

Inspection of a good school: Great Milton Church of England Primary School

High Street, Great Milton, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX44 7NT

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 February 2024

Outcome

Great Milton Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The essence of Great Milton is captured perfectly in the words of the parent who observed, 'The school feels like a family. Kindness and happiness are at the heart, which is what makes the children feel safe and secure to grow as individuals.' Many other parents expressed similar views. Pupils, too, describe the school as being like 'one big family' with 'one big heart'. Those who have joined the school later appreciate how they were made to feel welcome and how something 'just clicks' so that they feel they belong. The way that the school embraced the arrival of refugees and their families a couple of years ago is impressive. While they have all moved on now, the legacy of empathy and the depth of pupils' understanding about what their former classmates had experienced is inspirational.

The school is equally committed to pupils' academic achievement. The 'Great Milton Way', which includes 'be ready, be respectful, be responsible', underpins daily life in school from Reception upwards. Pupils work hard and know that it is okay to ask for help and to learn from mistakes. They gain a good grounding in the basic skills and important knowledge across the full range of subjects.

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

Pupils get so much more than an academic education at Great Milton. Visits and visitors bring learning to life and broaden pupils' horizons. Plenty of clubs allow them to pursue their interests or have a go at something new. The recent addition of a lunchtime book club, led by Year 5 reading ambassadors, is proving very popular. The school makes sure that staff have the knowledge, skills and resources to teach the personal, social and health education curriculum confidently. So, for example, pupils learn to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy and about different types of relationships. They are very accepting of difference and insist that no-one is left out. A preventative anti-bullying programme for key stage 2 pupils tackles issues proactively and equips pupils with strategies to stand up for themselves and others. Any incidents of pupils falling out are dealt with sensitively, using a restorative approach.

The school successfully nurtures individuals 'to be the best they can in an inclusive environment where they feel valued, respected and know they belong'. Leaders are improving attendance by working closely with families to overcome barriers. Pupils who have not had a good start to their education elsewhere or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive as part of the Great Milton family. Staff are compassionate and well trained to meet their needs. The school is tenacious in chasing other agencies when they feel more support is needed for individual pupils.

Pupils are learning and achieving well overall. While outcomes at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are not as strong as before the pandemic, small class sizes and pupils joining and leaving the school at different times skew the figures somewhat. Nevertheless, the school is reflective and outward looking in its determination to continually improve provision and give pupils with the best chance of success. The new phonics programme introduced last school year is having a notable impact. Children start to learn to read more or less as soon as they join the Reception class. Staff are well trained, so teaching is precise. Tailored extra teaching and support for pupils who do not find it as easy to master early reading skills means that they still experience success and see themselves as readers.

Mathematics teaching has improved over the same period, underpinned by the use of a published scheme and regularly revisiting learning to, as one pupil described it, 'jog our memories'. A strong focus on clear explanations and ensuring that pupils can explain their reasoning and apply their learning from early years onwards is bearing fruit. Pupils have a deeper understanding of their mathematical learning and, with it, greater confidence in their ability.

The school is equally ambitious for pupils' learning across other subjects. It has revisited its curriculum design following the COVID-19 lockdowns and continues to refine it, doing so in a manageable way. In some subjects, the school has carefully chosen and adapted published schemes. Guidance for staff makes sure that teaching is purposeful and engaging. Teachers know what pupils should understand and be able to do and check their learning by observing and talking to them. Pupils can see how their knowledge and skills are building over time. In a few subjects, the progression of learning is not as clearly defined and pupils do not recall their learning as readily. This means that they are not achieving as well as they could.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum beyond the core subjects is under review. As yet, the guidance for staff in a few subjects about how learning should build over time is not as helpful as in others in making sure that pupils have the essential learning for what comes next. This impacts on what pupils remember and know. In further refining the curriculum, the

school should ensure that it is clear what knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils must have mastered and retained at key points from early years to Year 6 in all subjects.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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 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	123130
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10313347
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chetan Lad
Headteacher	Alyson Frost
Website	www.greatmiltonschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Almost half of teachers have joined the school since it was last inspected, including the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENCo), who took up post in September 2022. Over half of teaching support staff are new to the school since the last inspection.
- The school's religious character is inspected separately. The last section 48 inspection took place in 2017. The next one is due by 2025.
- Over the course of the previous two school years the school had up to 30 refugee pupils on roll at any one time.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, SENCo and pastoral lead. The inspector also had discussions with the early years team, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult. The inspector considered the school's curriculum in some other subjects by looking at curriculum maps with leaders and talking to pupils.
- The views of staff, parents and pupils were gathered using Ofsted's surveys. The inspector also talked to pupils around school and at breaktime, and with staff as they went about their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, 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.

Inspection team

Alison Bradley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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