

Inspection of Great Bowden Academy, A Church of England Primary School

Gunnsbrook Close, Great Bowden, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 7HZ

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Bishop. The school is part of Learn Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jane Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeremy Benson.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since September 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Great Bowden Academy relationships between staff and pupils are positive and nurturing. This gives the school a strong family ethos which is supported by its Christian values which run through all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils are caring and welcoming towards those around them. They feel safe, enjoy coming to school and attend well. One pupil shared, 'We have worry buddies. They are our trusted adults that we can share any of our worries or concerns with.'

The school has high ambition for pupils' achievement. As a result, pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and achieve well. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of their behaviour. The vast majority of pupils focus well in lessons. Pupils know and follow the school rules: 'Be ready, be respectful, be responsible'.

Pupils treat each other and staff with courtesy and respect. They are supportive of their peers and maturely recognise that some pupils may need additional help to regulate their emotions and behaviours.

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

Children get off to a strong start in the Reception Year. Staff make effective use of resources and equipment to successfully design learning activities which encourage children to explore, take risks and learn through play. This supports children's learning and development across the early years curriculum. Staff have introduced clear routines which children follow closely and develops their independence. Children are well-prepared for their next stage of education.

The school prioritises reading. Staff have been well trained to deliver the phonics programme. Extra support is in place for some pupils who are at risk of falling behind the pace of the programme. The reading books that pupils take home are carefully matched to include the sounds that they have learned. This supports pupils to develop their reading fluency and overall confidence with reading. Staff read to pupils daily. The school chooses diverse, high-quality texts that strengthen pupils' awareness of the world around them.

The mathematics curriculum is a strength of the school. It focuses on pupils' mathematical fluency. Pupils successfully use and apply their fluency skills in problem solving tasks and reasoning about number. Teachers model lesson content well and their explanations are clear.

Across the range of subjects taught, misconceptions that pupils have about their learning are addressed in the moment. For example, staff discuss the reasons behind a mistake. Pupils show high levels of engagement and take pride in the work that they produce. Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is positive.

The school has created an ambitious curriculum for subjects in the wider curriculum. Some of these subjects are more established than others. For example in history, the school has identified the important knowledge that pupils should know and remember. Lessons regularly recap pupils' previous learning. As a result, pupils' recall of knowledge in history is secure. This depth of knowledge is not as secure across other subjects in the wider curriculum. This is largely because some of the curriculum content has recently been changed or there is a new curriculum in place.

The school has a clear and effective approach to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) for the majority of their learning. The school works proactively with a range of external professionals to seek expert guidance to strengthen the support they offer. However, the school does not ensure that learning is adapted as successfully as it could be across all subjects. As a result, for some pupils, including some pupils with SEND, learning opportunities are missed.

Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. For example, they demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of different types of families and the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. They understand the importance of equality and they respect difference. Pupils access a range of clubs and trips. Pupils enjoy taking on leadership positions such as being a school councillor. These opportunities develop pupils beyond their academic achievements. They increase pupils' independence as well as their talents and interests.

The school carefully considers staff's workload and well-being. Staff appreciate the professional development opportunities available to them, particularly the chance to network with colleagues from across the trust. This gives them the knowledge and expertise they need to support pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes. Those with responsibility for governance know the school's strengths and priorities well. They offer appropriate support and challenge and fulfil their statutory duties.

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 for some subjects in the wider curriculum is new in its implementation or has undergone some changes. As a result, pupils' knowledge is not as secure as it is in subjects that are more established. The school should ensure that work to embed all areas of the curriculum is completed so that pupils know and remember more of the intended curriculum.

- Teachers do not consistently adapt learning effectively for some pupils. This means that the learning for some pupils, including some pupils with SEND, is not as carefully considered as it could be when tasks are adapted to meet their individual needs. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers gain the knowledge and understanding they need to adapt learning with greater success and precision so that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	138359
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10347535
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	136
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremy Benson
CEO of the trust	Jane Jones
Headteacher	Sarah Bishop
Website	www.greatbowden.leics.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 September 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Learn Academies Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of school's religious character, took place in March 2020. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2025.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and reviewed samples of pupils’ work.
- The lead inspector carried out a wider curriculum review of science and design technology. The lead inspector reviewed samples of pupils’ work and met with subject leaders for these subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, the early years, and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust and also members of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Luella Dhoore, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Liz White

Ofsted Inspector

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