

Great Ouse Primary Academy

Address: Seaforth Gardens, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK40 4TJ

Unique reference number (URN): 144746

Inspection report: 2 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders monitor pupils' attendance carefully. They communicate expectations to parents and carers and pupils by sharing the number of days lost to learning, as this provides a clear picture of why regular attendance is important. Overall, attendance is in line with national figures over time, although leaders aim to improve it further. When leaders identify declining attendance for an individual, they work with the pupil and family to remove barriers and encourage regular attendance. This approach is personalised and is successful. Leaders also track patterns in attendance over time and evaluate the impact of any support so that they can make it even more effective. They maintain regular communication with families and external agencies where needed. This ensures consistent messages, builds trust and supports improved attendance overall.

The positive relationships that are built throughout the school underpin effective behaviour management strategies. Staff act as role models and pupils respond well. Pupils interact positively with each other across age ranges. In lessons, pupils contribute readily, listen carefully and focus on their work. For pupils who need additional support to manage their behaviour, staff put support in place swiftly and effectively. The school uses a range of strategies. Pupils understand that staff address poor behaviour, including bullying or racist language, and that it is not tolerated.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Early years leaders demonstrate clear passion about the work they do to enhance children's learning. They ensure that they identify and meet the needs of all children. The curriculum offers challenge and ambition for every child. Staff present new learning clearly and take time to check what children know, understand and can do. The learning environment aligns closely with the curriculum and makes learning engaging and appealing.

Staff provide frequent opportunities for children to practise taught skills in a range of contexts. For example, in mathematics, all children engage with and develop familiarity with new equipment. Some children choose to count independently and without prompting, which shows growing confidence.

Staff place a clear emphasis on developing language skills, including their home language. This supports pupils with English as an additional language, as well as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children also learn sign language and use it confidently for a range of vocabulary, including subject-specific words.

Staff and children build secure, positive relationships, beginning in pre-school. Expectations remain high for all children. Children understand these expectations and respond to them confidently, which prepares them well for learning in Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school quickly identifies pupils who face barriers to learning and/or wellbeing, including those who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and

those known to social care. Leaders have embedded processes to review the strategies and support they provide for each pupil. This ensures that staff meet pupils' needs well.

Staff receive training and support to deliver high-quality teaching that meets pupils' needs. As a result, most pupils access the same age-appropriate curriculum as their peers. Leaders work closely with external agencies and act on their advice to strengthen provision further. The school also works in effective partnership with parents and carers, which strengthens the support that pupils receive.

Leaders' pupil premium strategy identifies the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils. It clearly outlines how funding is used to address these barriers. Leaders ensure that strategies reflect research, evidence and best practice.

Pupils who are new to speaking English receive effective support. They develop language through effective support and benefit from explicit teaching of subject-specific vocabulary. Staff track their progress carefully and provide additional support when needed to ensure that they make progress.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The school's personal development programme and pastoral care are well planned alongside the curriculum. This approach is enhanced by the school values, which are embedded in everyday life. This can be seen in the way pupils support, care and empathise with each other, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Relationships and care sit at the heart of the school.

Pupils welcome difference. They learn about a wide range of religions through visits to different places of worship. They celebrate religious festivals, deepening their understanding of the religious celebrations and practices through these experiences.

The relationships and health education curriculum has been developed with regular consultation with parents and carers. This helps them understand the materials used and to support learning at home. Pupils know how to stay safe online and understand the steps to take if they have concerns.

Leaders ensure pupils feel well supported both pastorally and academically. Pupils who need additional support to regulate their emotions and be ready to learn or spend their breaktimes in a quiet spaces, can do this. These activities include visiting the nest or lunchtime breakout rooms and play or 'Lego therapy'.

Pupils respond positively to the wide range of opportunities available to them. They understand that everyone should have the chance to have a go and that some pupils may access different opportunities. For example, pupils may join the football team or attend nurture club or family cooking classes. Leaders track these opportunities carefully to ensure everyone experiences a broad offer.

Pupils develop their individual talents and interests through an extensive clubs programme and through opportunities to learn a musical instrument. Staff actively encourage pupils to reflect on their personal development and recognise their achievements. Opportunities for

pupils to share ideas and contribute to school life help build pupils' confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging. Pupils take pride in their school and value school life fully.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Over time, pupils achieve highly in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Many pupils also attain at the higher level in mathematics. This shows that most pupils leave prepared for secondary school. However, a small number of disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as their peers. This is due to gaps in their learning not being identified quickly and precisely enough, for them to be addressed.

From the early years, staff focus carefully on helping children secure basic skills. Typically, pupils develop the foundational knowledge and skills they need in reading, writing, maths and language. Pupils generally speak confidently about their learning and the skills they are developing, in most subjects. This gives them confidence to continue developing their learning and to build on the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have a secure understanding of the curriculum and how it meets pupils' needs. They consider the needs and context of pupils carefully, reviewing the curriculum regularly to ensure that it remains appropriate. It is ambitious, broad, and well balanced. The curriculum is sequenced clearly, so that learning builds over time. Teachers generally implement it effectively, demonstrating clear subject knowledge. However, in a few subjects, this consistency is not always as evident. The expectations of the work that pupils produce in these subjects is also not as consistently high. Therefore sometimes pupils do not learn as much as they could, despite having regular opportunities to revisit and embed important knowledge.

