

Gainsborough Primary and Nursery School

Belgrave Road, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 7NH

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress of current pupils in key stage 2, although improving, is not as strong as it should be. Not enough pupils reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers do not set consistently demanding work across a range of subjects that challenges the most able pupils, especially in key stage 2.
- Pupils in some year groups in key stage 2 do not receive enough opportunities to apply their writing skills effectively.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils' progress is variable across subjects and year groups.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics do not assess and track pupils' progress closely enough.
- The school's improvement plan does not contain precise ways of measuring the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils do not regularly show pride in their work, especially in English.
- The rate of persistent absence is above the national average.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have a secure grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their actions have resulted in a rapidly improving quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders have taken many actions that have secured strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in key stage 1 and in the early years.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They trust adults to look after them well.
- Behaviour is much improved because of leaders' actions, with considerable reductions in fixed-term exclusions and incidents of bullying.
- Children in the early years make strong progress from low starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more pupils achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that teachers regularly plan work that stretches the most able and provides opportunities to deepen their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills so that they are able to write at length
 - embedding the strategies that leaders have introduced to strengthen pupils' progress in reading and mathematics.
- Secure consistently strong progress for pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics by making sure that teachers plan lessons that enable pupils to acquire the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills effectively.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics put procedures in place to ensure that pupils' progress is accurately tracked in each subject
 - the school's action plans for improvement clearly identify how leaders will measure the impact of their actions on pupils' achievement.
- Ensure that pupils further improve their attitudes to learning by more consistently showing pride in their work, especially in English.
- Make sure that leaders continue with their strategies to improve attendance, so that the rate of persistent absence reduces to near the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- There has been considerable instability in the leadership of the school until recently. The federation headteacher and the head of the school have been in their current roles for approximately two years. During that time, they have focused with determination on improving the quality of education in the school. They have successfully challenged underperformance by staff, resulting in several changes in personnel. They seconded some staff from the partner school in the federation, who will become permanent from September 2018. They have also brought about improvements in pupils' behaviour and in the progress made by children in the early years, for example.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have made an honest and accurate self-evaluation of the quality of provision. They have devised detailed action plans for improvement, although these plans do not consistently contain measurable ways of evaluating the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' achievement. Leaders have, for example, focused on improving reading by commissioning a specialist teacher to support and train members of staff. This has had a positive impact. In the early years, for example, more children achieved the early learning goal for reading this year than in 2017. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 who achieve the expected standard continues to be close to the national average. In key stage 2, more of the current pupils in Year 6 are working at the expected standard in reading than last year, although this is still below the national average. A high number of pupils in Year 3 are working at the expected standard for their age.
- The actions that senior leaders have taken have brought about strong improvements in the early years. There has been a substantial increase this year in the number of children achieving a good level of development compared to 2017. Leaders have also maintained good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1. Typically, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in these subjects is close to the national average. This represents strong progress from low starting points. There is also strong progress in mathematics in some year groups in key stage 2. Behaviour is much improved, with a considerable reduction this year in incidents of bullying and fixed-term exclusions. Leaders have managed any exclusions that have occurred appropriately and there have been valid reasons for them.
- The headteacher has made improvements to the checks leaders make on the quality of teaching. There are now more ambitious targets for teachers, which include a clear focus on pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders hold meetings more frequently with staff to discuss pupils' progress. During these meetings, they identify individual pupils who need extra support to help them improve. These actions have contributed effectively to the rapidly improving quality of teaching in the school. However, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes still require improvement. This is because leaders' actions have not yet raised standards sufficiently.
- The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. Pupils have opportunities to develop their understanding of fundamental British values through a range of activities, such as an 'art week' to consider the theme of Remembrance. Displays in the school

also reinforce these values. A programme of lessons in religious education enables pupils to understand different faiths. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development with a variety of educational visits to enhance pupils' experience of the curriculum. Leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum to find ways of further enhancing pupils' enjoyment and interest.

