

# Great Denham Primary School

Greenkeepers Road, Great Denham, Bedfordshire MK40 4GG

## Inspection dates

6–7 December 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The senior leadership team has developed a strong ethos that is respected by pupils and adults alike. The school's mission statement of 'Inspire excellence; everyone, everyday!' is at the heart of everything that the school does.
- The headteacher and deputy headteachers have an accurate view of the school's performance. Consequently, they have identified appropriate priorities for further improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and the projects undertaken by the pupils are highly engaging and develop their basic skills effectively.
- Children in the early years make outstanding progress as a result of strong leadership and teaching. Children develop positive attitudes to learning that prepare them well for Year 1.
- Staff ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities access the full range of subjects. All pupils play and learn happily alongside one another.
- Pupils take immense pride in their school and enjoy their learning. They are polite, friendly and respectful. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Staff and governors are continually mindful of pupils' welfare.
- Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are consistently good, particularly in their project work.
- Teaching assistants ensure that the pupils they work with learn well and make good progress.
- The school's work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Sometimes pupils, particularly the most able, are not given hard enough work and therefore their progress is not as rapid as it could be.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils are making strong progress in writing and mathematics. However, pupils' achievement in reading is not as strong at key stage 2 as it is at key stage 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. However, there is still a difference between the progress that they make compared with that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - ensuring that teachers consistently provide challenging work for the most able.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
  - continuing to diminish the difference between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers nationally at key stage 2
  - increasing the number of pupils who achieve the age-related expectations and greater than age-related expectations in reading by the end of key stage 2.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders share their high expectations for the school passionately. The headteacher and deputy headteachers have an excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and understand how to move the school forward swiftly. They tackle any trace of underperformance in teaching quickly and positively. Staff receive personalised support if needed and benefit from a wide range of training and development opportunities. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Leaders' focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning continues to raise standards and improve pupils' progress. Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and learning on a regular basis to ensure that teachers and support staff receive timely, good-quality feedback and training. As a result, more current pupils are on track to reach age-related expectations and better than age-related expectations than in previous years.
- Leaders ensure that everyone involved with the school believes in their plan to move the school to outstanding. They have created an open and honest culture among staff and pupils, encouraging them to share their views and learn from mistakes.
- Staff morale is high and staff embrace opportunities to develop their practice. The performance management of staff is closely linked to the priorities of the school improvement plan. Staff told inspectors that 'leaders listen to staff and actively respond to our feedback when implementing policies and procedures' and 'I feel privileged to work at Great Denham Primary School'.
- Leaders and governors ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively. It is improving disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress. However, at key stage 2, there is still some further work to do to diminish the difference between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers nationally.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport funding well. Consequently, pupils have access a wide range of sporting activities, including regular sporting competitions and a wide range of resources that are improving pupils' physical education skills.
- Key stage leaders make a significant contribution to raising standards in their area of responsibilities. They model highly effective teaching for others, make sure that assessments are accurate and track progress carefully. They observe teaching and learning in other classes and coach staff carefully to improve their skills.
- Subject leaders are an emerging strength of the school. Their leadership skills are developing well due to the high-quality training they receive. They know the strengths and areas in need of improvement in their subjects.
- Several parents praised the school's swift action to support children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They commented that the teaching and help provided make a very positive difference to their children's progress.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through a broad and highly engaging curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning about a wide range of differing subjects and speak knowledgeably about other world religions.
- Leaders review the curriculum regularly to ensure that it engages all groups of learners. Carefully chosen projects maintain a high level of pupil engagement and pupils thoughtfully answer key questions such as, 'What makes a person truly heroic?' and 'Can food transform lives?' During the inspection, pupils were observed developing key skills that allow them to be computer technicians, historians, geographers, artists and scientists rather than just taking part in lessons. For example, groups of Year 4 pupils were using a range of multimedia tools to research the Treaty of Versailles and could articulately describe what they had found out and what they had researched. Leaders ensure that each project has a 'Fabulous Finish' that pupils work towards for the term. Year 6 pupils recently invited the local community to attend their wartime tea party. These opportunities make the learning more memorable for pupils.
- Pupils visit local places of interest and this adds to their enjoyment of school. Since the start of this academic year, pupils have benefited from regular opportunities to build their confidence and self-esteem through creative learning experiences in the local community. For example, children in the Reception class have recently visited a local farm and Years 3 and 4 pupils attended a soldier day.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school and typically make comments such as, 'What a unique and special place', 'A fantastic school with excellent teachers and effective leaders', and 'Really pleased my children are having this amazing journey with this school.'
- Staff value the professional development provided, especially the school's newly qualified teachers who welcome the opportunity to learn alongside their colleagues.
- A local authority adviser provides effective support to leaders. As a consequence, much progress has been made in tackling the school's areas for improvement which are identified in the school improvement plan. Leaders have actively sought advice from the local authority as well as looking further afield to develop good practice. As a result, a greater number of pupils are working at age-related expectations and greater than age-related expectations than in previous years.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a good knowledge of what works well and what needs to be developed next. They are proactive in suggesting and developing changes which support the school to improve.
- Governors have ensured that there is a wide range of experience on the governing body. Governors audit their skills regularly to make sure that they have the breadth of expertise needed to carry out their responsibilities well.
- Governors keep a close eye on the school's finances to ensure efficiency and value for money. They set clear plans for the use of specific grants, such as pupil premium funding. Governors monitor pupils' progress and outcomes carefully to make sure that money is effectively used.

- Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They take nothing for granted and make regular checks to ensure that the information they receive from the school's leaders is accurate.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The site is secure and parents agree that pupils are safe. Leaders ensure that safeguarding training is up to date and processes for checking new employees and volunteers are thorough.
- Staff know pupils well. The culture of care and protection extends far beyond that of fulfilling statutory requirements. Staff go the extra mile to ensure that pupils with the most complex and challenging needs are well cared for and receive the support they require.
- Staff training in child protection is up to date and new staff complete a detailed induction process to prepare them for keeping pupils safe in school. Staff apply the school's policies adeptly in practice.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders are developing consistently good standards of teaching and learning. Teachers provide stimulating activities that encourage high levels of pupil engagement. They use questioning to check pupils' understanding and help them think more deeply. As a result, pupils have an excellent attitude to learning and are curious, attentive and keen to respond.
- Teachers have high expectations of what most pupils can achieve. For example, pupils are provided with challenge activities to deepen their thinking and to develop their mathematical reasoning skills. However, the most able pupils do not consistently receive a suitable level of challenge. When this occurs, they do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well with one another to plan teaching and support. They monitor pupils' work within the classroom to ensure that learning takes place at a brisk pace. Teaching assistants know pupils well and intervene effectively to provide support through detailed questioning and work matched to pupils' needs.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and, as a result, pupils are keen to learn and activities are varied and interesting. For example, in science, pupils enjoyed sharing what they had found out about various food types with pupils from other groups.
- In response to a dip in attainment and progress at key stage 2, teachers have developed a new way to teach reading: 'Reciprocal Reading'. As a result, attainment in reading is rising and there are good opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their vocabulary to gain a deeper understanding of what they are reading.

However, there is still a way to go until reading matches the progress seen in other subjects.

