

Guilsborough Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122022
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359147
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Kath Campbell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon King
Headteacher	Philip Henretty
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2008
School address	The Green Guilsborough, Northampton NN6 8PT
Telephone number	01604 740307
Fax number	01604 749999
Email address	head@guilsborough-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. She observed six teachers and eight lessons. Three lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. The inspector held meetings with a representative of the governing body, staff and pupils. She also spoke informally to parents and carers. She observed the work of the school and looked at a wide range of documentation including information about pupils' progress, child protection and safeguarding procedures. She looked at pupils' current and past work and scrutinised 74 questionnaires completed by pupils and 49 by parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by pupils, particularly girls in mathematics, in Key Stage 2.
- The effectiveness of initiatives to increase the number of pupils reaching higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- The degree to which day-to-day assessment information is used to provide sufficiently challenging work, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- The rigour and precision of leaders and the governing body when monitoring the impact of initiatives to raise standards, particularly in priority areas such as writing and mathematics.

Information about the school

Guilsborough is a smaller-than-average school that serves a rural community on the outskirts of the town. Most pupils are from a White British background and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs is average. The school has received several awards in recognition of its work, including the Artsmark, and has gained Healthy Schools status.

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

Guilsborough is a good school. Attendance is excellent because pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. There are notable strengths in the care, guidance and support provided for pupils, resulting in their good personal development. It is evident from questionnaires completed by parents, carers and pupils that most are proud to be part of the school. As one parent commented, 'There is a caring, nurturing environment.' The headteacher and two recently appointed senior teachers have successfully created a school where staff and pupils feel valued. Staff work together effectively as a team and share the same ambitions for improving the school.

By the time pupils leave, they typically reach above-average standards. They achieve well after a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they enjoy success through good-quality support. The high standards found at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained in Key Stage 1, with reading a particular strength but writing not quite as strong. In Key Stage 2 standards have been more variable, chiefly because of a decline in standards in mathematics. In 2010 the school made a concerted effort to stem this downward trend. Until recently, some of the most-able pupils, particularly the girls, did not reach the levels of which they were capable because not enough was asked of them. Since the introduction of improved systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils, potential underachievement is now identified much earlier than in the past. As a result, all groups of pupils currently make good progress in literacy and numeracy because the work set for them more accurately matches their ability levels, and standards in Key Stage 2 are once again above average. Even so, not enough pupils are reaching higher levels in mathematics in Key Stage 2, or in writing throughout the school.

The quality of teaching is good, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Teaching and support staff do much to make learning enjoyable. As a result, classrooms are very positive learning environments, where pupils are keen to succeed. However, although most teachers use assessment well to accelerate pupils' learning, there are still some inconsistencies. A few teachers do not use day-to-day information on individual pupils' progress accurately enough to provide the right level of challenge, and some marking does not show pupils clearly how to improve their work. The curriculum is well organised and initiatives to enhance pupils' learning add greatly to their enjoyment. Pupils appreciate the good range of out-of-school activities that effectively develop social skills and healthy lifestyles. Swimming is a particular strength. The curriculum has successfully been adapted to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes, but the school recognises that it does not yet provide enough opportunities for pupils to fully develop their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects. Pupils' care and welfare are given a high priority. The school is a very supportive community, where pupils are able to flourish academically and socially. Its support procedures work particularly well

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with pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, enabling them to participate fully in school life.

Senior leaders know their school well and accurately identify the right priorities for moving it forward. Sometimes their self-evaluation is over-generous, for example, when judging pupils' contribution to the wider community. The role of subject leaders has been strengthened since the previous inspection. The monitoring of teaching is good, but occasionally lacks precision and does not always focus sufficiently on the learning outcomes for pupils. The governing body has experienced a period of change since the previous inspection that has prevented it from moving forward at the desired pace. It is well organised, dedicated and supportive but does not have a prominent enough role in monitoring the learning outcomes for pupils. Taking all the above into account, particularly the effectiveness of the strengthened leadership team and the sustained improvement in standards, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in writing throughout the school and in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by:
 - planning lesson activities more precisely to meet the individual needs of different ability groups, especially the most able pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
 - using marking more effectively to move pupils on to the next step.
- Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation role of leaders and the governing body by:
 - ensuring that monitoring focuses with greater precision on measuring the success of initiatives by their impact on pupils' learning outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils typically start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly at the levels expected for children of this age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the strong focus on developing early reading and writing skills is particularly effective in securing foundations for future development when children move into Year 1. Writing is a whole-school area for development, and recent initiatives have greatly improved pupils' enjoyment of writing. In discussion, boys and girls of all ages said they liked looking back at their writing assessments to see how much they had improved. The work in their books confirms good progress and much greater confidence with writing. In Key Stage 2, greater precision in identifying weaknesses and targeted intervention for individual pupils is having a positive impact. Current work shows more pupils working at higher levels than last year through greater challenge. A good example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson, where even the most able mathematician was challenged by a warm-up activity that extended basic numeracy skills. Boys and girls relished the opportunity to find their own solutions and were strongly motivated to succeed. They enjoyed a high-quality learning experience.

Pupils are proud of their school and know they are part of a very caring community. They eagerly embrace responsibility and most develop into mature, confident individuals. Relationships are harmonious and this contributes greatly to pupils' very good behaviour in

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lessons. Outside of lessons, behaviour is occasionally not of the same high standard. In discussion, pupils say they feel safe and have a valued voice on the school council. They take adopting healthy lifestyles very seriously. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. 'Celebration Assemblies' are very special occasions, with a strong sense of community. Creative and artistic opportunities greatly enhance pupils' cultural development.