- The subject leaders for English and mathematics have a secure understanding of standards in their subject. They regularly take part in activities such as analysis of pupils' work to check on the quality of teaching and learning. They provide coaching for members of staff who need support with aspects of teaching. Their work has contributed effectively to the progress current pupils make, especially in key stage 1 and in some year groups in key stage 2.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics understand the strengths and weaknesses of their subject. They make appropriate checks on the quality of teaching and learning. However, they do not have effective procedures in place to ensure that pupils' progress is closely tracked in each subject.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the use of pupil premium funding and they track pupils' progress well. For example, they provide training to teaching assistants to provide specific programmes for support for pupils. These programmes focus on overcoming pupils' barriers to learning, such as social and emotional issues or difficulties in speech and language skills.
- Leaders make good use of the funding they receive for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is knowledgeable and provides effective support for pupils. For example, she deploys a language specialist to help pupils who have difficulties in this area. Leaders successfully meet the needs of the majority of this current group of pupils and enable them to make strong progress.
- The school uses the physical education and sport premium particularly effectively. The subject leader for physical education has strong subject knowledge and manages this funding well. For example, she addresses the needs of pupils who are more reluctant to improve their fitness by ensuring that they have priority in various sports clubs.
- Staff are very positive about their work in the school. They feel that leaders provide training that helps to improve their performance and that all staff are 'striving to make the school the best it can be'. They appreciate the coaching sessions that designated teachers lead. In conversation with the lead inspector, new staff praised the support they have received since their arrival, making them feel part of 'family Gainsborough'.
- Although a few parents and carers expressed individual concerns about aspects of the school, the large majority are very supportive and positive.
- The local authority and the independently commissioned school improvement partner have an accurate view of the school's priorities. They provide appropriate and effective support.

Governance of the school

- Governors are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding. Some members of the governing body have specialist training in this area as a feature of their work

outside school. They keep themselves abreast of safeguarding issues in the school by, for example, analysing regular reports from senior leaders. There are also two safeguarding governors, who meet every term with the school's designated safeguarding lead to discuss any issues and keep a check on the effectiveness of procedures.

- Governors are clear about the school's priorities. They provide challenge for leaders effectively and ask searching questions to hold the headteacher to account. These questions concern subjects such as finance, staff workload and pupils' progress. They are ambitious to see continuing improvement to the quality of education the school provides.
- Governors have ensured that the school's website is now up to date and complies with the government's requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The required checks the school carries out on members of staff are thorough and comply with the government's guidance.
- Leaders organise their records of safeguarding concerns well and ensure that they contain appropriate information. The designated safeguarding lead makes referrals to external agencies, such as children's services, when required. She pursues issues with these agencies if necessary.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff receive regular and effective training, so that they know how to be alert to signs of abuse. Leaders have enhanced pupils' awareness of bullying, including racist and homophobic, by introducing a new scheme. Pupils receive regular lessons on the features of bullying and how to manage it or report it. Leaders also ensure that pupils are safe online by providing opportunities to learn about e-safety.
- The school employs a family support worker. She has positive relationships with parents or carers, supporting those who have vulnerable children effectively. Her work has contributed well to the recent reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions, for example.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, although improving because of leaders' actions, does not currently secure strong enough progress for pupils across some year groups and subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently plan lessons that are challenging enough for the most able pupils. This means that these pupils do not regularly have opportunities to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. In writing in key stage 2, for example, most-able pupils often do not have the opportunity to make their own decisions about the organisation or content of their work.

- Teachers typically demonstrate secure subject knowledge, such as in explaining inequalities in mathematics and in teaching pupils about the environment and endangered animals in science. However, there is variability in the level of demand in the tasks they set. This results in pupils in some year groups in key stage 2 losing interest and not making as much progress as possible.
- Teachers do not consistently provide pupils in some year groups in key stage 2 with opportunities to apply their writing skills effectively. Pupils in these year groups do not develop the ability to write at length, for example. Some pupils' work also shows underdevelopment of skills in spelling and grammar.
- Teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to use skills they have learned in mathematics and English in other subjects, but this is variable. For example, in key stage 2, pupils use their writing skills to complete reports about investigations into electricity. However, there are fewer opportunities in subjects such as history and geography.
- The actions that senior leaders have taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning have had a positive impact on the progress of pupils in key stage 1. In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils typically acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need at a strong rate. This results in the majority of pupils achieving expected standards by the end of Year 2.
- The subject leader for mathematics has introduced new strategies for teaching mathematics in key stage 1 and in some year groups in key stage 2. Where these strategies are more established, there is evidence of strong improvement in pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers focus more sharply on developing pupils' mathematical reasoning and solving problems. They skilfully model the technical language of mathematics and provide challenge for most-able pupils.
- Where teaching over time is most effective, teachers ask questions that probe pupils' learning, such as in mathematical reasoning in Year 2. Teachers make good use of assessment to support pupils who need help and they build on pupils' experience in devising lessons. They are successful in effectively supporting the least able and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, providing well-tailored interventions where required.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and manage it well. Relationships are warm and positive. Teachers organise transitions between lessons and phases of lessons well. They ensure that a large majority of pupils display positive attitudes to their work. These attitudes contribute well to the progress that current pupils make, especially the strong progress evident in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are confident that adults will support them if they have any concerns, such as experiencing stress or other mental health issues. They know that the school checks visitors thoroughly and they recognise that it

