

The Gedney Hill Church of England VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120548
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358786
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Georgina Beasley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Simpson
Headteacher	Lynn Chappell
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2008
School address	North Road Spalding PE12 0NL
Telephone number	01406 330258
Fax number	01406 331079
Email address	lynn.chappell@gedney-hill.lincs.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Nine lessons were observed and three teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at policies and procedures, pupils' work, tracker books, lesson and curriculum planning, monitoring reports and the school improvement plan. Twenty-eight questionnaires from parents and carers were received and analysed.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- How well do pupils achieve in writing, especially more-able readers and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- Are the youngest children given enough opportunities to plan and decide what they want to learn and where?
- How well does the curriculum promote pupils' enjoyment and personal development and help them to build key skills that prepare them well for the future?
- How does the school involve parents and pupils in school self-evaluation and subsequent improvement planning?

Information about the school

Nearly all pupils who attend this very small village school come from White British backgrounds. More pupils than average have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities mostly for behaviour, speech and language, or learning difficulties. A very small number speak English as an additional language. More pupils than usual start the school in year groups other than Reception and leave before they reach Year 6. Children start in the Reception year in the September following their fourth birthday. The school has Healthy Schools Status and Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils enjoy learning. The curriculum is rich and interesting. Varied curricular topics enable pupils to build knowledge and skills across a number of different subjects and to practise literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in meaningful contexts. Excellent sporting festivals and competitions and numerous arts activities enable pupils to be physically fit and to build good personal, physical, artistic and musical skills. Pupils particularly like the Children's Choice afternoons in which they take part in a varied range of activities that meet everyone's interests. These afternoons are led by skilled adults and so give teaching staff time to effectively assess and plan pupils' learning. Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes in lessons make a strong contribution to their successful learning. The school council enables pupils to express their views and to be involved in improvement planning.

Attainment has been rising steadily for several years and is now securely above average in reading, mathematics, science and ICT by the end of Year 6. Attainment in writing is average but improving. More-able pupils are reaching higher levels this year as a result of more focused use of assessment. Achievement is good. Teaching is good and pupils make good progress in lessons. Focused support in lessons for pupils' individual needs enables those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language to make equally good progress. Teachers' comments when marking work are precisely focused on the skills pupils need to improve. However, pupils do not always have enough time to make the subsequent improvements.

There has not been a similar rise in attainment in Years 1, 2 and 3. Learning and progress are satisfactory from pupils' starting points. Learning objectives are sometimes too focused on the task pupils will complete rather than the knowledge and skills they will acquire. Children's skills when they start in the Reception year vary considerably each year due to the very small cohorts. For the last two years, most children have started with skills, knowledge and understanding within the expected band for their age. Satisfactory progress gives them a secure start to learning in Year 1. Children do not always have enough opportunity to choose what and where to learn and so show their full potential early. Assessments are not monitored closely enough to ensure adults build every child's learning systematically.

As a result of the headteacher's positive and clear leadership, the school continues to improve strongly on its work and performance. She is well supported by all staff who help to ensure the school runs smoothly each day. Pupils feel safe because they know adults will deal with any concerns, although a few pupils would like this to happen a little more quickly on occasions. The governing body has a clear picture of what the school does well and an accurate view of what needs to be improved. There is good capacity to improve. Despite its successes, a significant number of parents do not recognise the many positive

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aspects of the school's work. Parents have had some opportunity in reviewing the reasons for this through the parents' forum, and planned actions are detailed in the school's improvement plan. However, these have not yet been shared formally with all parents. Several parents endorsed the views of one who 'chose this school over others in the area ... and hope that many other parents feel the same way in years to come'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistency in the teaching especially in writing and in Years 1, 2 and 3 by:
 - identifying sharper learning objectives that give more structure to the development of knowledge and skills
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to respond to teachers' marking and so improve their work.
- Involve parents more proactively in evaluating and celebrating the school's successes so that the large majority have more positive views of the school.
- Improve provision for children in Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - giving them more regular opportunities to decide what and where to learn especially in the outdoors
 - monitoring to ensure assessment information is being used effectively to plan learning that enables the children to demonstrate their potential.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' pride in their work is evident in the care they take with presentation and their keenness to show off their achievements to staff, parents and visitors. Pupils' sporting achievements and Year 6 pupils' ICT multimedia presentations are two examples. Pupils are very considerate of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, giving them space to deal with their behaviour or time to think when contributing ideas in group work. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the importance of being physically active. The youngest children know that they eat fruit for snack because it is healthy and know that 'they can't even have oven-baked crisps'. Pupils' development of good habits for later life is reflected in good personal qualities and above average literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual. Play leaders play an active role in organising games that help younger pupils in particular to enjoy school and feel safe. Pupils reflect carefully on their contribution to the school and wider communities and demonstrate this through the considerate way they treat each other in school.

