

St Germans Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120891
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380125
Inspection dates	5-6 March 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Walker

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edward Grey
Headteacher	Alison Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Walker

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited nine lessons and observed four teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, the assistant headteacher, staff, and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school improvement plan, the tracking system to monitor pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, and a sample of pupils' work. He also analysed questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 45 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is housed in a Victorian building which has recently been extensively refurbished and extended. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well above average. Most of these pupils have specific or moderate learning difficulties, speech and communication difficulties or behavioural issues. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils are taught in four mixed-aged classes. The school has not met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is made through the Reception class which is taught with Year 1. The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club which were included in this inspection. The school has received the Activemark and Artsmark awards, and has achieved National Healthy Schools status.

The school is part of the Wiggshall Federation, through which it works with Magdalen Village School. The schools share a single headteacher and governing body.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This satisfactory school provides a safe and happy environment. Despite some growing strengths, it is not good because the quality of teaching and the actions of leadership and management have not led to good progress in all classes.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress and attain below average standards overall by the end of Year 6. However, progress in reading is good and most pupils gain levels in reading that are in line with the national average. Pupils are not fully developing their skills in writing or mathematics and too few reach the higher levels in their work. Pupils at risk of underachieving do not always get additional support quickly enough and attainment targets are not sufficiently challenging to ensure high standards.
- Teaching is satisfactory. There is a positive atmosphere for learning in most lessons and some good practice, particularly in the Reception/Year 1 class and the Year 5/6 class. However, teachers do not always check the understanding of the pupils, challenge the more-able pupils, or encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They feel very safe, are polite and respectful, and have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and develop into friendly and considerate individuals. Attendance is above average.
- Leadership and management, including the leadership of teaching, are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the areas for development and is implementing a plan for improvement. However, senior leaders are not consistent enough in sharing good teaching practice or holding teachers fully to account for the progress of their pupils. Parents and carers are not sufficiently involved in supporting their children's learning.
- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils across the school so that attainment is at least in line with national averages in English and mathematics by:
 - building on the systems for tracking pupils' progress and providing timely additional support for pupils identified as at risk of underachieving
 - further developing pupils' abilities and confidence in writing, and in applying skills in mathematical calculation
 - ensuring that attainment targets are sufficiently challenging.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that all teachers are:
 - checking the understanding of their pupils and ensuring that they make good progress in all lessons
 - ensuring that the work is challenging for more-able pupils so that they attain the higher levels in English and mathematics
 - encouraging pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Improve the consistency and impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders are rigorously holding teachers to account for the progress of all pupils in their classes
 - sharing the best practice in teaching and learning across the school
 - encouraging all parents and carers to be more involved in supporting their children's learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' current work and the lessons observed show that the majority are making satisfactory progress, as confirmed by parents and carers. Attainment has been below average for the past two years as pupils have been the equivalent of six months behind the national average at the end of Year 6. However, an increasing number of the pupils are now gaining levels which are in line with the national average. In a number of classes, progress is good because of the higher quality of teaching. For example, the teacher's good use of imaginative stimulus material and ability-related tasks ensured that Year 5 and 6 pupils made good progress in their mathematics lesson on measurement.

Children have traditionally joined the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below the levels typical for their age, although there is some variation from year-to-year. They are presently making good progress in their learning because of the well-planned provision and the consistently good teaching.

Pupils make good progress in reading from their low starting points so that attainment is only slightly below average: a term behind national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress in reading because this is a key focus, and they read regularly in school and at home each day. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in reading is in line with the national average. The majority of

pupils are making satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics. Assessment data indicates that well-structured teaching is currently leading to good progress in English and mathematics for pupils in Year 1 and Year 5. The school is presently providing after-school booster classes in mathematics for Year 6 pupils in order to improve their progress. Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make progress in line with their peers because of effective additional support from teaching assistants which helps them overcome barriers to learning and take part in lessons with the other pupils. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make satisfactory progress.

The school did not meet the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress in 2011. This was principally because there had been issues, now resolved, of persistent absence for a very small number of pupils. Pupils' progress is now satisfactory and most pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to make satisfactory or better progress in English and mathematics. However, the skills and confidence of a number of pupils throughout the school in writing and mathematics have not been consistently developed. The new systems for tracking pupils' progress and additional help for underachieving pupils are supporting improvements in achievement. Nevertheless, a small number of pupils are not fully benefiting from this extra support because they are not identified quickly enough for additional help. Attainment targets are based on previous performance but are not sufficiently challenging for all pupils. This means it is hard for them to demonstrate more than satisfactory progress over their time at school.

