

Inspection of a good school: Garvestone Community Primary School

Dereham Road, Garvestone, Norwich, Norfolk NR9 4AD

Inspection dates:

15 January 2020

Outcome

Garvestone Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

A distinctive feature of this school is its sense of community. Pupils told us they get to know everyone well because the school is so small. This helps them to make friends easily. Pupils say they feel safe and that staff look after them well.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour and pupils rise to the challenge. Teachers plan activities which capture pupils' curiosity. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

There are lots of enrichment activities for pupils. Teachers offer a wide range of clubs after school and these are well attended. Leaders take advantage of events organised by other trust schools. Such experiences contribute well to pupils' development.

Pupils insist there is no bullying at the school. They say that some pupils can be unkind at times, but that this is rare. Year 6 peer mediators, supported by staff, help younger children to resolve problems with relationships. This helps all involved to learn better communication skills. Pupils told us that staff take their concerns seriously and help to sort out issues quickly.

Leaders understand the school's strengths and what needs improving. They know pupils' learning in mathematics is not as good as it is in other subjects. Leaders also know that pupils' attendance should be higher.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They provide a curriculum which enables pupils to experience the world beyond the school and local community. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They organise the order in which pupils learn knowledge effectively. Staff make learning exciting, practical and link pupils' learning to other subjects. For example, pupils recall making models in art of volcanoes they had learned about in geography. They mixed water, vinegar and bicarbonate of soda and

observed the reaction in science. Teachers ensure that vocabulary is central to their planning. In this way, pupils are increasingly able to talk about new ideas and learn more.

The curriculum is enhanced by plenty of opportunities to join other schools in the trust for sporting competitions, music and drama. All pupils, including children in the early years, benefit from outdoor learning. Enjoying the mud, children enthusiastically made wooden kites and built shelters.

The teaching of reading is a high priority. As soon as they join Reception, children learn phonics. Teachers plan carefully which sounds children will learn and by when. Pupils understand how phonics work. This helps them to read and spell. Teachers provide extra support for those pupils in danger of falling behind to help them catch up. Older children use phonics to read and understand progressively complex words. Teachers promote reading for pleasure by reading to pupils every day. They provide them with plenty of opportunities to read and talk about good-quality books.

By the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement in national tests is above average in reading and writing. Although improving, their achievement in mathematics is below average. Leaders have recently improved pupils' ability to recall mathematical facts more efficiently. They have introduced a new approach to teaching mathematics to improve reasoning and problem solving. This approach is at a very early stage and needs more time to bring about the desired improvement.

Teachers check pupils' skills in all subjects and use this information to plan what they need to learn next. Work in pupils' books is of good quality. The curriculum is adapted for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff provide effective support for these pupils by explaining ideas in different ways. They give pupils good examples. As a result, pupils are clear about what is expected of them.

Pupils understand the school's behaviour guidelines, including its rewards and sanctions. They behave well. This is primarily because teachers make learning engaging. Sometimes, a few pupils lose interest and concentration. Staff intervene quickly, and pupils are responsive to their guidance.

Trustees are mindful of the well-being and mental health of staff. They have taken decisive action to manage staff workload and reduce unnecessary tasks. The responses of the ten staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are highly positive. Parents and carers also indicated that they are pleased with the school's work. Most said that their children loved coming to school and are well cared for.

Pupils' attendance has been below average for three years. Although leaders have acted to improve attendance, it has remained below average. Sometimes, absence is due to pupils arriving late to school. Leaders know they need to take more robust action to reduce the number of late arrivals and improve rates of attendance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including trustees, have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Careful checks are made on the suitability of adults who work at the school. Staff training is up to date. Staff are clear about the systems in place to report, record and follow up their concerns. Leaders work well with external agencies to make sure pupils get the help and support they need. Pupils say that staff teach them how to keep safe, including near roads and when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The progression of knowledge from the early years to Year 6 is not as well planned in mathematics as it is in other subjects. As a result, pupils are not able to use what they have learned previously to explain and solve increasingly complex problems. Leaders need to ensure that teachers' planning is structured more coherently to enable pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Pupils' attendance has been in the lowest 20% of schools for three years. This means that too many pupils are not able to take advantage of the learning opportunities on offer. Leaders have already acted to improve pupils' attendance, but it has not been sufficiently effective. Leaders should consider alternative strategies to improve pupils' attendance.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Garvestone Community Primary School, to be good in July 2013.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	144315
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10121414
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	68
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Alan Jones
Headteacher	Michelle Farnan
Website	www.garvestone.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Garvestone Community Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- The school is a member of the Unity Education Trust (UET). Trustees are responsible for holding the school's leadership to account. The trust delegates responsibilities to a school oversight committee.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and other staff. We met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of the trustees, the trust's director of school improvement and the community governor from the school oversight committee. We spoke to the trust's special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENCo) and to staff responsible for safeguarding.
- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics and science. We met with staff responsible for leading these subjects and visited lessons in all year groups. We spoke with pupils, looked at work in their books and spoke with their teachers.

- We took account of the nine responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and five free-text responses from parents. We considered the 10 responses to Ofsted’s survey for staff and the 40 responses to the survey of pupils’ views.

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Heather Hann

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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