

Stamford St Gilberts Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120543
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380054
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Hammant
Headteacher	Claire Thorley
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 teachers and one teaching assistant, and saw 19 lessons. Inspectors observed three school assemblies and held discussions with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. They looked at pupils' books and viewed a wide range of documentation including school policies, planning, self-evaluation information, safeguarding and welfare arrangements, and records of pupils' progress. Questionnaires returned by 173 parents and carers, 100 pupils and 34 members of staff were analysed.

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

- What is the impact of strategies to raise attainment in writing, particularly that of boys?
- How well does provision meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes?
- How effective are middle leaders in carrying out their responsibilities and supporting the drive for improvement?

Information about the school

This is an above-average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-below average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school has received national recognition for its work in several areas and holds the Food for Life and Eco-schools Green Flag awards, and National Healthy School 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

This is a good and improving school. It has a number of outstanding features. It is welcoming and pupils make an excellent contribution to the life of the school. They take responsibility very readily, behave well and are respectful of their peers, adults and visitors. Pupils feel very safe and secure. Their enjoyment of school life is reflected in their high rates of attendance. A further strength is the excellent promotion of healthy lifestyles, evidenced in the school's achievement of Healthy School status. Pupils participate in regular physical exercise and understand the importance of diet to health. They take full advantage of the additional activities, sports and clubs provided, many of which arise from the school's excellent partnerships with outside providers. Because pupils of all ages get on well together, the learning atmosphere is purposeful and harmonious. This is recognised by parents and carers. All who replied to the inspection questionnaire indicated that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. One, capturing the views of many, said, 'My children are very happy at St. Gilbert's. They are thriving intellectually, socially and in sports.'

Pupils' achievement is good. Based on accurate early assessments, children begin to make good progress as soon as they join Reception. This good progress is maintained as pupils move through the school and standards at the end of Year 6 have been above average since the last inspection. The improvement in pupils' writing skills reflects the effectiveness of successful action taken to tackle the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. In order to further accelerate progress, the topic-based curriculum is being developed to make more meaningful links between subjects. This is proving more stimulating and engaging pupils' interest, particularly that of boys.

Pupils' good progress is due to much good teaching and the effective use of assessment information to check progress so that well-focused support can be provided where needed. This has a positive impact on standards and is particularly beneficial to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who make good progress as a result. However, teaching is not consistently good in all aspects. In some lessons progress slows because pupils spend too much time listening to lengthy introductions and the learning tasks are not suitably challenging for all ability levels. One notable aspect of the school's highly effective care for individual pupils is the support provided for any whose circumstances may make them particularly vulnerable, to ensure that they keep up with their classmates.

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The outstanding headteacher has successfully developed a strong sense of teamwork and ambition amongst new and existing staff. School self-evaluation is effective in identifying the right priorities for improvement. Increased responsibility is being given to staff with coordinating roles for monitoring the quality of provision and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility, and all are responding to these responsibilities with enthusiasm. They are keen to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills so that good practice can be identified and shared more widely. The determination of the headteacher and staff to take the school forward, together with the expertise and commitment of a highly supportive governing body, the improvements seen since the last inspection and total confidence of parents and carers, gives the school good capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all teaching good or better and accelerate progress by ensuring that:
 - lesson introductions are not too long and the best use is made of teaching assistants during teacher-led parts of lessons
 - the pace of learning is brisk and that tasks are appropriately challenging for all groups of pupils.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that middle leaders have the skills necessary to identify what individual teachers need to do to make sure that pupils' progress is consistently good.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children's skills on entry to Reception are generally in line with expectations for their age. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently above average. This is confirmed by the 2011 provisional national test results and the work inspectors observed in Year 6. Classroom observations and the work seen in pupils' books show that the improvement in the standard of boys' writing is being maintained. It remains below that of girls, but the gap is narrowing rapidly.

Pupils quickly get down to learning at the start of the school day and enjoy their lessons. Their willingness to learn makes a significant contribution to the purposeful learning atmosphere. Pupils respond well to interesting and challenging activities and demonstrate the ability to work effectively, both independently and collaboratively. This was exemplified in an excellent literacy lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils where the effect of the activities of Sir Francis Drake on the relationship between England and Spain was explored. Their discussions generated plenty of ideas and all made rapid progress because they were enthusiastically engaged in writing from the outset of the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because their needs are carefully assessed and they are sensitively supported with good challenge in class, or receive specialist individual or small group support.

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Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They regularly reflect on their lives and on spiritual and moral matters. Pupils lead prayers in assembly which express their sensitivity to the needs of others. They are aware of how to avoid risks, whether on the internet or during journeys to and from school. Pupils are very keen to contribute to the community and take great pleasure in doing jobs around the school and taking care of younger pupils in the playground. The school council plays an active role, for example, in organising events to raise money for those in need. High attendance and good basic skills ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

All lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. In the very best lessons, pupils make good progress because assessment information is used well to guide the planning of learning tasks. Pupils are expected to work independently, stretching themselves and others as they talk things through. Perceptive questioning is used to extend pupils' thinking and encourage the use of more varied vocabulary in their answers. This was seen in a lesson with Year 1 and 2 pupils, where good progress was made in understanding how the imaginative use of words can enhance descriptive writing. However, in some lessons, pupils are given work that is too easy and this slows the progress they make. Progress is also slowed in lessons where teachers take too much time introducing learning, which gives pupils too little time to apply their learning and

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

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skills independently. Pupils are provided with clear guidance on how to improve through the marking of their work. Particularly effective use is made of assessment information to track pupils' progress towards their targets, identify underperformance and provide additional support where necessary.

