

Gretton Primary Academy

Kirby Road, Gretton, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 3DB

Inspection dates	4–5 February 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- All pupils make at least good progress from their different starting points. Many pupils achieve standards securely above those expected for their age in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the school provides very effectively for their needs.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and as a result they plan learning that accurately targets the next steps in learning. Where this high-quality teaching is at its best, pupils are making substantial and sustained progress across the school in many subjects, including mathematics, reading and writing.
- Pupils are real ambassadors for their school. They are very keen to help and support one another. They have excellent attitudes to learning and apply themselves very well to their lessons.
- Children in the early years make outstanding progress from their starting points. They rapidly gain skills across all the early learning goals. This prepares them very well for Year 1. The early years leader provides stimulating and exciting activities that capture the imagination of the children and as a result learning time is fully capitalised upon.
- The headteacher is an outstanding leader. Together with the assistant headteacher, she has successfully secured good and outstanding teaching across the school. She is relentless in addressing areas for improvement and knows precisely what needs to be done to secure further improvement.
- Other school leaders, including the governing body, support the headteacher very well. They share the same determination to improve the provision for all pupils. They are rigorous and uncompromising in securing this goal.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is yet of the same inspirational quality as the very best teaching in the school. As a result, not all pupils make the same sustained and substantial progress as their peers.
- Not all pupils, particularly the most able, get enough opportunities to excel and gain deep understanding in a range of subjects across the curriculum other than in English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all teaching is equal to the most challenging and inspiring teaching in the school.
- Ensure that the curriculum provides all pupils, and particularly the most able, with the opportunity to deepen their understanding and skills and excel in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher is an outstanding school leader. She is ambitious and has a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning at the school. The headteacher is rigorous and unrelenting in addressing areas for development. As a result of well-targeted support and checking, she has secured teaching that is at least good and in many cases outstanding since her arrival. Consequently, from their starting points, all groups of pupils are making at least good progress in mathematics, reading and writing. School assessment information and pupils' books show that there are an increasing number of pupils making sustained and substantial progress in all three subjects. However, leaders know that this is not yet consistent for all year groups and are acting with determination to secure this.
- The headteacher is well supported by a resolute and knowledgeable senior and middle leadership team. The assistant headteacher provides the staff with an excellent model of high-quality classroom practice. She leads by example and supports other teachers to improve their work through training and coaching. All subject leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects. Leaders act effectively to close learning gaps through well-planned intervention groups so that no pupil is 'left behind' in learning.
- Leadership of special educational needs is thorough and effective. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability have equal access to the curriculum because the special educational needs leader keeps a watchful eye on the support pupils receive and the impact this has on progress. Careful analysis of needs and well-planned interventions support these pupils so that they make similar progress to their peers in mathematics, reading and writing.
- School leaders thoroughly check the impact of pupil premium spending. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the barriers to learning faced by this group of pupils and act with precision to close learning gaps and barriers to learning. Current pupils supported by this funding are making good progress in mathematics, reading and writing.
- The curriculum provided by the school is broad and balanced. Leaders successfully promote a love of reading and a curiosity for learning. Leaders ensure that pupils have many opportunities to learn about the world they live in through the many visits and visitors linked to the subjects they study. During the inspection, pupils spoke eloquently and with excitement about their visit to a Hindu temple. They also spoke of their visit to Leicester to gain a better understanding of the different cultures and lifestyles that exemplify the diversity of British culture. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is threaded throughout the wealth of experiences they have. The result of this can be seen in pupils' respect for each other and their tolerance and openness to new ideas. However, leaders are aware that opportunities to excel in subjects other than English and mathematics are not as well developed as they need to be and have put plans in place to address this.
- Systems for managing the performance of teachers are well established and effective in raising the quality of teaching. This can be seen in the rapidly rising attainment and progress of the pupils. Teachers value the support and training they receive to develop their skills. Leaders use the effective support of the Brooke Weston Trust judiciously to enhance further professional development. School leaders keep a careful track of the impact of support and are not prepared to accept anything less than high-quality teaching across the school.
- The additional sports funding received by the school from the government is used to provide opportunities for greater involvement in inter-school sporting activities such as rugby, archery, netball and cricket. School information shows that more pupils are keen to take part in sport and pupils now that taking part in sport is seen as part of a healthy lifestyle. Leaders have also noted the improvements in skills when pupils are playing team games.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The local governing body (LGB) is a strength of the school. It demonstrates the same ambition and determination as senior leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve. It rigorously tracks the progress of pupils and is effective in challenging school leaders to secure further improvements where necessary.
 - The LGB has effective systems to check the quality of teaching and learning. Individual governors visit the school regularly to meet with subject leaders to learn about the impact of training and support. Governors check the quality of work in pupils' books and speak with pupils and about their work.

