

Great Gidding CofE Primary School

Main Street, Great Gidding, Huntingdon PE28 5NX

Inspection dates

22–23 September 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make good enough progress. By the time they reach they end of Key Stage 2, too few pupils attain the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The need to accelerate progress in mathematics was highlighted as an area requiring improvement at the school's previous inspection, in June 2012. Until very recently, little had been done to address this issue and too little improvement is evident.
- The most-able pupils in the school do not achieve well enough. No pupils reached the higher levels in writing in 2015 and the proportion attaining the higher levels in other subjects was well below the 2014 national average.
- Early years provision is inadequate because leadership in this area is ineffective. There is insufficient insight into the developmental needs of very young children and too little knowledge of how to implement the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Although there are only three classes, there is variation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- When teaching is weaker, it fails to engage pupils and maintain their interest.

The school has the following strengths

- After a period of turbulence, the school now has longer-term leadership in place. The new interim headteacher has already begun to tackle the areas in the school that require improvement.
- Teaching is improving and much is good. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Years 5 and 6 is good.
- The school is a welcoming and friendly place. Pupils enjoy school and parents are equally appreciative of the positive 'family' atmosphere.
- Pupils behave well and are polite to adults and each other. They are kind and considerate towards one other and play well together.
- Governors are keen to learn and have a passionate drive to improve the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality and consistency of teaching, so that it is at least good throughout the school, by:
 - sharing the good practice evident in Years 5 and 6
 - ensuring that teaching interests and engages pupils fully
 - continuing to develop rigorous and robust assessment procedures following the removal of National Curriculum levels
 - raising expectations both of what pupils are capable of doing and of the standard of work that they are expected to produce.

- Improve the quality of the early years provision by:
 - ensuring that leaders have a thorough knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum
 - evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the current early years provision in order to plan appropriately for how this key stage could and should be developed
 - developing the use of assessment, including children's 'learning journeys', in order to inform planning to meet children's individual needs
 - improving phonics teaching so that children make the rapid progress that they are capable of and are not held back by expectations that are too low.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors develop the skills and knowledge they need to hold school leaders fully to account
 - suitable arrangements are put in place to employ an experienced and/or qualified person to lead the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - leaders are analytical and self-critical when evaluating both the school's strengths and its weaknesses
 - plans for school improvement are informed by thorough and rigorous self-evaluation
 - the actions of middle leaders have a direct impact on the outcomes that pupils achieve.

An external review of governance 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

- The school has experienced a period of considerable turbulence over the past year and has been led by four different headteachers during this time. This lack of continuity has resulted in insufficient progress being made in strengthening the areas identified at the last inspection.
- Until recently, school leaders have had an insufficient impact on maintaining a culture where expectations and aspirations are high. This has resulted in falling standards, insufficient progress and too few pupils achieving the standards that they should.
- Leadership other than the headteacher is underdeveloped and is yet to have a noticeable impact on improving the school. The leaders of both English and mathematics are new to the school and have not yet had the opportunity to develop their leadership of these areas. The school does not currently have a special educational needs coordinator and the headteacher is leading this area on a temporary basis.
- The school provides an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum. All National Curriculum subjects are taught using a topic-based approach. The school has introduced a three-year rolling programme to ensure that pupils do not repeatedly cover the same topics as they move through the mixed-age classes. A strength of the curriculum is that it provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English. However, this has not yet had an impact on raising standards in writing across the school.
- The headteacher is aware that there are weaknesses in the teaching of some subjects (specifically modern foreign languages and music) and is considering how best to address these. She is also aware that the school offers very little in the way of clubs and other extra-curricular activity; a weekly multi-skills session is currently the only club available to pupils other than the daily after-school club that provides a childcare facility for parents. However, the curriculum is enhanced by educational visits (such as the recent visit to Flag Fen) and contributions from visiting speakers.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is very small. Although the funding has been spent thoughtfully, it is unclear what impact this has had on outcomes for eligible pupils. The headteacher is aware of the need to review the way this funding is spent in order to maximise its impact.
- The current interim headteacher has been in post since the beginning of September and has been appointed for the full academic year. In the short time since she took up her post, there is clear evidence of the impact that she is having on raising standards. Parents comment very positively on the stability that she has brought to the school and the changes that are already evident, such as an insistence on higher standards of behaviour during school assemblies.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are taught to be tolerant and accepting of people's differences. In a discussion with the lead inspector, pupils spoke maturely and convincingly about how important it is to be kind to other people and commented that 'we're all different' when talking about the many different groups in modern society.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility, such as helping during assembly, and they do so with enthusiasm. Pupils are taught to be respectful during the daily act of collective worship. Prayers are said and pupils make their own choice as to whether or not they wish to join in. However, all pupils are expected to show respect by remaining quiet and contemplative while the daily prayer is said.
- The primary PE and sport premium is used effectively. The school uses the funding to pay for membership of the local school sports partnership. This enables the school to use specialist sports coaches to teach physical education lessons. The funding has also been used to subsidise swimming lessons for pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have dealt well with the considerable difficulties the school has faced over the past year. They have sought help appropriately and have been supported well by the local authority.
 - Governors have a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know where the strongest teaching is in the school. Governors are aware that they have not had enough involvement in ensuring that teachers' performance management arrangements are robust and that there is a clear link between performance and pay.
 - The governing body – led by the newly appointed Chair – is deeply committed to ensuring that the

