

Gislingham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Broadfields Road, Gislingham, Eye, IP23 8HX

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- In the words of one staff member, 'This is a fantastic school, where children, parents and staff learn together in a happy and safe environment.'
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their behaviour is faultless, and they say they feel very safe. Pupils have a mature attitude towards their learning. They are polite and courteous and readily accept responsibility.
- Following a fall in standards in 2010, swift action by the newly appointed headteacher prevented further decline. His inspirational leadership has made sure that standards have risen impressively in all year groups since then.
- Standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics are now very high compared to those reached by pupils in other schools.
- Outstanding teaching enables pupils to make quick and sustained progress in all subjects.
- As a result all groups, regardless of their level of ability, special educational needs or background, are doing very well throughout the school.
- Teachers are skilled at planning challenging, interesting activities. Their marking makes sure that pupils know how to improve the quality of their work. At times, teachers do not make sure that pupils' presentation is also outstanding, and overlook some punctuation and simple spelling errors.
- Leadership and management at all levels, including governance, are outstanding. Leaders regularly and thoroughly check that all teaching is helping pupils to make outstanding progress. They set demanding targets to make sure the school carries on improving.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector also observed the headteacher reporting back to teachers on the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the steering committee of the governing body. The inspector held a telephone conversation with with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the federation improvement plan, the school's raising attainment plan, data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring files, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector met some parents informally at the start of the school day. She took into account the responses to the school's own survey and the 29 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Heather Weston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- Very few pupils are known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium.
- In January 2011, the school became formally federated with Palgrave Primary School, having worked in partnership with this school since 2005. The two schools share the same headteacher and have a single governing body. A number of staff either work in both schools, or are based in one school and provide support in both schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should ensure that teachers and teaching assistants pay even closer attention to the presentation of pupils' work, including the use of correct spelling and accurate punctuation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The proportion of pupils making expected or better progress is higher than in other schools nationally. All pupils in Year 6 make two National Curriculum levels progress or more between Key Stages 1 and 2 in writing, reading and mathematics.
- Pupils make outstanding progress through the school because teaching is outstanding. Teachers inspire pupils to succeed and to share responsibility for their learning.
- From starting points below national expectations, children in the Reception Year make outstanding progress and join Year 1 with above average standards. The rate of progress slowed down in Key Stage 1 in the past, but because of leaders' decisive action, outstanding progress has been re-established in all year groups.
- The introduction of a systematic approach to teaching phonics (the sounds made by letters) for pupils in Years R, 1, and 2, and for some in Year 3, has contributed to rapid progress in reading and pupils' improved ability to spell words. This approach, combined with a strong focus on developing confidence, led Reception children to ask their teacher to give them 'really difficult' four-letter words to sound out, rather than the appropriate three-letter words which she had selected. The children's success in this challenge gave them all (including their teacher) great satisfaction.
- A strong emphasis is placed on developing literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils develop these skills and acquire knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Standards are high in all subjects, including, for example, technology and music. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those for whom additional funding provides support, make outstanding progress. This is because teachers set their work at just the right level of difficulty, and they and other adults in the classroom provide highly effective support and guidance whenever it is needed.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Leaders' emphasis on improving teaching has resulted in many consistently strong features in teaching throughout the school. Teachers are particularly skilled at holding children's interest and in making sure that they extend their learning.
- Pupils say they enjoy lessons, and that teaching motivates them and helps them to make progress. They value the teachers' comments in their books, as these help them to improve their work. Pupils appreciate their role in taking responsibility for their learning, and say that this makes them feel very involved. Parents also expressed confidence in the quality of teaching.
- Teachers and teaching assistants regularly and thoroughly assess the levels pupils are working at, in order to plan precisely what they need to do next and to give them the right level of challenge. As a result, lessons are planned and structured well. Teachers and teaching assistants show great expertise in helping pupils to take big steps forward in their learning during lessons, and in asking searching questions that gauge the depth of pupils' learning while making them think hard. Homework strongly supports pupils' learning.

