

Inspection of Great Ponton Church of England School

Mill Lane, Great Ponton, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG33 5DT

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school with a big heart.

Pupils are good friends to each other. The school gives a warm welcome to any new pupils who join them. They ensure that these pupils settle as quickly as they can. The school is inclusive. Pupils value this. As one pupil described, 'In this school, everyone tries to make people feel happy and welcome and give them joy.' This reflects the school's Christian ethos.

Pupils are confident to describe aspects of life in modern Britain. The school teaches about fundamental British values and topical news events. Pupils relate these to the school values. They can talk about the importance of equality and the need to respect those who are different to them. They understand individual liberty and what democracy means. The school is working hard to prepare pupils for their next stage of education as well as for life.

Parents and carers are positive about the care given to their children. They praise the good communication they have with all staff. All parents who inspectors met could not praise the whole staff team enough.

Pupils are polite and courteous. They feel safe in their school. They describe their enjoyment of lessons. They are proud of their school and everyone in it.

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

Reading is central to the curriculum. Pupils start learning letter sounds as soon as they begin school. This includes new pupils who join school at different times. Pupils develop their reading fluency from expert staff, who teach them well. Pupils who need more help, or who are new to learning English, get extra practice. This means that they can catch up. The school has invested in reading materials and books. Teachers encourage pupils to read a wide variety of these. Pupils can talk about the fiction and non-fiction books they enjoy reading.

The curriculum for the early years is designed to ensure that children are ready for Year 1. Children benefit from a range of high-quality resources and activities. They have writing activities linked to books they are reading. The school ensures that children develop good social skills and independence. Children talk about their learning with confidence.

The school has worked hard to ensure that there is an ambitious curriculum in each subject. The foundations for these begin in the early years. The curriculum enables pupils to understand a broad range of topics. However, in some subjects, the most important knowledge that pupils must remember is not clearly identified in the curriculum. This means that teachers do not focus enough time on what is most important in the unit of study. As a result, pupils do not always remember the key points in the subject over time.

Teachers check on pupils' understanding in lessons. However, the school's assessment approaches are not clear enough in some subjects. The school has not yet refined its systems for checking the impact of the curriculum in all subjects. This means teachers are not able to address some gaps in knowledge over time.

The school has supported all staff so that they can teach lessons well. This is most evident in mathematics and phonics lessons. The school has focused on making sure lessons in these subjects have a clear structure. This helps pupils to see clear steps in knowledge. The school is continuing to provide training for this so that staff can teach as well as possible in all subjects.

The school is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Strategies have been introduced to identify pupils' needs and plan the necessary support. Teaching is adapted so that pupils with SEND achieve as well as they can. Staff provide effective support in lessons so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers.

The school has systems in place to check on attendance for all pupils. Published figures for attendance do not reflect the full picture. Many pupils join or leave mid-year. The school does all it can to be vigilant in tracking this.

There is a range of enrichment activities for pupils to enjoy. Pupils can take part in sports and book clubs. The school council collects pupils' views about school life. The pupils have organised clothes collections for families who might need them. They fundraise for their own Year 6 trip to London. Pupils are positive about the responsibilities given to them, such as being ambassadors for sport.

The governing body is a new team. It is putting plans in place so that it can check the impact of school actions more regularly. This includes the impact on staff workload. The school is mindful that workload is a challenge for a small team. Leaders recognise that this needs careful management.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculum areas do not precisely identify the key knowledge and skills that pupils should know and remember. This means that some units of study are too broad and do not support pupils to acquire sufficient depth of knowledge. The school should ensure that the curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced in all subjects, enabling pupils to know and remember more over time.

- The school has not yet refined the approach to assessment in some foundation subjects. This means that there are no clear systems for checking that the curriculum is having the desired impact on pupils' development of knowledge and skills. The school should ensure that a coherent approach to assessment is established.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	120602
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10298427
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Williams
Headteacher	Keith Leader
Website	www.greatpontonprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been a number of changes to the governing body since the last inspection and a number of governors are new to the role.
- The school has above-average pupil mobility, which means considerable numbers of pupils arrive and leave the school at different points.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

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

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and teachers in the school. They met with governors and spoke to a local authority representative.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also considered documentation and discussed the curriculum in music, history and personal, social, health and economic education. Inspectors looked at books in a number of subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss the provision of pupils with SEND, behaviour, attendance and pupils' personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, parents, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the day. They considered the responses to the online surveys of parents.
- Inspectors considered online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Donna Moulds, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andy Lakatos

Ofsted Inspector

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