There is a real sense of collective responsibility among governors and a shared responsibility to 'get it right' for the pupils.

- The LGB has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. It takes its responsibility for managing the performance of the headteacher very seriously and seeks the support of the trust to manage this. Financial management for the day-to-day running of the school rests with the trust and governors work effectively alongside the trust to ensure that the premises and staffing are appropriate to the needs of the pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders are vigilant in verifying the suitability of staff and ensure that all the necessary checks are carried out assiduously. Leaders keep detailed and well-ordered information regarding pupils' welfare. Relationships with external agencies are well maintained to ensure that leaders know exactly who to refer to should they need guidance and support. The headteacher ensures that staff training to safeguard pupils is up to date. The school checks the effectiveness of the training through the monitoring of responses to any reported incidents or concerns expressed by the pupils. The LGB understands its duty with regard to preventing radicalisation and extremism and has ensured that the appropriate training has taken place. Parents expressed confidence that their children were safe at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is at least good and is improving rapidly across the school. As a result, an increasing proportion of teaching is outstanding. All teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and plan learning that is appropriate and engaging. Consequently, their pupils make at least good progress in different subjects across the curriculum.
- Where teaching is outstanding and pupils make the greatest sustained and substantial progress, teachers make the most of every learning opportunity. This progress is reflected in pupils' books and it is clear the tasks pupils undertake build significantly on previous learning, particularly in mathematics, reading and writing. This is because of the expertise and skill of the teachers. School leaders know that this is not yet consistent across all year groups and in all subjects and are acting decisively to bring this about.
- Teachers follow the school policy when giving pupils feedback about their work. The comments teachers make are of a high quality and support pupils to make adaptations and changes so that their work improves. This is particularly strong in mathematics and writing. Pupils spoken with during the inspection were able to explain clearly how their teacher's feedback, both in their books and through discussion, helped them to understand and deepen their learning.
- Pupils find real pleasure in writing and reading. This is because teachers ensure that the writing tasks pupils undertake are aligned closely with either the books they are reading or with the 'topic' they are studying. For example, during the inspection, Year 4/5 were fully engaged in writing a response to the jeopardy a character found himself in, from a book they were reading as a class. The teacher skilfully drew the pupils into the world of the book. There was a palpable sense of engagement and concern as they wrote on behalf of the character. Pupils wrote emotive and heartfelt pleas for help, used appropriate and well-chosen language and gained the sympathy of their readers. As a result, pupils of all abilities made excellent progress in their writing.
- In mathematics, pupils are gaining a sound understanding of mathematics mastery. Teachers use well-chosen problem-solving activities to test whether pupils fully understand how to use their mathematical knowledge in wider contexts. For example, in Year 6, pupils were challenged to use their reasoning skills to solve logic problems. Pupils were very determined and clearly enjoyed sorting cubes to comply with a 'set of rules'. The task tested their ability to explain their understanding mathematically. Pupils were successful because they had the skills to work well together and to explain their thinking appropriately. This is because pupils used their previous learning well to support their new learning.
- Teachers quickly identify when pupils need further support to make progress in learning. As a result, the work of teaching assistants is well planned. They work closely with teachers to provide effective support to different groups of pupils. Tasks to improve pupils' skills in using phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) to support reading are well taught across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very strong. This can be seen in their application to learning both in class and in the homework they complete. Pupils are very keen to discuss their learning and to speak eloquently about their work.
- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They think deeply about the world they live in and are aware of the advantages they have to grow and develop in their school. Through opportunities within the curriculum, pupils discuss issues in the wider world such as the plight of Syrian refugees. They demonstrate sympathy, tolerance and a sense of the 'unfairness' of the world. Pupils understand that other people may hold views different to their own and the school supports them to achieve this.
- Concern for pupils' welfare and personal development are high priorities for school leaders. Pupils listen well in assembly, from the oldest to the youngest. They appreciate each other's success. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils spoke with clearly articulated language about the dangers of using the internet inappropriately.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to maintaining neat, tidy presentation. Pupils are clearly proud of their work. The learning environment is bright and well ordered and pupils work hard to keep it that way.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the high standards of behaviour at the school. The management of behaviour is consistently high and as a result pupils are very clear about what is expected of them. Pupils manage themselves very well around the school and it is clear pupils choose to work together to ensure that their school is a harmonious place.
- Pupils are clear that their school is safe. During playtime and lunchtime, pupils played very well together, developed their own games and carried out investigations linked to their learning in class. It is clear pupils cooperate well and show respect for each other through very good relationships and a sound understanding of the 'code of conduct' agreed by the school.
- Adults support pupils to behave well and are rewarded in age-appropriate ways. The school identifies key concepts such as 'kindness' and 'tolerance'. These are promoted across the school and pupils are recognised for demonstrating them. On many occasions during the inspection, pupils carried 'sunflower petals' with incidents of kindness recorded on them. Together, the pupils were creating a large sunflower of kind deeds.
- Leaders keep detailed information about the quality of behaviour and are vigilant in addressing any incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils say that their teachers talk to them about bullying. The older pupils have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and homophobic bullying. Pupils are aware that there are many different 'types' of families and are adamant that if you were 'different' it would be 'okay' at their school.
- Attendance at the school is high. Pupils rarely take time off and clearly enjoy their school very much.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics, reading and writing are at least good and improving rapidly across the school. This is because school leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they pursue this with vigour. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Outcomes are not yet outstanding because some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and progress of pupils in some year groups and subjects.
- A high proportion of pupils enter Year 1 with skills above those typical for their age. This is due to the excellent start they have in the early years. Due to the good-quality teaching in Key Stage 1, they continue to make good and better progress. Unvalidated data from the 2015 assessments indicate that in writing, pupils' outcomes are significantly above the national average. In mathematics and reading, although pupils' outcomes are above the national average, they are not significantly so. There are some slight gaps between the attainment of boys and girls. The school is addressing these through targeted intervention groups.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check is well above the national average. Boys' outcomes are similar to girls' outcomes. Every pupil who did not achieve this standard at Year 1 achieved it in Year 2 and has done so for the last three years.

