

Inspection of Great Dalby School

Top End, Great Dalby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE14 2HA

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Nick Sale. This school is part of Bradgate Education Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Gareth Nelmes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Cotton.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since September 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

There are high expectations of pupils at Great Dalby. The school's motto is 'achieving greatness, together' and the ambitious curriculum is thoughtfully designed to enable pupils to achieve well. That said, the school continually strives to make improvements that will help pupils reach greatness.

The school's vision is for pupils to develop into well rounded and respectful individuals. Pupils are continually taught how to demonstrate the 'Dalby greats' of caring, achieving and persevering. Pupils are proud to be guided by these values. They are always polite and respectful to adults and each other. They work incredibly hard and always try their best, taking great pride and care in their work. Overall, pupils' behaviour is exemplary.

Pupils play an active role in school life. They apply for important roles of responsibility, including to run clubs at lunchtimes. Pupils are considerate and are keen to make a positive difference to the lives of less fortunate others. The school council organises opportunities for pupils to raise money for their selected charities.

Pupils value having a say in decisions made in school. They thrive on mutually respectful relationships with staff. Parents and carers highly recommend the school because pupils are very happy here and they are genuinely well cared for.

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

The school prioritises reading as the key to unlocking pupils' potential. It successfully implemented a phonics programme to ensure that the teaching of reading is thorough. The enthusiastic teaching of phonics is highly effective. Staff track pupils' reading progress with rigour to ensure that pupils receive swift support if needed. Pupils soon become fluent and keen readers. Staff also read to pupils regularly. The school carefully selects a range of quality books for pupils to enjoy. Older pupils are inspired to read to younger ones in the reading shed at lunchtimes. The 'reading champion' pupils organise competitions that help nurture everyone's love of reading.

The school has designed an ambitious and highly engaging curriculum. The curriculum is well organised and caters effectively for learning in the mixed-age classes. Starting from the early years, it enables pupils to build coherently on their knowledge over time. Teachers have the necessary subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum well. They explain new concepts clearly and provide appropriate and engaging learning activities. Teachers continually check pupils' understanding and skilfully address misconceptions. They use effective strategies to help pupils remember well what they have been taught.

Across the curriculum, pupils develop detailed factual knowledge of the topics taught. They gain skills to complete increasingly complex tasks, such as a picture in the style of an artist they have studied. Pupils gradually develop an understanding of some complex themes like globalisation. In a few subjects, however, pupils' grasp of some important knowledge is not as secure as it should be, for example how people's knowledge of the

past is constructed from a range of sources of information. This is because teachers do not focus on this essential knowledge, as it is not clearly defined in the curriculum design.

The school has greatly improved its processes for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It quickly identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff provide effective support to appropriately meet the needs of these pupils. However, sometimes the curriculum adaptations do not focus sharply enough on overcoming the specific barriers to learning which these pupils face. As a result, pupils with SEND sometimes do not build their knowledge as successfully as they could.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptional. Strong learning behaviours start in the early years. Children work and play cooperatively and encourage each other with their learning. Pupils build on this as they progress through school. Learning to behave well is not left to chance. The school ensures pupils know exactly what positive behaviour looks like and why it is important.

All aspects of pupils' personal development are carefully considered. Pupils learn how to avoid potential dangers, including online. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to learn to be responsible citizens. Pupils further their understanding of rights and equalities through their topic work. They understand democracy and can explain how it works in their school. Pupils explain how everyone has a right to share their view, albeit in a respectful way.

The trust has robust processes in place to check the effectiveness of the school's work. It works closely with the school to make improvements and realise the ambitious vision for pupils. There have been significant changes in recent years, but staff feel well supported in implementing them. They value that their well-being and workload is always considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the school has not clearly identified some essential knowledge that pupils should learn. As a result, teachers do not focus on this knowledge and pupils are not prepared to deepen their understanding as they progress through the curriculum. The school should make clear exactly what pupils should learn in these subjects and check that teachers deliver this in their lessons.
- Sometimes, learning is not adapted well enough to overcome individual barriers to learning for pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils do not build their knowledge as well as they could. The school should ensure that learning is adapted more precisely to meet pupils' needs to ensure they progress as well as possible through the curriculum.

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	139342
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10347559
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	136
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Cotton
CEO of the trust	Gareth Nelmes
Headteacher	Nick Sale
Website	www.greatdalbyprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 September 2014 under section 5 of the Education Act

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school joined the Bradgate Education Partnership on the 1 October 2016.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 is 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.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO and other trust leaders. She also met with a trustee and the chair of the local advisory board.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders of the school and considered a range of documentation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. 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.
- Inspectors listened as some pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered evidence about some other curriculum subjects.
- 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 inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during breaktime.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors spoke to parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff.

Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Monaghan

Ofsted Inspector

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