

Inspection of Guilden Morden CofE Primary Academy

Pound Green, Guilden Morden, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 0JZ

Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are extremely happy at school. They enjoy their work and are keen to do well. They like the small size of the school because everyone knows each other. As one pupil commented, 'We are like one big family.' Pupils behave well and have good manners. They talk happily to visitors about what they are learning. They understand why it is important to work hard.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They regard the school as a 'bully-free zone'. They know that staff will take rapid action if anyone is naughty. These high expectations mean that pupils can work undisturbed.

There is a delightful atmosphere at breaktimes. Pupils play together happily. Staff provide lots of activities at playtime to keep pupils occupied. Peer mediators explain clearly how they would help someone who was looking unhappy.

Pupils especially enjoy being given responsibility. For example, teachers have helped pupils start a new 'Global Gang'. This already has some great ideas for improving the environment both in school and beyond.

Leaders believe it is important to help all pupils to flourish both socially and academically. They prepare pupils well for each new stage of their education.

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

The headteacher has built an effective team who work together well. They have high aspirations for their pupils. They have been supported well in school improvement by a strong and effective local governing body. A carefully planned programme of support from the academy trust has also been instrumental in the rapid pace of change in the last two years.

Staff have worked together to design a curriculum that successfully meets the needs of pupils in the school's mixed-age classes. The curriculum is organised so that pupils learn the right thing in the correct order. Teachers plan work that helps pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to achieve well.

The curriculum provides all pupils with rich experiences that is likely to leave them with lifelong memories of their time at the school. Staff plan activities that broaden pupils' horizons and encourage them to have high aspirations for themselves. For example, a Year 6 girl has decided she would like to be an engineer after taking part in a design activity in class.

Teaching helps pupils to learn quickly and to build up their knowledge and skills over time. They expect pupils to work hard and behave well. Skilled teaching assistants give calm and sensitive support to pupils with SEND. Occasionally, teachers plan work that is either too hard for the least able or too easy for the most able.

The headteacher and staff are determined that pupils will develop a love of reading. Teachers read regularly to their class. They make good use of books to link subjects together. This makes learning purposeful. Teachers quickly give help to pupils who are in danger of falling behind in their reading. However, a few less-able pupils have reading books that are too difficult for them to read confidently.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. Children settle quickly into the pre-school and are well cared for. Adults have high expectations of children. For example, children are encouraged to try to write their name when they 'sign in' each day.

In the Reception Year, the teacher gives early reading skills a high priority, from the first day in school. Phonics are taught well, and children's skills improve quickly. Adults plan a suitable range of activities where children can choose where to work. These sometimes lack a clear purpose.

There is a very happy atmosphere in school. Staff and pupils get on well together. Adults do all they can to help pupils understand the importance of resilience and perseverance. This is supported well by activities such as a recent mini-Paralympics, when pupils saw how it is possible to overcome adversity.

Staff in the school enjoy their work. They willingly take on extra responsibilities for managing subjects. Leaders and the governing body are considerate of teachers' workload. They their best to ensure that tasks are manageable.

The school has placed itself at the heart of the local community. Parents are very positive about its work. Typical comments include, 'The school is an extremely happy place', and 'The new headteacher and the great team he has assembled at this little school have transformed it.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has strong systems to keep pupils safe. There are rigorous checks in place to assure the suitability of staff to work with children.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures. They know what to do if they have a concern. School records show that the school responds immediately if staff have identified a problem.

The school teaches pupils how to stay safe. Expert visitors sometimes give talks to pupils about how to avoid danger. For example, a specialist from a local supermarket spoke to pupils during the inspection about how to avoid problems when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some less-able pupils have reading books that are too hard for them. The school needs to ensure that there is a better match of reading books to the sounds that pupils already know. This will help pupils to use their knowledge of phonics to read more confidently.
- There are occasions when work is too hard or too easy for some pupils. To tackle this, teachers need to respond more quickly when they can see that pupils are struggling with their work or are ready for the next steps in their learning.
- In the Reception Year, the teacher plans interesting activities for children to work on independently. However, the purpose of some of these is unclear. The teacher needs to ensure that all activities have a clear purpose so that adults know when to respond to move learning on more quickly.

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're 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	142811
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10110180
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Maxwell
Headteacher	Jeremy Fisher
Website	http://guildenmorden.cambs.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- This Church of England school became a part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust in February 2016.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- Early years provision includes a pre-school for two- to three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and middle leaders and other staff. The inspectors met with members of the local governing body and representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views of school. They observed playtimes and visited the after-school club.
- The inspectors heard pupils read. They looked at school documents, including planning and monitoring documents; the school development plan; records

relating to behaviour and attendance; safeguarding information; and health and safety documentation.

- The inspector looked at the 26 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspectors looked in detail at four subjects – reading, mathematics, science and Spanish. The inspectors observed lessons in these subjects, some with the headteacher. The inspectors also met with teachers, curriculum leaders and pupils, and looked at a sample of pupils’ work in these subjects.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Daniell

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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