is safe to talk to them if they are wearing the correct identity badge. Adults help them to stay safe by giving them information about, for example, organisations like the NSPCC or Childline. Pupils also benefit from information about healthy eating. Pupils who spoke with inspectors knew, for example, about the importance of eating vegetables in a healthy diet.

- Leaders employ a family support worker. She provides social and emotional support for some families. She also directs families to other agencies that may be able to help with specific issues, such as bereavement. Her work contributes effectively to the personal development of more vulnerable pupils in school.
- Pupils enjoy a variety of clubs, such as dance, cooking and choir, and visits to places such as botanical gardens or a local church. These activities contribute effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic. They say that bullying sometimes happens and adults are effective in dealing with any incidents.
- There are various opportunities for pupils to develop roles of responsibility. For example, there is the school council, which contributes to establishing school rules. The school council also decides which charities the school will support by arranging fundraising events.
- Pupils do not consistently show pride in their work. This is mainly true in English books, where careless presentation sometimes makes it difficult for pupils to read their own work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils demonstrate overwhelmingly good conduct around school, which is typically an orderly environment. Pupils play harmoniously at breaktimes in the playground. At lunchtime, pupils enjoy socialising as they eat. This can result in some noisiness, but this is partly down to the acoustics of the dining hall and does not interfere with the effective organisation of lunchtime. Midday assistants are alert and manage behaviour well. Pupils have a range of activities on the playground, which contributes to the smooth organisation of this period of the day.
- There are occasional disruptions to learning, usually from pupils who have particular needs. However, teachers manage these effectively when they occur and little learning time is lost. Pupils respond well to teachers' strategies for managing behaviour. Pupils clearly understand the school's new behaviour policy, which now involves more rewards for good behaviour. These include a regular period of free choice of activities, known as 'Golden Time'.
- Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils' attendance is as high as possible. They have a wide range of strategies in place. These include promoting high attendance in school with various competitions and rewards for pupils. Leaders also send letters to and hold meetings with parents if their child is absent too often. Because of these actions, rates of absence and persistent absence have reduced since 2016/17. Overall attendance is

now close to the national average. However, the rate of persistent absence is still above average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, pupils performed poorly in tests in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Attainment was below the national average and progress was significantly below average. In writing, pupils' progress was also below the national average, though not as far below as in reading and mathematics. Current pupils across key stage 2 are making improving progress, but it is still inconsistent across year groups and subjects. It is not currently strong enough to result in enough pupils reaching the expected standards. Progress in writing in some year groups is weaker than in reading and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 2 in 2017 who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was close to the national average. Assessment information and evidence from books show that current pupils across key stage 1 continue to make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics from low starting points.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils' progress is variable across subjects and year groups. In science in key stage 1, for example, pupils acquire knowledge and skills at a strong rate, learning about, for instance, life cycles and materials. In geography, however, pupils learn about continents and journeys, but pupils are not accumulating appropriate knowledge and skills systematically or rapidly enough.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged make strong progress in key stage 1. In key stage 2, current pupils' progress is improving because of leaders' actions. However, it is not consistently strong enough to result in sufficiently high proportions of pupils achieving at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Senior leaders have acted decisively to secure stronger progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. They have, for example, employed additional staff to support pupils' learning and their emotional and social issues. They have employed a specialist teacher to support pupils' reading. They have also made teachers more accountable by establishing more-rigorous checks, such as more-frequent meetings to monitor pupils' progress.
- Current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress from their various starting points. This is because staff identify their needs effectively and provide appropriate support.
- Most pupils read with fluency and comprehension that match their age and stage of development. Younger pupils use their knowledge of phonics effectively to read unfamiliar words. Many pupils are very enthusiastic and show their enjoyment of reading, but some are less so.
- The majority of pupils in Year 1 make strong progress in phonics and reach the expected standard. They typically have low starting points and benefit from effective teaching and extra support where required. However, teachers do not consistently