The curriculum provides continuity and progression in learning across the key stages and also within the mixed-age classes. Provision for modern foreign languages and creative subjects, such as art and music, is a particular strength. The curriculum is enhanced through local partnerships: for example, links with other schools broaden pupils' experiences and contribute to pupils' enjoyment, as do the good range of extra-curricular activities and trips out of school. Parents and carers rightly say that the school is exceptionally caring. Pupils are very well looked after in this nurturing family community. All adults are fully informed about the needs of pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. They monitor their well-being and progress carefully, and intervene sensitively and effectively with very well-judged support when needed. Staff very successfully involve parents and carers in their children's learning. The results of this are seen, for example, in pupils' high attendance.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

With good support from all staff, the school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher. This is recognised by parents and carers and seen in the highly positive questionnaire responses. The clear direction provided for the school is driven by the headteacher's detailed knowledge of the school and the local community, and her determination to raise standards even further. Because of recent staffing changes, the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders are being re-allocated. As a result, leadership and management are in transition and the evaluation of provision by middle leaders is not yet developed well enough to sharpen the work of other teachers and so quicken pupils' progress. Targets for all groups of pupils are both realistic and challenging, and consequently good progress is made towards them. Very strong links with external agencies support the individual needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds. This is an essential element of the school's effectiveness in combating discrimination. It also ensures the promotion of equality of opportunity so there are no significant gaps in attainment between any groups of pupils.

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The school benefits from the support and challenge offered by a highly effective governing body. Its members are fully informed about school performance through monitoring visits and regular reports from the headteacher. They have worked closely with staff to ensure that safeguarding procedures are of high quality and all staff are fully trained in these matters. As a result the school has the total confidence of parents and carers regarding their children's safety. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A good plan and clear actions promote pupils' understanding from a local perspective well. Through links with schools abroad, pupils' minds are opened to the range and diversity of culture in the wider world. Pupils' understanding of what life is like for others in different social contexts in the United Kingdom is less well developed, but plans are in hand to enable pupils to collaborate with those from different backgrounds to strengthen this aspect of their personal development.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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 settle quickly on entering Reception because of the well-organised induction arrangements, very effective adult care and support, and excellent links with parents and carers. As a result, children feel safe and enjoy their learning. All adults are vigilant in meeting the needs of children, and welfare requirements are fully met. A strong emphasis on children's personal and social skills ensures that they soon begin to share, to learn and to play together. They are well behaved and polite to each other and to adults, and their personal development is good.

Teaching is good because staff have a good understanding of how children learn and they work well as an enthusiastic team. They provide a broad range of adult-led and free-choice activities indoors and outside that promote good outcomes in all areas of

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learning. The teaching of letters and sounds receives good attention and children are making good progress in acquiring early writing skills. However, opportunities that arise to further extend children's literacy and numeracy skills when they are outdoors are not always taken. The new Early Years Foundation Stage team have a clear vision of what can be done further to enhance children's learning experiences and, in particular, to provide children with more opportunities to explore, to be creative and to work independently.

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

The response to the pre-inspection questionnaire was much higher than usual. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers expressed positive views about every aspect of the school. There were no particular trends in the very few negative comments received by inspectors. Many respondents wrote additional comments indicating their strong support for the school and the direction it is taking. Typically, one wrote, 'The style and approach role-modelled by the headteacher sets a wonderful tone for this lovely school. My eldest child has been supported every step of the way by some really wonderful teachers'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stamford St Gilberts Church of England 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 inspection team received 173 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 314 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	122	71	49	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	133	77	37	21	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	107	62	61	35	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	110	64	56	32	4	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	127	73	43	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	123	71	46	27	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	118	68	53	31	1	1	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)	114	66	49	28	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	114	66	51	29	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	107	62	59	34	3	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	104	60	61	35	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	138	80	34	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	138	80	35	20	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 8 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



3 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Stamford St Gilberts Church of England Primary School,
Stamford, PE9 2PP**

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school and for the friendly way you received us. We spoke to many of you, and you were really helpful. We also want to say how much we enjoyed listening to your excellent singing in assembly and seeing how much you celebrated each other's success in the 'Star of the Week' assembly.

You receive a good education and reach above average standards at the end of Year 6. You enjoy school, listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and are willing to work hard in your lessons. Your good behaviour is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn. In most lessons you make good progress, but we have asked the staff to make sure that you are actively engaged and really stretched in all of your lessons, so that you make the best progress you possibly can. Your teachers spend a lot of time marking your work and you can help yourselves to make even more progress by trying hard to follow the advice you are given.

You attend school regularly and understand the importance of being healthy, eating sensibly and taking part in physical activity. Your teachers plan a good range of visits and after-school activities that broaden your experiences. You told us how much you enjoy your topic work and we were impressed by the good quality of the displays of your work around the school. We were also impressed with how you all do so much to help the school. Adults at school look after you exceptionally well, so that you are safe and happy. Your headteacher, all the other staff and the governing body are determined to make things even better. As part of this, we have asked that staff who coordinate different aspects of the work of the school are more closely involved in checking how well you are doing. We think that you can all work together to do this and that you will want to play your part by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Kenneth Thomas
Lead inspector

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