher | Colin Tapscott |
| Telephone number | 01473 682148 |
| Website | www.gusford.suffolk.sch.uk/ |
| Email address | admin@gusford.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19–20 March 2015 |

Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school, based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school, with 22 classes. Children in the early years are taught in three Reception classes and a Nursery.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons, many of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or other members of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspectors made some short visits to observe learning at other times.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, a representative from the academy trust and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 112 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also talked with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at their work and school documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding arrangements and information and health and safety documentation.
- The inspectors analysed responses to inspection questionnaires from 63 members of staff and 73 pupils.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------|------------------|
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| Lynn Lowery | Ofsted Inspector |
| Richard Hopkins | Ofsted Inspector |

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