

Inspection of Great Chesterford Church of England Primary Academy

School Street, Great Chesterford, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1NN

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Great Chesterford meet the high expectations staff set for them. Pupils, their parents and school staff all embody the school motto: 'together we are great'. For example, many pupils read widely. This is because their teachers teach them how to read well. Also, teachers give clear guidance to pupils' parents that helps parents support their child's reading at home. Such collaboration helps many pupils achieve their best.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and purposeful. Pupils quickly build strong relationships with staff. Through staff's clear routines, children in the early years learn how to try their best and treat others kindly. These behaviours follow them through the school, creating a happy environment. Bullying happens rarely at the school. Pupils know that if someone does or says something unkind, that it is followed up by adults straight away to stop it happening again.

Most pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as orchestra, sports clubs and musical theatre. These experiences give pupils the confidence to represent the school in competitions and performances. For example, pupils enjoyed singing at an event to raise awareness about dementia. There are other community and church events which develop pupils' moral understanding.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that is broad and varied. Staff know what pupils need to learn and when. As a result, most pupils achieve well.

Leaders have ensured staff have strong subject knowledge. For most of the curriculum, staff know the most effective ways to make it engaging and memorable. This is enhanced by going on trips and having visitors into the school, for example visiting an archaeological dig and a Greek day. Most pupils are able to recall their learning and make connections across the curriculum.

Leaders ensure staff receive the training and resources they need to teach pupils how to read confidently and fluently. For those weaker readers, staff deliver extra sessions, focusing on the sounds those pupils need to know to help them read words and sentences easily. Leaders introduce pupils to ambitious texts and many different authors. Pupils access books they can read independently. This encourages a love of reading. Nearly all pupils can read well by the time they finish Year 6.

Many children in the early years achieve well. Children have a go and try hard. While the curriculum content is well thought through, not all aspects of the curriculum take account of what children can already do. As such, some children do not access opportunities that help them to deepen their knowledge further.

Overall, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support to learn the curriculum. For example, teachers select pupils'

learning partners carefully, so that pupils with SEND feel confident to partake in activities with a peer. Well-trained staff provide pupils with SEND with additional resources, such as picture prompts, helping pupils to complete work independently. However, on occasion, there are some parts of the curriculum where adjustments are not precise enough. For example, some pupils are not having enough opportunities to recap learning before new content is taught. As a result, some pupils with SEND struggle to remember the concepts and vocabulary they need to know.

Behaviour routines are clear and expectations are consistently high. Most pupils behave very well. When pupils struggle to focus on their learning, they quickly get appropriate support from well-trained adults. This includes leaders facilitating external support for pupils. Leaders use meetings and observations to check external support works as well as the extra help on offer by school staff.

Leaders have implemented a personal development programme which promotes a culture of support and respect among pupils and staff. There is a well-considered programme of assemblies, introducing pupils to people and cultures that differ from their own. Some of these assemblies are led by pupils, helping them also to develop the confidence to speak in front of a large audience.

Governors carry out their statutory duties to good effect and know what works well in the school. Governors, working with school leaders, have put measures in place to support staff workload and well-being. This contributes to the high levels of satisfaction from staff about all elements of working in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know their pupils and families well. Leaders ensure any concerns about pupils, however small, are recorded and followed up promptly. Staff are trained to notice any changes and report concerns that might indicate pupils are at risk of harm. Leaders access outside agencies to provide support for vulnerable families.

The necessary checks for adults working in school are in place. Training is ongoing to keep staff updated of any changes.

The content of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum teaches pupils to be vigilant about online safety and how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils, including pupils with SEND, struggle to remember the concepts and vocabulary they need to know. This makes it difficult for those pupils to join in discussions and/or complete activities well. Leaders must ensure staff receive

training so they are able to confidently make appropriate adjustments that consistently ensure pupils revise and remember key content ahead of new learning being taught.

- On occasion, some children in the early years are not being given enough opportunities to recall and deepen their prior learning. This means that these children are not achieving as highly as they could. Leaders must review the range of curriculum opportunities on offer to ensure all pupils apply what they have learned and deepen their knowledge.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137516
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10242308
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Taylor
Executive Headteacher	Sarah Mitchell
Website	www.greatchesterfordprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Great Chesterford C of E Primary Academy converted to academy status in October 2011. Great Oak Multi Academy Trust was formed in January 2017.
- A private provider operates a breakfast and after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- Leaders do not use any alternative providers.
- The executive headteacher is the chief executive officer of the trust, which also includes Debden Primary Academy.
- Great Chesterford C of E Primary Academy has a Christian character. The religious aspects of the school's provision were last inspected in March 2019, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils, the chair of trustees, the chair and four other members of the governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. In early reading, this took the form of listening to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans for, and spoke to leaders about, PSHE.
- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, inspectors reviewed the single central record, met with the designated safeguarding leads, reviewed safeguarding files, looked at behaviour and attendance records and spoke to pupils and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school self-evaluation form and improvement plan, school policies and minutes from governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the 81 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and considered 81 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also considered 27 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and 85 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Carol Dallas

Ofsted Inspector

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