The teaching of phonics and early reading is effective, particularly in supporting pupils to read unfamiliar words and develop fluency. Many pupils apply their phonics knowledge confidently when spelling. A whole-school approach to developing subject-specific vocabulary is evident in the environment and in some lessons. Pupils are confident to use this vocabulary within their spoken and written work.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) through a range of strategies, including targeted adult assistance. Staff training enables them to deliver appropriate interventions and make adaptations where necessary. This helps pupils with SEND to access learning more effectively. Generally, teachers spot and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, they sometimes do not do this as effectively for a small number of disadvantaged pupils.

There is clear strategic leadership across the school, overseen effectively by the trust. Leaders consistently place pupils' best interests at the centre of decision-making when identifying and prioritising key areas for improvement. These priorities are considered thoughtfully, within both the school context and its position within the trust, reflecting a shared commitment to working together.

Although standards across the school are high, those pupils who are disadvantaged do not achieve as highly as their peers. This is due to gaps in some pupils' learning not being identified and addressed quickly and precisely enough.

Clear lines of communication ensure that leaders, academy council members and the trust understand where to seek advice and when to offer appropriate challenge. Academy council members have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They ask probing questions to deepen their knowledge of leaders' actions and priorities. This enables them to provide effective challenge regarding decision-making.

Leaders recognise the importance of staff well-being and work–life balance. They provide appropriate training and resources to support staff in performing their roles effectively, as well as providing opportunities for personal professional development. High expectations are consistently communicated and embedded at every level.

Leaders work proactively with other schools and organisations to share and learn from best practice to improve outcomes for all pupils.

The school sits at the heart of a growing and changing community, where parents and carers feel welcomed, supported, and heard. Pupils, and staff feel valued, fostering a strong sense of belonging.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils feel cared for and valued at this warm, nurturing school. They enjoy attending and speak positively about their experiences. Relationships between pupils and with staff are firmly rooted in mutual respect. Pupils act with kindness, support and thoughtfulness towards one another. These strong relationships extend to staff, whom pupils trust to listen and resolve issues. As a result, pupils feel a deep sense of belonging. They proudly describe the school as 'one big family'. This encourages pupils to attend regularly.

In the playground, pupils cooperate well and organise their own games successfully, taking careful consideration of others. In lessons, they listen to each other's ideas and work collaboratively to complete tasks. Pupils understand clearly what bullying is. While occasional unkindness occurs, staff address it promptly and effectively, meaning pupils feel safe.

From the early years, the curriculum inspires curiosity and encourages pupils to explore topics further. Staff make learning enjoyable, helping pupils remember key knowledge. Pupils achieve well. Carefully planned trips enhance learning across the curriculum. For

example, a visit where pupils examined Egyptian artefacts strengthened their knowledge and motivated them to continue learning beyond school.

The school includes all pupils in academic and extra-curricular activities. Staff identify and remove barriers so that everyone can participate fully. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well prepared for learning and are helped to access the curriculum successfully.

Pupils value the wide range of opportunities available, including sports competitions, trips and residential visits. They take pride in representing their school and demonstrate enthusiasm when engaging in new experiences. Leaders actively promote the school values, which ensure that pupils build confidence, resilience, and independence. As a result, pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all pupils' individual targets and adaptations are sharply focused and precise so that pupils with gaps in their foundational knowledge make increased progress.
 - Leaders should ensure a consistently effective approach to teaching and to the quality of work produced across the school.
 - Leaders should refine analysis of disadvantaged pupils' gaps in learning to ensure greater precision and enabling more targeted support for a small group of pupils.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Meridian Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Woods, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Shirley Jamieson.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the executive principal, headteacher, assistant headteachers, teachers, support staff, pupils and some parents during the inspection. They also spoke to representatives from the trust and local academy council.

The school currently does not use any alternative provisions.

The school also, under the same registration, runs a nursery.

Lead inspector:

Katie Devenport, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Caroline Dawes, Ofsted Inspector

Richard Fordham, Ofsted Inspector

Michele Geddes, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

444

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

22.22%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.83%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.04%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	67%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	78%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	67%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	85%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	82%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	81%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	70%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	85%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	94%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	90%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	46%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	57%	44%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	80%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	92%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	57%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	71%	58%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	71%	59%	Close to average

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	52%	68%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	46%	69%	-23 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	57%	66%	-9 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	80%	80%	0 pp
2024/25 (final)	92%	81%	11 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	57%	78%	-21 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	64%	78%	-14 pp
2024/25 (final)	62%	78%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	71%	77%	-6 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	64%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	54%	81%	-27 pp
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	71%	79%	-8 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.7%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	12.8%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	20.0%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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