- Teachers effectively address the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities through good planning and additional support and intervention. Parents are encouraged to review their children's learning through regular and formalised review meetings. As a result of this good teaching, effective partnerships with external agencies and the positive involvement of parents, pupils make good progress.
- Teachers make sure that all subjects stimulate pupils' interest and provide them with opportunities to develop their writing skills accurately. Pupils were observed learning a range of key research skills through a history project of the Second World War. Pupils' project books are neat and demonstrate the good progress made.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers ensure that pupils are fluent in their mathematical skills and provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Pupils in Year 6 were observed explaining their work to find common denominators to order improper fractions.
- There are a number of pupils who speak English as an additional language and some who are in the early stages of speaking English. These pupils are taught well and make good progress. They are given extra support to develop new vocabulary and language structures based on the context of their current learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are self-assured, articulate and motivated learners. They talk confidently about their learning. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy coming to school, wear their uniform with pride and are very proud of their work.
- Pupils are polite, welcoming and confident, and respect the needs of others. They speak positively about their teachers and other adults in the school, and how well staff care for them. They are taught ways in which to resolve disagreements but know that there is always an adult who is there to help them.
- Members of staff are very caring and know the pupils' specific needs well. They provide strong support to ensure that pupils are kept physically and emotionally fit. For example, there is valuable support for pupils who have specific medical needs.
- Pupils are extremely confident and knowledgeable about how they can succeed. They enjoy learning and are keen to improve. Pupils appreciate the individual meetings they have with their teachers to reflect on and discuss their learning.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare. When it does take place, they say they have the trust and confidence in adults to deal with issues effectively. They know about different forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying, and the digital leaders support other pupils in keeping safe online.

- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe at school. They say they know whom to approach should they have any concerns, and are confident that adults take their concerns seriously. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in a variety of situations through the school's personal, social and health education programme. For example, pupils are taught how to stay safe online.
- Pupils develop a very clear understanding of how they can keep healthy through making healthy food choices and developing an active lifestyle. A significant increase in the number of pupils taking part in after-school clubs demonstrates the impact of this learning.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, overwhelmingly agree that pupils feel safe in school.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well around the school and within lessons. Older pupils are given additional responsibilities as house captains and digital leaders. Pupils take these roles extremely seriously and see supporting their classmates as a key part of their role.
- Pupils respond quickly to instructions and requests from staff, and their outstanding conduct reflects the school's efforts to promote high standards. Pupils understand and demonstrate the school's values of courage, determination, equality, excellence, friendship and respect to a consistently high standard.
- Leaders have reviewed their procedures for improving pupils' attendance. As a result, levels of attendance are consistently higher than the national averages and rising.
- All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, disruption to learning is rare and when it does occur is dealt with swiftly, which ensures that little teaching time is wasted. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly manner.
- The school's own records of behaviour are analysed by leaders and any trends noted are tackled as themes during assembly and their impact monitored carefully. The parents' survey is extremely positive about the way the school deals with behaviour. Pupils get on well with each other, regardless of their different backgrounds, and treat other with respect.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes in key stage 2 have been affected by high mobility into the school since the school opened in September 2012. Analysis of school assessment information and pupils' workbooks shows that pupils who completed key stage 2 at the school performed significantly better than those who did not.
- Current pupils are achieving well across the school. The current Year 5 pupils will be

the first cohort to sit key stage 2 tests having been at the school since it opened in 2012. Work in their books and learning seen in their classrooms show that progress in this cohort, and subsequent years, is stronger than the school has seen previously.

- Pupils in key stage 1 have made strong progress in recent years and have attained higher than the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, the unvalidated outcomes for pupils in key stage 2 show a good improvement from the previous year. By the end of key stage 2, attainment in writing and mathematics was in line with the national average. However, attainment in reading was below the national average and leaders have identified this as an area for improvement.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are very well supported by staff who have received training in order to support their needs. This group of children are making strong progress from their varied starting points. Leaders and staff work closely with a range of outside agencies to support these pupils and their families. Careful monitoring of their progress allows teachers to meet their needs effectively through well-considered lesson planning and activities across a range of subjects. Pupils are supported to enable them to have access to all areas of the school curriculum.
- By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, they are academically and socially well prepared for secondary school. Transition arrangements between the school and the secondary school are strong.
- Pupils acquire phonics knowledge well and make good progress in their reading skills. As a consequence, the school has seen a significant increase in the proportion of pupils who reach the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1.
- In project books, work is of a high standard and there is evidence to show that pupils act on teachers' feedback and are improving their skills as a result. Pupils are encouraged to write across the curriculum. As a result, writing is a strength at the school.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has improved since 2016. While their attainment is still lower than that of other pupils nationally, the difference between the two is diminishing.
- The most able pupils make progress over time, although there are occasions when their work is not suitably challenging to enable them to.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- As a result of strong leadership, teaching and well-resourced classrooms, children have made consistently strong progress in the early years over a four-year period and achieve levels of development above those seen nationally.
- The early years provides an extremely welcoming and exciting learning environment where children are happy and make strong progress in their learning. Routines are positive and clear, and children are encouraged to learn from the moment they arrive.
- Leaders have worked with external partners to improve practice and check the accuracy of standards. This work has supported consistent improvement since the

