

Inspection of Great Kimble Church of England School

Church Lane, Great Kimble, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP17 9TH

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
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 Clare Lodge. This school is part of Great Learners Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Lorraine Greco, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alan Rosen.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Great Kimble Church of England School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Great Kimble is a happy and vibrant school community. Pupils enjoy attending this caring and kind school. They feel supported and listened to by adults. Pupils are confident to share any worries and know that staff will act swiftly to address them. They are highly positive about each other and adults who support them.

Pupils' learning does not yet meet the schools' aspirations. The school has high ambition for pupils' achievements and pupils display positive attitudes to learning. However, there has been considerable staff turbulence and much of the school's offer is new. As a result, pupils' achievement over time is variable. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The community values the school. One parent commented, 'The whole school ethos is so positive and encouraging.' This is reflected in the school's carefully chosen experiences and opportunities to broaden pupils' learning. The school choir, trips to the Ashmolean Museum and initiatives like the pupil led 'Friends of Kimble' group enrich the school experience for pupils. The school ensures that pupils who are disadvantaged benefit equally well from these opportunities.

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

The school has established a broad and ambitious curriculum. It contains well-defined knowledge and skills that build gradually over time. Leaders have carefully considered how disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND, can be supported throughout the curriculum. The school uses an effective approach to identify pupils with SEND. However, the school's ambitions for pupils to learn the planned curriculum are not fully realised in practice.

The school has recently prioritised equipping staff with expert knowledge to teach across all subjects. Staff welcome the school's support to strengthen their teaching. This helps some staff to effectively explain new concepts, provide clear models and accurately check pupils' understanding. This is not yet consistent across the curriculum. In addition, the school is working to address a legacy of substantial staff turbulence. As a result, pupils' achievement is inconsistent across different subjects. This includes pupils with SEND who do not receive consistent, high-quality support to enable them to learn well. Weak pupil progress over time is reflected in the most recent published outcomes.

Reading is a school priority. Most pupils read books that are carefully matched to their phonic knowledge. Leaders have trained staff to teach phonics effectively. They ensure that staff use a consistent approach by carefully reviewing resources and supporting teaching. Pupils love reading and have access to a broad range of books. Consequently, pupils read widely and often.

Children benefit from a strong start in Reception. The school have designed a well-sequenced curriculum for the early years. This builds from what pupils know, to ambitious endpoints that focus on promoting communication and vocabulary. Staff follow this plan closely, and this helps children to achieve well. Children flourish alongside their peers and demonstrate high-quality language skills. Consequently, children leave Reception ready for the next stage of education.

Pupils are polite and considerate. The school have established a respectful and kind ethos. This means that relationships between staff and pupils are positive and constructive. The school has a clear approach to maintaining a calm and orderly environment with consistent routines and expectations. Leaders use a clear strategy for addressing attendance concerns. This approach has been effective at swiftly reducing persistent absence, including for the most disadvantaged pupils.

The school provides a secure moral compass, and this promotes pupils' personal development well. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. They embody the school's 'window, mirrors and doors' approach. They look outwards through the 'windows' and learn key information about their community and other cultures. They effectively reflect on their learning, welfare and actions with the 'mirrors'. The 'doors' are linked to a broad range of experiences that help pupils understand more of the world around them. Through this approach, pupils learn and remember how to stay safe in person and online and accept differences and change. Consequently, pupils learn to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy and have a growing understanding of the world around them.

The new school leaders have a clear and ambitious vision. There has been a systematic approach to implementing many improvements across the school. They recognise there is further work to do to address the legacy of underachievement and inconsistency in pupils' learning. The work to improve the school has been strengthened with appropriate challenge from governors, who are now utilising the support from the trust to further build capacity.

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 needs further development. This means pupils' learning across different subjects, including English and mathematics, is inconsistent. The school must ensure the curriculum is taught consistently well and pupils are supported to learn and remember the most important content over time.
- The support for pupils with SEND is underdeveloped. This means pupils are not achieving as well as they could across the curriculum. The school should ensure that staff adapt their teaching, so pupils are provided with consistent high-quality support to enable them to achieve well from their starting points.

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	145323
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10317820
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	104
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alan Rosen
CEO of trust	Lorraine Greco (Interim)
Headteacher	Clare Lodge
Website	www.greatkimbleschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Great Kimble Church of England School converted to become an academy school in January 2018. When its predecessor school, Great Kimble Church of England School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the Great Learners Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in November 2016

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and also with members of the trust board and the chief executive officer.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to familiar adults.
- The team spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. It took into account the views of parents, carers and staff through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Toby Martlew, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Shaughnessy

Ofsted Inspector

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