Learning and progress in lessons are good in Years 4, 5 and 6 because tasks are matched to different ability needs and build learning effectively from each pupil's starting points. Tasks challenge pupils to think, for example by finding ways to solve a particular problem in mathematics, to design a webpage in ICT or to decide what to include in a thank you letter. Two more-able pupils were able to explain why a line graph was the most appropriate way to display information about the pound/euro exchange rate. Pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 make steady progress to give pupils a secure basis for learning. Learning in reading is good due to more focused tasks and well-matched adult interventions.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In Years 4, 5 and 6 learning is matched closely to pupils' precise needs. More-able pupils do harder work while those who need some extra support receive clear guidance in small groups and individually on how to improve their knowledge and skills. Pupils check their learning against assessment statements in the progress trackers and so know how successful they have been and feel able to improve their work independently. In Years 1, 2 and 3, pupils are given interesting topics through which to learn and so enjoy lessons. Learning is not always identified with enough precision and so pupils are not always clear about what they are learning and why.

The rich curriculum includes numerous visits and visitors that give learning a real-life purpose. For example, pupils are learning about wartime recipes from older residents and cooking these during the Children's Choice afternoon. Partnerships with local schools support pupils' regular involvement in a range of sporting and arts events.

Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are followed consistently by all staff. Good induction arrangements ensure the many pupils who join the school throughout the year are welcomed. As a result, they settle quickly and older pupils make good early progress. Staff regularly discuss each pupil's progress and take immediate action if a slowing of progress is noted. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good guidance and support that enables many to reach average levels by the end of Year 6.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads a committed staff team who work effectively together to ensure pupils' good academic achievement and personal development. Subject leaders have analysed assessments closely to identify the precise aspects in need of improvement and have monitored carefully the impact of planned actions against pupils' progress. As a result of this work, teaching has improved in all year groups and especially in Years 4, 5 and 6. All adults play their part in ensuring a safe environment. Everyone asked gave examples of how pupils' behaviour has improved.

Members of the governing body visit the school regularly and so know at first-hand the school's strengths and improvement needs. Very detailed and accurate reports from the headteacher keep them fully involved in the review of procedures and school improvement planning. Safeguarding arrangements are monitored rigorously and any emerging issues tackled immediately such as the improvements to the school's environment last year. Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are not involved enough in reviewing the school's work and so not all views are incorporated into improvement planning.

There is a strong and established ethos to promote equal opportunities throughout the school, especially in ensuring pupils' preferences for Children's Choice activities are met and that all pupils who wish can take part in one of the many sporting and/or arts festivals. Targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in lessons and when working with an adult individually ensures they make good progress. Partnerships provide good support for the curriculum and pupils' enjoyment. Links with schools abroad effectively enrich pupils' knowledge and understanding of different religions and cultures.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Reception year enjoy a range of interesting activities that promote their personal development well. They make choices independently and talk about their learning with confidence. Teaching is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress from their starting points in all areas of learning. In the last two years, most reached the levels they should reach by the end of the Reception year in all areas of learning except writing.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Induction arrangements ensure the children settle quickly. Parents are involved in early discussions about their children's achievements and, along with information from the local pre-school, staff have up-to-date information about each child's achievements as soon as they start school. This ensures supports for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are put into place quickly. The children do not have enough time throughout the day to choose what and where to learn to demonstrate what they already know and can do. Adults make regular assessments about each child's learning and use the information when planning activities. The use of assessments is not monitored with enough rigour to ensure that planned activities and adult interactions always provide enough challenge for more-able children. Children enjoy learning in the improved outdoor area, and there are clear plans to further develop its use as an effective learning space.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers returned a questionnaire. Those who responded and who spoke to the inspector are satisfied with the school. The inspector endorses the view of most that pupils enjoy school, that they make good progress because teaching is good, that they are kept safe and encouraged to lead healthy lives, and that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively. Almost half of parents raised concerns about the school's leadership and management. There are effective systems established in school that ensure pupils' improving achievement and good learning and progress. The parents' forum goes some way to encourage parents to hear about the school's work and to listen to their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Gedney Hill Church of England VC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	61	9	32	2	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	46	12	43	2	7	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	7	25	19	68	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	32	16	57	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	43	13	46	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	21	19	68	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	32	18	64	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	18	17	61	2	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	11	14	50	5	18	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	7	20	71	1	4	3	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	11	16	57	3	11	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	3	11	12	43	12	43	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	14	21	75	3	11	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



8 November 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of The Gedney Hill Church of England VC Primary School, Spalding, PE12 0NL

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school recently. Thank you to those of you who took the time at playtimes, in lessons, over lunch and during special meetings to tell me so much about your school.

Gedney Hill is a good school. You all make good progress because teaching is good. You have positive attitudes to learning and this helps you to do well. You are proud of your achievements which are reflected in the neat way you present your work and the animated way you talk about the numerous events and activities in which you take part. Your involvement in the excellent range of sporting events and the active playtimes helps you to keep fit. It was good to see the play leaders doing their job so well. The interesting curriculum also helps you to enjoy school. Children's Choice is a particular favourite. Behaviour is good and this helps nearly all of you to say that you feel safe. You have good skills to help you learn when you get to your next school.

The headteacher leads the school well but I have asked her to work with the staff, governing body and parents to improve three things:

- to improve the teaching especially in writing and in Years 1, 2 and 3 so that you all make consistently good progress
- to involve parents more in evaluating and celebrating the school's successes so that the large majority recognise the school's good work and your good achievement
- to give children in the Reception year more opportunities to choose what and where to learn, and to use the information the school has about your progress to help you learn at a faster rate.

You can help by continuing to do your best, by checking your work carefully and making it better if you can. You can also tell your parents as often as you can about all the good things you are doing in school. I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Georgina Beasley

Lead inspector

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