previous inspection, with the early years now being a strength of the school.

- Teachers and teaching assistants provide exceptional care and establish positive relationships from the moment children join the school.
- Inspectors observed much productive learning. For example, in the Reception class, children designed and built models of space rockets to fly to the North Pole and recorded their classmates performing a Christmas play using multimedia tools. In the pre-school class, children developed their awareness of number by counting and writing letters outdoors making use of the exceptional outside learning environment.
- Parents are closely involved in their children's learning. Children's learning journals show that parents record their children's cooking, reading and holiday experiences, which helps them with their learning at school.
- Pupils make strong progress during their time in the early years from starting points that, for the majority, are broadly typical for their age. However, a minority of children begin the early years with skills and knowledge that are lower than would be typical for their age, especially in their speaking and literacy. Staff target these children particularly well by offering very specific catch-up programmes. As a result, these children make swift progress in reading, writing and speaking.
- The indoor learning areas provide a wide range of interesting learning opportunities matched to children's interests, needs and different levels of ability. Staff observe children carefully to assess their skills and then intervene sensitively to adapt opportunities to meet their needs. For example, some least able children struggled to hold a pencil correctly to form letters. Staff skilfully guided them to use the correct pencil grip which allowed them to form letters correctly.
- In writing, children's skills develop quickly. Many children begin the early years unable to form any letters of the alphabet correctly. They move on swiftly to be able to write their own names. Most can write full sentences by the time they reach Year 1. Children were observed writing letters to Father Christmas in child-led activities making effective use of the writing opportunities on offer.
- Phonics is taught effectively and systematically in the early years. This has a positive impact on the development of writing and spelling, and prepares children well for Year 1.
- Children are exceptionally well behaved in the early years. They play and learn happily with each other in a safe environment. Children remain focused on the tasks selected and are not easily distracted by each other. This is the result of clear routine and structures that are well established.
- Staff carefully monitor children and know what to do if they have any concerns about a child's safety. Staff receive good-quality training in all aspects of keeping children safe, including child protection and paediatric first aid.
- Safeguarding is effective, and all statutory responsibilities are met.

## School details

Unique reference number	135996
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10037636

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	476
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Weir
Headteacher	Denise Burgess
Telephone number	01234 266 245
Website	<a href="http://www.greatdenhamprimary.org.uk">www.greatdenhamprimary.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@greatdenhamprimary.beds.sch.uk">enquiries@greatdenhamprimary.beds.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–18 October 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school opened in September 2012 with 100 pupils and has now grown to 476 pupils. The majority of these pupils started their education at the school. However, in previous years, the school experienced a high level of mobility into the school. There are plans in the near future for the school to grow further to three forms of entry.
- The majority of pupils are taught in two forms of entry across the school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds but an increasing number come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium grant is broadly average.

- The proportion of pupils identified as having SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates before-school and after-school provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in classes and in small groups, individually and with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work, talked to them about it and listened to them read.
- Inspectors talked with pupils informally as they played at breaktimes, visited the dining hall at lunchtimes and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. They met formally with a group of pupils. Inspectors also took account of the 57 pupil responses to Ofsted's online survey.
- An inspector met with three members of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority who has provided support to the school.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They took account of 116 responses to Parent View and also obtained the views of 38 staff members.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, school development plans, information about teachers' performance and external views of the school. Inspectors scrutinised school records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Joseph Figg, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Wayne Harris	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Treacy	Ofsted Inspector

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