Quality of teaching

Most teachers plan interesting activities and create a positive learning atmosphere in their classes, as confirmed by the pupils. Displays in classrooms provide a stimulating environment for learning and celebrate the work of the pupils. Teachers' marking provides encouragement and guidance for pupils on how to improve their work. All pupils have daily periods of literacy and numeracy, and this aspect of the curriculum is supporting the teaching of basic skills. The teaching of different cultures, beliefs and ways of life is good and includes recent projects on both Sikhism and the Olympic Games. However, teachers are not always checking understanding and ensuring that all pupils are accelerating their progress, particularly in English and mathematics. Not all teachers encourage pupils enough to take responsibility for their own learning. Some talk too much in lessons and tend to do the thinking and problem-solving for the pupils. Most teachers are using assessment of progress well to inform their planning so that there are suitable activities for the lower attaining pupils. However, teaching in English and mathematics does not always challenge the more-able pupils.

In lessons observed during the inspection, the teaching was particularly strong in the Reception/Year 1 class and the Year 5/6 class, and this was also highlighted by some parents and carers in the questionnaire. Good use was made of a range of teaching strategies, with many opportunities for pupils to work independently and increase their pace of learning. Good teaching was generally seen when teachers challenged their pupils with high-quality questioning and encouraged them to take greater responsibility for their work. For example, Year 5/6 pupils made good progress in their understanding of paragraphs through skilful questioning by the teacher which

challenged the pupils before moving on to their individual writing tasks. Similarly, Reception children were engaged and challenged by a range of structured activities in and out of the classroom which was having a significant impact on their personal development as well as encouraging number and language skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school, and this contributes to a positive atmosphere for learning. The school has well-developed systems for promoting positive behaviour. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires believe that behaviour is good. In lessons, pupils consistently meet the school's expectations and, typically, there are good levels of engagement. A small number of pupils who display challenging behaviour are managed well by the teaching assistants so that they do not disrupt the learning of the other pupils. Pupils confirmed that disruptions are very rare and that any misbehaviour is dealt with appropriately by the teachers. They particularly appreciated the assembly rewards for good behaviour and attendance.

Although bullying of any kind is rare, pupils, parents and carers say any unkind behaviour, such as teasing and pushing, are dealt with quickly and effectively. Teachers and other adults take good steps to ensure that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to thrive in an atmosphere of fairness and trust, and without fear. Consequently, pupils feel very secure and they have a good awareness of issues relating to safety. Pupils talk confidently about how they would keep themselves safe in a variety of situations and mention the better security in the refurbished building. The school has been active in improving attendance by discouraging term-time holidays and addressing issues regarding persistent absentees. The attendance figures for the first half of this school year are better than for the comparable period in previous years.

Leadership and management

The school improvement plan is a comprehensive working document, sharply focused on improving pupils' attainment and progress. There are clear signs of improvement in the school, particularly in terms of pupils' achievement and attendance. The school has partly addressed the key issues in the previous inspection. The headteacher regularly monitors the quality of teaching and organises appropriate training within the federation to improve teaching practice. However, the school is not fully sharing the best practice in teaching and learning within the school to raise the quality of teaching in all classes. Senior leaders are not rigorously holding teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their classes.

The members of the governing body are well informed and are effective in their evaluating and monitoring roles. They have been active in supporting the development of the federation and the recent building works. There is a strong commitment to inclusion and tackling discrimination. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

The curriculum, although imaginative and relevant to pupils' needs, is satisfactory as it has not led to good progress for all the pupils. A number of visits out of school and

the additional clubs increase pupils' enjoyment and experience of school. Pupils benefit from effective support in physical education from the local secondary school and from the opportunity to play the violin in Years 4 and 5. The range of experiences within the curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils gain confidence and self-esteem, and develop good social skills and a clear sense of right and wrong.

The large majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school and value the education provided for their children. Teachers recognise that parents and carers are more involved in their children's learning in Key Stage 1 than when they are older. They acknowledge that although parents and carers are invited and welcomed into school, this has less of an impact on helping them to support their child's learning in Key Stage 2. The clear leadership of the headteacher, the developing systems for tracking pupils' progress and the improvements in pupils' progress and attendance show the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Germans Primary School, King's Lynn, PE34 3DZ

Thank you for making me so welcome and for sharing your views with me during the inspection and through your questionnaires. I greatly enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to see you during assembly, playtime and lunchtime. Your school is satisfactory. The headteacher and governing body have made some improvements since the last inspection. There are many positive things about your school.

- You enjoy school, attend regularly and work hard in your lessons.
- You are friendly and well behaved.
- You show kindness and consideration to others.
- Your teachers and their support staff care greatly for you as individuals.
- The curriculum supports your personal development and experience of school.
- The new school building provides you with good facilities.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governing body to do the following things to make the school even better.

- Help and challenge all of you to make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Support your teachers in sharing good practice so that you can make even better progress in all lessons.
- Check your understanding and help you to take more responsibility for your work.
- Encourage your parents and carers to be more involved in helping you with your learning.

You can all help by asking the teacher for help when you do not understand the work and also telling them when the work is too easy. I wish you every success in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker
Lead inspector

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