- In Key Stage 2, unvalidated data for the 2015 assessment indicate that in grammar, punctuation and spelling, pupils' outcomes are significantly above the national average. The most able are well challenged and outcomes for them at Level 5 and 6 in mathematics, reading and writing are above the national average but not significantly so. From their starting points, pupils' progress in mathematics and writing is better than the national average for both expected and better than expected progress, although in reading it is broadly in line with expectations.
- The progress and attainment of current pupils is good and improving. School assessment information and the work in pupils' books show many pupils making accelerated and sustained progress from their starting points. This picture has strengthened over the last two years. In mathematics, reading and writing different groups of pupils including disadvantaged pupils and pupils supported through the pupil premium achieve as well as their peers. Gaps in attainment are narrow, and in some cases outcomes are better for these groups of pupils. The most-able pupils also achieve in line with their peers. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, they are not yet achieving as much as they could because the level of challenge is not yet appropriate.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability achieve well. This is because the work they do is well planned and meets their learning needs. As a result, they make similar progress to their peers in mathematics, reading and writing.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children enter the early years with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those typical for their age in all of the early learning goals. They have particularly well developed social skills and this is capitalised upon by the early years leader and her team. Learning is focused and planned precisely to meet the needs of every child. As a result, children leave the early years well above the national average for a good level of development. A high proportion of children exceed this standard across all seven areas of learning. Children are therefore extremely well prepared for the Year 1.
- Children settle very quickly into the school because leaders think carefully about the different needs of the children and adjust their transitions accordingly. The early years leader works closely with the nursery on the school site to ensure a smooth transition between the two provisions. Consequently, when children arrive in the school they are excited to learn and 'raring to go'. The team then wastes no time in capitalising on this to ensure that children's learning gets off to a flying start.
- Adults know the children exceptionally well. The teacher and teaching assistants plan children's learning based on detailed observations. Adults are quick to notice children's interests and fascinations, and plan learning around these. As a result, children sustain their engagement and enjoyment in learning. Children are keen to take part in the activities planned for them. During the inspection, every child was involved in learning activities both indoors and outside, showing sustained concentration. For example, a group of children were 'writing' a story linked to their interests in dinosaurs. Children managed their pens with appropriate dexterity. They had a precise understanding of what they wanted to record and used their well-developed phonics skills to spell simple words with accuracy.
- The learning environment is exciting and interesting. Children have many opportunities to develop their mathematics, reading and writing skills through exploration and investigation. Those children not engaged with adults play well together while learning about the world around them. During the inspection, one child was outside using pincers to thread 'cheerios' onto pasta stalks. She was able to use her developing mathematical skills to mentally add and take away numbers to 10. Other children were recording their ideas while digging out dinosaur eggs. Adults ensure that every learning opportunity is used well and this accounts for the exceptional progress children make in learning.
- Children behave very well, listen carefully to one another and cooperate with their teachers. Good-quality conversations between adults and children develop their social skills well. Adults use high-quality questioning to support children to think carefully and extend their learning. As a result, outcomes for personal and social development are high.
- The school manages the learning needs of different groups of learners very well. Early identification of learning difficulties and challenges elicits an immediate response from the leader. As a result, children with particular needs in the early years make similar progress to their peers.
- The school works hard to involve parents in the day-to-day learning of their children through an electronic communication system. Parents have the opportunity to share their views and see what their children have been doing at the school. The early years leader manages this effectively and compares her