- Not all teachers make sure that pupils always produce their best handwriting, or remember to use the correct punctuation at all times. At times pupils make silly spelling mistakes as they are concentrating on other aspects of their learning.
- Detailed assessments are also made during reading sessions. These help teachers to increase the progress pupils are making in reading. This is evident in the highly effective reading sessions held every morning, which help pupils to refine and develop their reading skills day by day.
- Teachers give pupils excellent opportunities across different subjects to promote their communication skills and their spiritual, moral and cultural development. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 discussed the Great Fire of London. They described 'distressed horses' and 'people running in terror' from the billowing smoke.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught extremely well in an atmosphere where all are valued. They have the opportunity to engage in tasks independently and under the guidance of highly skilled adults, as appropriate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour observed during the inspection in lessons and around the school was, without exception, outstanding. Pupils assured the inspector that they would expect nothing less.
- Courtesy and politeness towards each other and towards adults are expected. Pupils respect one another and adults, and take a pride in their school. Parents and staff also have very positive views of behaviour.
- In lessons pupils are fully involved and engaged in their learning. They have the confidence to discuss and debate issues amongst themselves and with their teachers. This was shown in an outstanding mathematics lesson where pupils discussed intently different ways to solve the problem of finding angles around the vertices (corners) of an irregular shape.
- Pupils say they feel well cared for. They know they can turn to each other or to any adult for help. They show a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when they use the internet, and of different types of bullying such as verbal bullying and through the use of mobile phone texting. However, they assured the inspector that there are no incidents of bullying at the school.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident. This is reflected in attendance levels, which are well above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Following his appointment in September 2010, the headteacher took concerted and thorough, successful action to improve the quality of teaching and leadership and management, and to address the issues from the last inspection.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have high levels of expertise and convey high expectations. All aspects of their work are outstanding. As a team they mentor and support other leaders, teachers and teaching assistants to carry out their roles to a very high standard. Leaders at all levels are aware of their role in ensuring that pupils' achievement continues to improve in all areas.

- The highly effective action taken to improve the quality of teaching includes checking the quality of teaching and giving detailed individual feedback, targeted training, coaching and sharing best practice. Federation arrangements enable staff to work across the two schools, to share strengths and to develop each other's practice, resulting in a highly efficient use of resources.
- Leaders make sure teachers have regular opportunities to agree the levels of pupils' work, and so their assessments are now accurate. As a result the headteacher and senior leaders can be sure that each and every pupil is making the rapid progress expected.
- Accurate information also informs the system for managing teachers' performance. This process holds teachers to account for their work. It ensures that rewards are appropriately linked to the progress made by pupils, and to meeting agreed targets.
- The leadership of support and guidance for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who are eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium, is outstanding. The coordinator ensures that support is highly effective in bringing about sustained improvement in achievement, but is also cost-effective. This ensures that barriers to learning are overcome, and the pupils concerned make outstanding progress despite their wide-ranging abilities and needs.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to use their reading, writing, and mathematical skills across different subject areas. A wide range of out-of-school activities such as residential visits, trips to London, an annual music festival, and sports events also help to make sure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- All these very strong features demonstrate that the school is very successful in eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.
- The local authority has provided highly effective strategic support for the school. Recognising the ability of leaders and the quality of action planning, the local authority provided challenge to the headteacher and monitored and evaluated the impact of actions taken. Support was given to validate the judgements of senior leaders and to improve the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the federation is strong, well informed, and exceptionally well organised. The governing body's excellent best practice is shared with other schools in the local authority. The governors know Gislingham School well, challenge its performance in terms of achievement and the quality of teaching, and have very high expectations that performance continues to be the best possible and the school outstanding. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements, and are rigorously applied, and ensures that extra funding such as the pupil premium is used very effectively to support pupils' achievement. The governing body uses the valuable range of expertise among its members very well to improve the school's performance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124753
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	402292

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	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Wells
Headteacher	Andrew Berry
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2009
Telephone number	01379 783283
Fax number	01379 783283
Email address	a.berry@gispalfederation.com

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