

Inspection of a good school: Guyhirn CofE VC Primary School

High Road, Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 4ED

Inspection dates:

30 October 2019

Outcome

Guyhirn CofE VC Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and well cared for in this welcoming school. They say that learning is fun, and that they enjoy their lessons. Pupils are well behaved, and lessons flow without disruption. Pupils learn during assemblies about being respectful to each other and adults.

Pupils are proud of their school and the resources that they have access to, such as the newly refurbished library. They are provided with many opportunities to develop their social skills before and after school. Playtimes are positive, and pupils of all ages play easily together. Pupils say that they enjoy physical education lessons and also the trips that make subjects such as history come to life.

School council representatives and prefects carry out their responsibilities seriously and maturely. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not occur. They know who to speak with if they have any concerns or if any disagreements occur. The school is a calm and purposeful place in which to learn. Pupils and adults have good relationships.

Children in the pre-school settle quickly and well. Adults plan learning activities that are suitable to meet the needs of children from the age of two. Children are well prepared for the start of Reception.

Since the school opened as an academy, pupils have not been making as much progress as they should in reading and mathematics from Years 3 to 6. Older pupils say that the quality of teaching is improving now. Many of the changes to the reading curriculum in key stage 2 started in September 2019.

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

The headteacher took up her post in September 2018. Since that time, leaders and governors have started to change the ways teaching is planned to help pupils learn more

and make better progress, especially across key stage 2. Staff support these developments and are proud to work at the school.

Leaders provide regular training to staff for the teaching of mathematics. They have adapted the way they teach mathematics so that the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes are well considered. There is a clear plan for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills as they move through the school. However, older pupils are not as secure as they should be with some of the basics in mathematics such as times tables. Teaching does not help pupils build on their learning from previous years as well as it could. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 shows that some pupils have not made sufficient progress. In 2019, the progress that pupils made in mathematics was particularly low.

Leaders promote pupils' love and enjoyment of reading. Leaders have effectively used local additional opportunity funding to refurbish the library, buy new reading books and train staff. There are workshops for parents, so parents understand how to help their children when reading at home. However, there is not enough coherence in how learning is organised for the mixed-age classes in key stage 2.

Adults focus on developing pupils' fluency and motivation to read. Support staff often lead groups of pupils in reading lessons. They do not have sufficient training to provide pupils with the necessary strategies to improve their understanding of the text they are reading. The progress that pupils make at the end of key stage 2 has been in slow decline over three years. In 2019, the progress pupils made in reading was very low.

Children in pre-school develop their language and communication skills effectively. Adults have designed an interesting and exciting learning environment so that children can learn well. This continues into Reception. Children are well prepared when starting school. Children learn to read quickly using their knowledge of sounds. Adults carefully use the school's approach to teaching phonics. They provide timely support for children who need to catch up.

Teachers understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They adapt planning so that pupils' needs are met. Adults have high expectations of what these pupils can achieve.

Governors are supportive of the work of school leaders. They ensure that the views of staff are considered when changes are being made. The local governing body and the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT) have an accurate view of the strengths and where they want the school to be.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a high priority on keeping pupils safe and well cared for. They provide up to date training for staff so that adults spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff are confident using the school's systems to report concerns.

Leaders work carefully with different professionals, so that pupils have the support that is needed.

The local governing body and DEMAT check that all information concerning the suitable recruitment of staff is in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The improvements seen in some aspects of the curriculum are not matched in all areas. Some aspects of the national curriculum expectations are not as well planned and delivered as others. Pupils' understanding and use of times tables is not as secure as it needs to be for them to be successful. Teachers are not building on pupils' knowledge and understanding so that more pupils are ready for the demands of Year 6 mathematics. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is adapted and implemented effectively across the mixed-age classes.
- Leaders' improvements to the teaching of reading are new. The design of the curriculum for the teaching of reading is not as coherent as it needs to be. There is not a logical progression of how pupils will learn and develop their understanding of texts across key stage 2. Leaders need to ensure that the teaching helps pupils deepen their understanding of texts and reading comprehension, so that more pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Support staff are very experienced and provide strong pastoral support. These staff are often used to leading learning for groups of pupils in the mixed-age classes. Leaders need to provide subject-specific training to support staff, especially in the teaching of reading and the expectations of the national curriculum.

Background

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 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, Guyhirn CofE VC Primary School, to be good on 6–7 July 2016.

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 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	144288
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10121428
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Maxwell
Headteacher	Karen Milnthorpe
Website	www.guyhirn.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Guyhirn CofE Primary School converted to become an academy in May 2017. This is the first inspection since that conversion.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT).
- The school is subject to a section 48 inspection. There has not been an inspection since the academy opened in May 2017.
- This is a small school with mixed-age classes. Most pupils are white British.
- The school provides education for children who are two years old and above.
- The school is growing, with some pupils starting part way through a school year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, leaders, staff, the local governing body, the chief executive officer and another representative of the trust.
- The inspectors looked closely at the curriculum for reading, mathematics and history. They visited a range of lessons and looked at learning plans. They spoke with pupils and staff and looked at pupils' work in books.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's website and the school's policies. They met with the school's designated safeguarding officer, spoke with staff and pupils. They checked the school's records of safer recruitment of staff. The responses to the parent, staff and pupil surveys were considered.
- Inspectors took account of 27 responses to Ofsted's online parental survey, Parent View, and 10 comments that parents made through the free-text service. There were 56 responses to the pupil survey and 15 responses to the staff survey, which were also considered.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Nutbeam

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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