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	1
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?

Teachers use a range of strategies that successfully capture pupils' interest. Secure relationships ensure lessons run smoothly. Searching questions challenge pupils' thinking and motivate them to make good progress. Learning is frequently at its best during group activities, when teachers and high-quality support staff work together very effectively to provide for individual pupils' needs. Teachers set appropriate individual targets so that pupils of different abilities know what they personally are trying to achieve. Where lessons sometimes fall below this good level, it is usually because teachers talk for too long, leaving pupils with too little time to practise skills, or because teachers occasionally do not provide that extra level of challenge for the most-able pupils.

Curriculum topics succeed in motivating boys and girls equally well. Themed events such as 'Problem Solving Days' promote key skills effectively because they combine learning across subjects, but there are not always enough opportunities built into the day-to-day

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curriculum to enable pupils to consolidate their key skills on a regular basis. A wide range of enrichment opportunities, such as the chance to learn to play the guitar, successfully enhance pupils' enjoyment of school. The well-structured personal, social and health education programme makes a strong contribution towards good personal development.

Pastoral care is good and there is a strong determination to nurture pupils, resulting in greater confidence and self-esteem. Older pupils look after younger ones and this successfully develops strong bonds of friendship. Good quality transfer arrangements ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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 senior leadership team successfully instils the ambition to improve school performance. Staff share their commitment and drive. Safeguarding procedures are secure, meet requirements and follow good practice. The school's approach towards child protection training for staff and the governing body is particularly good. The school development plan is a valuable working document and monitoring and evaluation are purposeful, but they occasionally lack rigour and precision, particularly when measuring the success of initiatives on pupils' learning. The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory; it maintains an overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses but does not monitor sufficiently how well pupils are performing. The school is strongly inclusive and ensures pupils feel valued as individuals. Pupils are made very aware of the need to tackle discrimination through their strong sporting links and their good relationships with partner schools. Community cohesion is very strong at a local level. The school is regarded highly within the village and takes an active part in community life through participation in fundraising and social events. There is a good involvement within the wider community. Pupils gain valuable insight into the lives of people in other communities through their e-mail links with pupils in places as far away as, for example, South America.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development effectively establishes firm foundations for good personal outcomes. Staff know families well and develop strong relationships, enabling children to settle quickly into routines. Parents and carers are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning right from the start. The Reception class is a fun place to be and learning is exciting and interesting. Children develop a good early understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They know adults care about them. They are provided with good opportunities to explore indoors and outside, although the improved outdoor learning lacks the flair and creativity needed to inspire children in their learning. The balance between independent and adult-led activities is just right. The good ratio of adults to children enables those who are potentially vulnerable, or who need extra support, to gain in confidence because they receive good quality individual support. Teaching is always good and children make particularly good progress when working with an adult in 'target groups'. Parents and carers say they value the job share arrangement because the two teachers complement each other's skills well. 'My learning journey' books provide valuable insight into the progress of individual children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and staff show a strong commitment towards sustaining improvement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. They particularly like:

- their children's enjoyment of school
- the way the school helps their children develop a healthy lifestyle
- how well the school prepares their children for the future
- how well the school meets their children's needs
- that the school takes into account their suggestions and concerns.

There are a few concerns. Most notably, a small minority of parents and carers feel that the school does not:

- provide them with enough information about their children's progress
- deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour.

The lead inspector followed up the concerns raised. She found that the recently introduced 'Progress Cards' had improved information for parents and carers, but the school recognised this was still an area for further development. The lead inspector found that behaviour in lessons was always at least good. However, at other times, behaviour was not always of the same high standard, and the school was aware that incidents were not always dealt with as effectively when teaching staff were not around.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Guilsborough Church of England (Aided) 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 lead inspector received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 137 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	55	21	43	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	65	17	35	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	37	26	53	5	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	33	30	61	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	43	25	51	3	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	39	27	55	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	43	27	55	1	2	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)	14	29	31	63	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	39	29	59	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	33	26	53	4	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	31	32	65	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	47	23	47	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	53	21	43	2	4	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



24 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Guilsborough Church of England (Aided) Primary School,
Northampton, NN6 8PT**

Thank you for looking after me so well when I visited your school. Your attendance is excellent because you really enjoy coming to school. You say you feel safe and you know a lot about how to eat healthily and keep fit. You like the grown-ups who teach you and care for you. Some of the older children look after their younger friends very well. You care about each other a lot. I liked talking to you about the work you are doing now, as well as looking at some of your past work. Most of you want to do well and try hard to improve your work.

You go to a good school. There are many good things about it, but I particularly liked the way you are proud of your school, and that your teachers make learning fun and give you lots of interesting work. I am glad I was able to come to your 'Celebration Assembly' because it is very special.

However, not everyone makes as much progress as they could, particularly those of you who find learning easier. I have asked those in charge to help you by giving you harder work, especially in writing and numeracy. I want to make sure you have plenty of time to practise your writing and numeracy skills in other subjects. I have also asked your teachers to let you know exactly what you need to do to improve when they mark your work. Your headteacher and some of your teachers and governors are going to check more carefully on whether you are doing well enough.

You will want to help your school to improve by keeping up that excellent attendance and always trying to do your best.

My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Kath Campbell

Lead inspector

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