provide the least able pupils with reading books that enable them to use their knowledge of phonics effectively to read unfamiliar words.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years lead has a secure understanding of standards in the provision. She has taken effective action to enhance the quality of education that children receive and to ensure that children make typically strong progress from their starting points. She has taken decisive action to ensure that the maximum number of children are ready for Year 1. For example, she has adopted features of recent research into teaching strategies in the early years and coached staff in these effectively. As a result, there is now a greater focus on developing key skills, such as literacy and mathematics. Leaders have chosen to organise this by planning a greater amount of discrete teaching time. Because of leaders' actions, there has been a considerable increase in the number of children who achieved a good level of development in 2018, compared to 2017.
- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age and stage of development. Several have difficulties with the development of speech and language. An increasing number of children begin the early years speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is below the national average. However, this represents strong progress from their low starting points. Children who attend Nursery before entering Reception make even better progress than those who do not. Leaders are determined to continue with their new strategies, such as the stronger focus on developing children's skills in literacy and mathematics, to increase the number of children who are ready for Year 1.
- Leaders involve parents effectively in contributing to their child's initial assessments. They hold suitable transition events, such as parents' visits to the early years provision in the summer term before their child starts. Staff carry out visits to a local nursery and to various childminders in preparing children to start in Nursery or, where appropriate, Reception. Leaders give parents useful opportunities to share in their child's learning and development. For example, they organise 'stay and play' sessions and parents' workshops to help them find out about their child's learning.
- Children show that they feel safe because they behave well and are happy to engage with trusted adults. Several children, for instance, showed considerable confidence as they proudly showed the lead inspector well-formed letters they had written. Staff follow the safeguarding procedures and policies that apply to the whole school. There are no breaches of the welfare requirements.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers carefully plan activities that stimulate and interest children. For example, one group of children in Reception enjoyed a 'word hunt' in the outdoor area. They showed good skills in reading the word they had found and then writing it on a clipboard. Teachers typically give children good opportunities to practise their skills and they model language for them effectively. They assess children accurately on entry and throughout their time in the early years. This enables them to plan tasks that match children's abilities and needs to help them to make strong progress.

- Leaders ensure that children who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make good progress. They are adept at identifying children's barriers to learning and providing effective support. This includes activities such as interventions to help to develop children's speech and language skills, as well as extra reading support.
- Staff often ask effective questions, such as 'How can we work out what it says?' These encourage children to think hard about their work and help to develop most children's skills successfully. Sometimes, however, teachers do not develop some physical skills sufficiently well. This results in a few children forming their letters poorly, because they do not have proper control of their pencil.

School details

Unique reference number	133352
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10045121

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	436
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Sercombe
Federation headteacher	Jane Booth
Head of school	Nicola Hough
Telephone number	01270 685328
Website	www.gainsboroughschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@gainsborough.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2014

Information about this school

- Gainsborough Primary and Nursery School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Three quarters of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their SEN and/or disabilities is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a hard federation with Cledford Primary School, Middlewich. There is a federation headteacher who leads both schools. There is one governing body, serving both schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in all year groups. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher, the head of the school and the deputy headteacher. The headteacher and the head of the school were also present at inspection team meetings.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school’s self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors had discussions with various stakeholders, including the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, other members of staff, the chair and other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, an independently commissioned school improvement adviser, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed pupils’ work in a range of subjects. They also looked at the work of children in the early years.
- Inspectors evaluated 41 responses received through Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, during the inspection. They also analysed 16 responses to the online staff survey. There were no other survey responses.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
David Deane OBE	Ofsted Inspector
Amanda Stringer	Her Majesty’s Inspector

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