

Inspection of The Gateway Primary Free School

Marshfoot Road, Grays, Essex RM16 4LU

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The head of school is Emma Pattison. This school is part of The Gateway Learning Community, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Viki Reid, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lynda Pritchard. There is also an executive headteacher, Dan George, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly school community where the trust values of 'All different, all equal together, improving on our best' are threaded through the whole school day. Pupils come happily into school, where they feel safe, flourish and achieve well. They take pride in their work. This is because of the high expectations that staff have and the nurturing environment that has been created.

Pupils behave extremely well and are very polite. Pupils are kind to each other. They look after their property with respect and, in doing so, keep the school tidy and well cared for. Pupils and staff build strong, trusting relationships. Pupils are focused and attentive in their lessons. Staff skilfully address any rare instances of poor behaviour.

The school's wider curricular offer goes beyond the classroom. It enables all pupils to take part in carefully considered enrichment experiences. These support pupils' growing confidence and independence. Pupils develop their leadership skills, such as becoming pupil leaders, where they enjoy the opportunities they have to give out rewards and stickers to their peers for their hard work.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious. From the early years upwards, leaders have ensured that pupils' knowledge builds gradually over time. This means that pupils are ready and well prepared for what they will learn next.

The school provides teachers with effective support and training. As a result, teachers in all year groups have strong subject knowledge. They teach the curriculum confidently. Teachers provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to use important words and phrases that will help them in the future. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding of the different subjects they study. Pupils achieve well because teachers explain things clearly. This includes children in the early years.

Teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember. Teachers adjust their teaching to close any gaps in pupils' understanding. Teachers regularly ask questions to identify pupils who need extra help. Pupils can often recall what they have been taught in previous lessons. However, in a few subjects the school does not gather the information it needs about each aspect of the curriculum in order to evaluate what is going well and what needs to improve.

Reading is a high priority for the school across all subject areas. Staff teaching early reading are well trained and ensure that they teach the chosen scheme well. Pupils learn, step by step, the sounds that letters make. They are proud to wear the stickers they get showing the sound that they have learned in the lesson. They continue to have opportunities throughout the day to repeat this learning, such as while lining up and walking in from playtime. Teachers check how well pupils are learning to read. This means that they can quickly identify and provide effective additional support for pupils who need to catch up. This ensures that pupils become confident readers and are prepared well for

the next stage of their learning. Pupils enjoy a wide selection of books. They know which genres they prefer and read within and beyond those genres.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Right from the early years, children learn and follow the school's routines. Pupils are highly engaged in their learning. They are extremely responsive to their teachers' instructions and guidance. Pupils are respectful to adults and each other in classrooms and around the school. Lessons proceed without disruption, allowing pupils to learn and develop.

Provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. From the early years upwards, pupils learn about relationships and healthy lifestyles in an age-appropriate way. Pupils talk confidently about difference and equality as well as other aspects of the personal, social, health and economic education programme. A wide variety of enrichment opportunities are available, and appreciated by pupils. Pupils work with the secondary pupils. This supports their transition and enhances their aspirations for their future.

Leaders identify the importance of pupils' attendance at school. They are doing all they can to promote positive attendance through communication and relationships with families. As a result, pupils' attendance is improving.

The trust provides a clear structure for governance. Trustees and governors support and challenge leaders appropriately. Staff, including those in the early stages of their teaching career, feel well supported by leaders and the trust. Staff feel valued and are proud to work in their community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, the school does not check well enough what pupils have remembered. This means that the school is not clear how successfully pupils are meeting the aims of the curriculum. The school should ensure that checks demonstrate fully how well pupils are recalling and retaining the depth of knowledge intended.

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	138334
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10345342
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynda Pritchard
CEO of the trust	Viki Reid
Headteacher	Emma Pattison
Executive headteacher	Dan George
Website	http://theglc-primaryfreeschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Gateway Learning Community trust.
- The school has a provision for two-year-olds.

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 evaluation 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.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the head of school, the executive headteacher, the CEO and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and members of the trustee board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and the senior leadership team, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a known adult. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took into account the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which leaders had created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of local governing body and trust meetings.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents through responses to the online Ofsted survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors spoke to parents at the school.
- Inspectors gathered the views of staff through the online staff survey, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Suzanne Thrower, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca McCutcheon	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Wade	Ofsted Inspector

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