

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Great Smeaton Academy Primary School

Great Smeaton, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 2EQ

Inspection date:

3 June 2025

Outcome

Great Smeaton Academy Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The interim executive headteacher of this school is Rebecca Wallace. This school is part of Dales 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 (CEO), Damian Chubb, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Judy Hooton. The interim executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

This a caring and welcoming school. Pupils are proud to be part of the Great Smeaton community. They feel well cared for and safe. The relationships pupils have with staff help pupils to do well. Pupils of all ages learn and play together effectively. Pupils enjoy coming to their small school and all that it offers them.

The school has the highest expectations for pupils' achievement. The curriculum is suitably matched to the mixed-age classes. It enables pupils to do the best they can. Pupils want to do well. They take pride in sharing their learning and achievements.

Pupils are highly respectful of each other. Pupils rise to the ambitious expectations the school expects of their conduct and behaviour. Carefully considered wider enrichment opportunities help pupils in readiness for their next steps. Outdoor learning opportunities foster teamwork and cooperation. Pupils enjoy working with their peers of all ages during these sessions. It enables pupils to be confident and resilient. Pupils also take pride in their enterprise projects such as the stationery tuck shop. School visits and other opportunities help pupils make sense of life in Britain. For example, pupils visit a Buddhist temple and work with the emergency services to understand how to be responsible citizens.

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

The school's curriculum carefully considers the mixed-age classes in the school. What pupils need to know and the skills that they need to be successful are clear. Pupils talk with precision about their learning and how this might be different depending on pupils' ages in the class. Pupils recall learning well. They talk with pride and detail about their learning and achievements. Staff take the time to check on pupils' previous learning carefully. Where needed, the school picks up misconceptions promptly. This helps pupils tackle new learning well.

Pupils benefit from a structured phonics programme. They make a positive start to learning to read. They read books that help them practise the sounds that they know. Key core texts help pupils enjoy new and exciting books. The books chosen enable pupils to write in different styles. Improvements to the writing curriculum are recent. Sometimes, the small steps that pupils need to be successful writers are not consistently clear. Pupils have had fewer opportunities to revisit and strengthen their learning in writing. Their knowledge of some writing skills is not as secure as their knowledge in other areas of learning. In addition, errors in some pupils' handwriting are not addressed promptly. Consequently, some pupils continue to repeat these errors. It is too early to see the impact of the changes made to the curriculum in pupils' writing.

The school is highly skilled at supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders and staff use a range of resources and strategies effectively to identify and support pupils with SEND to achieve alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school. They take pride in their learning and achievements.

Pupils are polite and kind. They demonstrate good manners and attitudes to learning. A carefully constructed wider development programme helps pupils understand the world they live in. Pupils have a detailed understanding of fundamental British values. They live them out in their approach to each other and to school life. This is the same when pupils talk about equality. They understand that different groups must be treated fairly. The school also supports pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are clear about the risks they may face online or in the community. Roles and responsibilities such as being members of the school council and the 'mini police' help pupils enhance their leadership skills. Pupils take pride in these opportunities and how they help each other and the local community.

The school has a suitably sharp focus on the right areas for development. The vision and ethos of the school are shared by leaders, staff, local governors and those who represent the trust. Staff feel supported by the collaborative work they benefit from with other schools in the trust. This helps to support staff's workload. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and the difference it makes to its pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new writing curriculum is in the early stages of implementation. This means there is variability in how pupils build the small steps of progress needed to be successful writers. The school should further strengthen the sequencing of the writing curriculum so there is a consistent approach across the school.
- At times, the school does not consistently identify the handwriting errors pupils make when they write independently. There is not a consistent, fluent handwriting style used by pupils. This means some pupils continue to make the same errors in handwriting over time. The school should ensure that it identifies and addresses these errors so that pupils develop their writing accuracy and apply it to their work consistently across the curriculum.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in December 2015.

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	137348
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10346421
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	28
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Judy Hooton
CEO of the trust	Damian Chubb
Headteacher	Rebecca Wallace (Interim Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.greatsmeatonschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Dales Academies Trust. It joined the trust in March 2024. Prior to this, the school was a stand-alone academy.
- There have been changes in leadership since the previous inspection. The interim executive headteacher took up post in March 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school offers a breakfast club and wraparound childcare.
- There were no children on roll in the early years at the time of the inspection.

Information about this inspection

- 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.

- Prior to the inspection, inspectors reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors spoke with the interim executive headteacher and other leaders in the school.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors held discussions with leaders responsible for attendance and behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors gathered views of parents in person and through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils' views were considered through the pupil survey and pupil meetings.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives from the local governing body, the chair of trustees, other leaders of the trust and the CEO from the trust.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classes, at the breakfast club and at social times.

Inspection team

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sharon Common

Ofsted Inspector

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