school improves and that it offers the highest quality of education to its pupils. Governors admit that there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and they are keen to ensure that these are filled as quickly as possible.

- Governors know that they must hold school leaders firmly to account in their role as ‘critical friend’. They have already arranged for governance to be audited by the local authority in order to ensure that they focus their efforts in the most suitable way.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher has a good understanding of child protection procedures, and arrangements are appropriate and thorough. All staff have recently been provided with training to update their safeguarding knowledge, including information about child sexual exploitation. The headteacher has recently undertaken training on the ‘Prevent’ duty and has already passed information on to staff and parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Since the last inspection there have been considerable changes in staffing: no teachers who were present at the last inspection remain at the school. Until recently, the school has struggled to form a teaching team and establish a consistent approach. This has had a detrimental effect on pupils’ progress and attainment.
- Recent changes to leadership and staffing are strengthening the quality of teaching. However, where teaching is weaker, lessons fail to capture and maintain pupils’ interest sufficiently. As a result, pupils sometimes become restless, fidgety and less focused on their work. In some lessons, tasks are not well pitched and pupils are not stretched sufficiently by the work they are given to do.
- The school has identified and addressed previous weaknesses in assessment practice. The policy has been reviewed and rewritten and assessment is now more secure. However, the school has yet to decide its approach to assessing pupils’ progress in English, following the removal of National Curriculum levels. The school has adopted a commercial system for assessing pupils’ progress in mathematics. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of this method.
- The quality of feedback pupils receive about their work is improving but it is not consistent across the school. Teachers mark pupils’ work conscientiously and frequently add ‘next steps’ to tell pupils how to improve their work. However, they do not always focus on the most appropriate point to move pupils’ learning forward and, instead, focus on something superficial that is unlikely to have an impact on pupils’ development.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Years 5 and 6 is a strength of the school. The impact of this is clearly evident in the quality of the work in current pupils’ exercise books and in the outcomes for pupils previously taught by this team. Teachers know their pupils very well and they use accurate assessment to plan tasks that both interest and challenge pupils. The clarity of teachers’ explanations mean that pupils understand what they are taught, and teachers’ high expectations encourage pupils to do their best.
- Staff throughout the school help to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere. Classrooms are bright and attractive, and displays are increasingly useful to pupils as they work. Teachers’ good subject knowledge enables them to provide accurate and helpful clarification for pupils.
- Specialist coaches provide high-quality teaching in physical education. The school very sensibly uses sessions taught by sports coaches as an opportunity for teachers to continue their professional development by observing specialists teaching their class.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They speak confidently to visitors and show pride in their school. Increasingly, pupils show pride in the work they produce.
- Pupils know what bullying is and the forms it can take. They have been taught what they should do if bullying should occur and they are confident that staff will ‘sort things out’ quickly if necessary. Pupils say that there is no bullying at the school. Parents agree and many state that the school’s ‘family’ feel was their main reason for choosing Great Gidding for their child.