assessments with theirs. This ensures that the next steps in the children's learning journeys are addressed quickly.

- Systems for keeping children safe are effective. Effective relationships with external agencies ensure that children's needs are addressed quickly should they arise. Training to protect children from harm is undertaken by all adults. Adults check the learning environment daily and they record this appropriately to reduce risks and ensure that it is safe for children to play and learn. Staff have undertaken the appropriate first aid training for young children.

School details

Unique reference number	138761
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10003383

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The local governing body
Chair	Dr Rob Preston
Headteacher	Jane MacDonald
Telephone number	01536 770 366
Website	www.grettonprimary.org
Email address	office@grettonprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Gretton Primary Academy is a smaller-than-average school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of the Brooke Weston Trust. The arrangements for governance are a local governing body that has responsibility for teaching and learning. The trust retains responsibility for the premises and the financial management of the school.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher are relatively new to their roles and joined the school at or after Easter 2014.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, all jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also carried out short visits to a wide variety of intervention groups supporting the development of phonics and reading. The inspector also observed a school assembly.
- The inspector scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also looked at pupils' books while visiting lessons and looked at the work on the walls around the school.
- The inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body and three other governors. The inspector also met with the chief executive officer of the Brooke Weston Trust and the executive principal.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, and the leaders of English and mathematics. A meeting was also held with the early years leader and the special educational needs leader.
- The inspector spoke with pupils during visits to lessons and at lunchtime and playtime. The inspector also spoke with a group of pupils more formally during lunchtime.
- The inspector analysed a large range of school documentation, including school data on the attainment and progress of pupils, attendance, safeguarding and the checks leaders make on the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents were gathered through the 55 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector also took into account the two letters from parents submitted during the inspection.
- The inspector also took into account the seven responses to the staff questionnaire and the 38 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jan Connor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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