

St Gilbert of Sempringham Church of England Primary School, Pointon

West Road, Pointon, Sleaford, NG34 0NA

Inspection dates 6–7 February 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress is too slow for achievement to be judged as good. This is because teaching requires improvement.
- Pupils' progress in writing is held back because they do not have enough opportunities to write in a range of subjects, or to write longer pieces of work.
- Teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly in mathematics. Sometimes they set work that is not hard enough. Pupils have too little time to work independently because teachers often take too long going over previous work or explaining tasks to the whole class.
- Teachers sometimes allow pupils' attitudes in lessons to be too casual, so behaviour is not good enough and this slows down learning.
- Leaders and managers have not made sure teaching is good in all classes, or that all pupils achieve well. The sharing of leadership among staff is at an early stage of development.
- The headteacher regularly checks on the quality of teaching, but these checks focus too much on the quality of teaching rather than its impact on pupils' progress.
- Governors have only recently begun to hold staff to account for pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- There is a busy, welcoming atmosphere in school and everyone is working together to improve pupils' achievement.
- The extra funding provided by the pupil premium is used well to make sure eligible pupils keep up with their classmates.
- The headteacher is making good use of advice and support from external consultants to take the school forward through more effective planning, carefully-chosen training and the sharing of best practice.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by six teachers. All the lesson observations were made jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils read and looked carefully their reading records and workbooks.
- Discussions were held with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, governors and a local authority officer.
- The inspector examined school documents including assessment information, planning documents, records of checks on teaching and documentation on safeguarding arrangements.
- The views of 14 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. Also considered were the views expressed in a letter and the transcript of a telephone call received from parents, and an interview conducted with a parent.
- The inspector considered the three responses received to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, 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 White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding (the pupil premium) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average, including those pupils supported on school action, and those at school action plus or supported by a statement of special educational needs.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils (lessons that take place regularly away from school).
- The number of pupils is too small for valid comparisons to be made against the government's floor standards (the minimum standards expected for attainment and progress).
- There have been several changes in staffing since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Reception-age children and Year 1 pupils are in Class 1; Class 2 is for Years 2 and 3; and Class 3 is for Years 4,5 and 6.
- The governing body provides a breakfast club and after-school care. Both were included in this inspection, but the registered setting for children under the age of three was not included.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and progress in all classes to at least good by:
 - managing pupils' behaviour to ensure their engagement throughout the lesson
 - keeping lesson introductions short, so pupils spend most of the time working on their own or in groups to develop their independent learning skills
 - insisting on high standards and a good work rate in every lesson, but particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that work is demanding but achievable for all the ability groups in each class.
- Improve achievement in writing by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities in a range of different subjects to practise writing skills
 - encouraging pupils to write longer pieces of work.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - developing the expertise and effectiveness of subject leaders, so they have a stronger impact on improving the school
 - making sure that lesson observations focus on how well all pupils are making progress
 - ensuring that governors hold staff fully to account for pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Individual starting points vary, but too few pupils make good progress through the school, because there is not enough good teaching. Therefore, pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is usually broadly average overall. It varies between subjects. It is lower in mathematics than in English, and writing lags behind reading.
- Learning slows when tasks are not demanding enough. In a mathematics lesson in Class 2, the planning did not take account of pupils' previous learning. They were already familiar with the concept, so spent the lesson going over familiar ground and made limited progress.
- In writing lessons across the school, while attention to sentence construction is thorough, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write longer, more demanding pieces such as play scripts, adventures, persuasive letters or balanced arguments.
- Sometimes, tasks that are too easy and a casual approach from pupils and teachers mean that not enough gets done. Despite an atmosphere of enjoyment, with good relationships, this leads to lapses in engagement and behaviour, slowing progress.
- Current pupils' progress is showing clear signs of improvement in reading, writing and mathematics in response to an intensive drive to improve teaching, in close partnership with external consultants.
- Attainment in reading is a little higher than in other areas because pupils use reading records well and teachers make sure they hear pupils read frequently and encourage them to enjoy reading. In Class 1, children took it in turns to prowl around the classroom dressed as *The Gruffalo*, stimulating interest and curiosity to read the story.
- Progress is best when activities are well planned and offer excitement and variety. In a Class 2 music lesson taught by a specialist, pupils much enjoyed the fast-paced variety of technical and practical aspects that challenged all abilities well.
- The school uses pupil premium funding wisely to support eligible pupils, by providing more time for support staff to offer additional help. These pupils progress at a similar rate to their classmates. The very small number of pupils involved means that it is not statistically valid to compare any difference in test scores against national assessment data.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. All staff have a good awareness of their individual learning needs. Pupils benefit from carefully tailored assistance to enable them to overcome their barriers to learning.
- Assessment information is used appropriately to follow each pupil's progress. When issues are identified, action is taken, usually in the form of well-judged personalised support. In this way, the school provides equality of opportunity for all and ensures there is no discrimination.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is not leading to good enough levels of learning. Sometimes, teachers do not work at a brisk enough pace or demand enough of pupils, or expect them to tackle tasks quickly enough. When pupils sit on the carpet for a long time while the teacher goes over work they have already covered, they start to fidget and their concentration wanes.
- Many lessons do not encourage pupils to think things out for themselves and work independently. Their learning often depends too much on continual guidance and intervention from adults.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to write at length, and this is partly because teachers' expectations of how much can be achieved in a lesson are too low. In mathematics, in particular, when planning does not capitalise on what pupils already know, this limits their progress.
- The more-able pupils are not always given work that challenges them. Sometimes, the only extension work is to do more of the same, rather than to use and develop more complicated skills. This slows progress and creates a lack of purposefulness. Sometimes, staff do not give enough attention to managing behaviour well, so pupils' attitudes to learning become less focused and some lose concentration and interest.
- Where pupils are able to do their own investigations, they are enthusiastic and learn well. For example, Class 2 pupils enjoyed researching on the internet about Tutankhamun when preparing for writing a report. However, when they were writing the report, too little was expected of them in the lesson.
- Teachers' written marking has improved recently in response to a focus on this aspect of their work. Helpful advice is given to pupils, and followed up. Consequently, pupils know how to reach the next level in their learning.
- Reading is taught well. Teachers offer numerous reading opportunities, so pupils have an easy familiarity with books of all kinds from an early age. The degree of support offered to readers varies according to their capabilities, so those who need it most benefit from numerous opportunities to read to adults.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is sensitive and caring. Staff follow individual education plans that meet the needs of each pupil well so they keep up with their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils rely too much on adults to help them learn. While disruption in lessons is unusual, pupils do not easily concentrate for extended periods on their work.
- Teachers do not manage classroom behaviour consistently well enough to make sure pupils learn throughout each lesson. Where teachers are alert to pupils' needs and help them through every stage of the lesson progress can be good; where teaching is less effective pupils' lack of focus hampers their learning.
- Very few parents have concerns about bullying or behaviour. All those who responded to the