- Pupils at Great Gidding are happy and enjoy school. They are kept safe at school and they feel safe in the school environment. The site is well maintained and secure, and pupils are adequately supervised.
- The school has a highly inclusive ethos and pupils are taught to value other people and their differences. Pupils know that staff would be quick to tackle any unkindness shown towards other people.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and during less structured parts of the day. They show caring attitudes towards younger pupils at playtime, they socialise well together at lunchtime and they enjoy each other's company.
- The behaviour of pupils has remained good over time. There have been no exclusions of any kind for several years. Where changes in leadership have led to a slight slippage in standards of behaviour (such as whispering in assembly), these have already been successfully tackled by the new headteacher.
- Pupils attend school regularly and on time. Attendance for the last academic year was broadly in line with the national average. There has been little absence during the first few weeks of this academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 have deteriorated since the last inspection. Provisional information for 2015 shows that the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. Similarly, the proportion who made at least expected progress was well below the national average in all three subjects.
- The most-able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Too few pupils reach the higher levels that they are capable of by the end of Key Stage 2. No children reached the higher levels in writing in 2015 and a lower than average proportion reached the higher levels in reading, mathematics, and spelling and grammar.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has remained above the national figure in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection. In 2015, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level was above the 2014 national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion who reached the higher level was in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, and above the national average in writing.
- Achievement in phonics (the sounds that letters represent) had been a strength of the school, but outcomes fell dramatically in 2015. In 2014, all pupils reached the expected level of the phonics screening check (a statutory assessment of Year 1 pupils' knowledge of phonics). This figure fell to 50% in 2015.
- The work in pupils' books indicates that current pupils are starting to make better progress than past groups. However, this is not consistent throughout the school and there has been no formal assessment yet this academic year to confirm pupils' rates of progress.
- There were too few pupils with special educational needs in recent Year 6 groups to report their progress without risk of identifying individual pupils. However, across the school as a whole, pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.
- Similarly, there are too few disadvantaged pupils in the school, and other pupils eligible for the pupil premium, to discuss their outcomes without risk of identifying individual pupils.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- The early years provision in this school is very small. There are currently seven children in the Reception Year and this group size is typical. The Reception children form part of a mixed-age class with pupils from Years 1 and 2. Children are adequately prepared for Year 1 because of the nature of this mixed-age arrangement rather than by virtue of the provision itself.
- Children do not achieve well enough in early years. For several years, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has been below the national average. Although the school says that some groups enter school with skills and abilities below those typical of their age, there is no obvious reason why they should not catch up quickly during the Reception Year.
- The leadership of early years is weak because leaders do not have the necessary knowledge or experience to effectively lead this key stage. Teaching is poorly planned because there is insufficient knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and what constitutes good practice when

teaching very young children.

- Assessment is not used well enough to inform planning. As a result, teaching is not pitched closely enough to children's needs and abilities. For example, in a phonics session, teaching focused on identifying loud and quiet sounds, and hearing the 's' sound in words. This provided no challenge for children in the group who were already able to read simple words.
- Children's individual learning-journey books are an attractive record of things that each child has done at school. However, they are not used to assess children's progress or to inform planning of 'next steps'. Opportunities to involve parents in their child's learning journey have not yet been taken up.
- The early years environment is attractive and welcoming. There is a large outdoor space, particularly given the number of children in the class, and this is attractively landscaped and well equipped.
- Children are safe in the early years class and statutory welfare requirements are met. The children are all new to the class, having started their school careers at the beginning of September. They have settled in happily, enjoy coming to school and already know the class routines well.

School details

Unique reference number	110813
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10005665

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Byard
Headteacher	Maureen Basford
Telephone number	018322 293466
Website	http://www.greatgidding.cambs.sch.uk/
Email address	office@greatgidding.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 June 2012

Information about this school

- The school's leadership has changed several times since the last inspection. A short-term interim headteacher was appointed for the spring term 2015 to cover for the substantive headteacher's absence. A second short-term interim was appointed for the summer term 2015 after the substantive headteacher left the school. A third long-term interim headteacher is now in post to lead the school during the 2015/16 academic year.
- The school met the floor standard in 2014; these are the minimum expectations, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress. The 2015 floor standard has yet to be published, but provisional information indicates that the school did not meet the floor standard this year.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was initially carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 as a short inspection of a school judged to be good at its most recent section 5 inspection. The inspection was converted to a full section 5 inspection when concerns became apparent that the school was no longer a good school.
- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. The inspector observed parts of seven lessons throughout the school, some jointly with the headteacher. The inspector looked at a range of pupils' exercise books, from all classes, jointly with the headteacher. The inspector listened to pupils reading and talked to them about their work. The inspector examined the school's documentation on pupils' outcomes and on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The views of parents were taken into account including 19 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire; 11 'free text' responses on Parent View; informal conversations in the playground; and the three letters and an email that were received. The inspector also listened to the views of staff.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documents, including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation summary, plans for future development, and attendance and behaviour records.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