online questionnaire feel that their child is kept safe and pupils agree. Attendance is average.

- Bullying is an unusual occurrence. Pupils say that anti-social behaviour is dealt with effectively by staff, so it rarely escalates into any form of bullying. They are aware of the possibilities of bullying through the internet or by texting, but say that it hardly ever happens.
- Teachers and pupils get along very well together; teachers go out of their way to foster good relationships with pupils. The atmosphere in the school building and the playground is generally calm and orderly, and pupils are courteous to one another.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because neither achievement nor teaching is good, and subject leaders make a limited contribution to checking the quality of teaching and learning.
 - Partnerships are strong. The local authority is alert to the school's needs. It has arranged for a national support school, a national leader of education and the diocese to join together in providing good advice and expertise to support the headteacher and staff as they pursue their goals of raising achievement, improving behaviour and developing teaching. There is a strong sense of all working together for improvement, although staff changes have delayed the full impact.
 - Coaching and training for staff, and regular checks on teaching to monitor the impact of the advice received, are making a positive impact. However, lesson observations do not focus sharply enough on the progress pupils make in lessons, as a yardstick for judging the quality of the teaching, for the checks to have a full impact.
 - The school has developed its use of assessment in response to the previous inspection and is set on a path to improvement. Leaders have an accurate awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. This leads to development plans that focus on the right key priorities for the school, and include helpful and challenging milestones.
 - The subjects and activities taught provide interesting, relevant experiences for pupils. Some good links are made between subjects, but opportunities are missed for pupils to practise and extend writing skills in a range of other subjects. Well-planned assemblies contribute to pupils' spiritual understanding and promote their social responsibility. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide well for those who attend.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is making good use of all available external expertise. It has become better informed about the school. It makes regular checks on the school's work, including through pupil consultations and a system of school visits. Useful reports from the headteacher and local authority are helping governors keep a closer eye on teaching and progress. They are less well aware of how teachers' performance is managed, and how priorities for individual staff link to their pay rises. Governors now more clearly understand data on pupils' progress and how it relates to national yardsticks, and are beginning to use this information to challenge the school to do better. They are aware of how the pupil premium is used, and check that this extra expenditure makes a difference to the pupils it supports. Governors are having relevant training to enhance their ability to support staff and pupils. They make sure

that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.

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	120606
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	405949

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	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Nelms
Headteacher	Emma Hunt
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2010
Telephone number	01529 240465
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