

Gedney Church End Primary School

Church End, Gedney, Spalding, PE12 0BU

Inspection dates 23–24 January 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		Good	2
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

- Teaching has not been consistently strong enough to ensure pupils make good progress.
- Pupils learn literacy and numeracy skills but do not always apply them well enough in their writing or problem solving.
- The marking and assessment of pupils' work has not been effective enough in helping pupils to improve more rapidly.
- Lesson planning does not always focus well enough on challenging individual pupils.
- Plans and checks on what Reception pupils can do have not yet been adjusted to take account of new national guidance.
- Teachers do not always ask sufficient questions of pupils during lessons to check their understanding of the work.
- At times, teachers simply talk too much, thus limiting the time pupils have to work individually or learn more actively during lessons.
- Subject leaders do not all have the skills they need to help the headteacher check on the school's effectiveness.
- The governing body has not checked closely enough on how well pupils are achieving, nor pushed the school hard enough to improve.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy school. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good.
- Working relationships between pupils and adults are good; pupils feel safe at school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Under the guidance of the headteacher, staff have a good understanding of what needs to improve.
- There is good teamwork amongst staff, and a determination to do what is necessary to help improve pupils' learning and progress.
- Parents and carers appreciate the 'family' atmosphere created by the school.

Information about this inspection

- At the same time as Gedney Church End Primary School was being inspected, Lutton St Nicholas Primary School, which is federated with Gedney, was inspected by a different lead inspector. However, to avoid unnecessary duplication, some meetings with staff were held either in common or by one lead inspector on behalf of the other, whichever proved most convenient for the schools.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, class teachers, those with responsibility for subjects and key stages, the chair of the governing body and administrative staff. Telephone discussions were held with a representative of the local authority.
- Where the two lead inspectors needed to share information concerning the federation, this was done during joint meetings with the headteacher.
- Most meetings with and discussions between the lead inspectors and the headteacher were held jointly, at whichever school the headteacher was normally based during the inspection days.
- In the course of the Gedney inspection, the inspector observed 10 lessons, including one which was observed jointly with the headteacher. All class teachers and their teaching assistants were seen working with the pupils.
- The inspector heard all three pupils from Year 2 read, attended an assembly, observed a literacy support session taught by a teaching assistant, and scrutinised the pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents, including: development plans; policies; self-evaluation reports; various monitoring files; safeguarding and curriculum materials; governing body documents; and information for families.
- He held a meeting with a group of pupils from Year 6; in addition, he took many informal opportunities to talk with pupils.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), but the inspector spoke individually with several parents and carers. The inspector also took into account the 10 questionnaires returned by the school's staff.

Inspection team

Michael Miller, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Gedney Church End Primary School is part of a hard federation with Lutton St Nicholas Primary School. The schools share the same headteacher and governing body; the headteacher shares his time across both schools.
- All leadership and management roles allocated to the teaching staff are shared between the two federated schools. Staff employed before the Federation are contracted to their specific schools; those employed after April 2008 are contracted by the Federation.
- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school serving families living in Gedney and many other local villages in a scattered rural community.
- There are currently three classes, two with mixed year groups and one for Year 6 pupils only.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such comparisons meaningful.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage; very few speak English as an additional language.
- An above proportion of the pupils join or leave the school other than at the normal times.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is broadly average. The percentage who have a statement of special educational needs, or who are supported at school action plus, is well above average.
- None of the school's pupils receive alternative provision (none are taught elsewhere).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to become at least good by:
 - ensuring lesson planning makes more use of assessment information to provide sufficiently challenging work for individuals as well as more general groups of pupils
 - using questioning better in lessons to check precisely and consistently on pupils' progress, and to help them identify clearly their next steps in learning
 - making sure that pupils are given the maximum possible time to participate actively in lessons
 - ensuring the marking of pupils' work, and written feedback, are focused specifically on helping them to remember and understand better what to improve.
- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that planning and assessment in the Reception year takes specific account of the new national statements concerning each child's expected development
 - helping pupils to be more consistent and confident in the use of their literacy skills
 - improving the way pupils apply their mathematics skills to solving problems.
- Improve the impact of the school's subject leaders by developing the essential skills they need to support fully the headteacher in checking the school's work.
- Undertake an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In some year groups, only one or two pupils who joined in the Reception year continue through to Year 6, and significant numbers join the school. The school's regular tracking of pupils' progress shows that most pupils make expected progress in both literacy and numeracy from the time they join. However, relatively few are making more rapid progress. The challenge for the school is to explore ways by which pupils' progress may be accelerated and their achievement enhanced consistently well across the school.
- The school has rightly identified that pupils' skills in problem solving are a weaker area in mathematics. In English, and particularly writing, pupils show good levels of imagination and creativity, but the more technical aspects which show higher attainment, including spelling, grammar, punctuation and devices to keep a reader hooked and interested, are not as strong or used consistently effectively.
- Children entering the Reception year have not always had the benefit of pre-school education. The assessment of children's starting points when they join the Reception class has improved through closer links with families. However, as yet assessment procedures have not been fully adjusted to take account of new national guidance about what is expected of children of this age.
- The school is successful in the ways it spends the additional pupil premium funding it receives. It is closing the gap between the attainment of this group and other pupils at the school. When 2012 Year 6 test results are compared with the results the same pupils had in Key Stage 1, they show there was no significant difference in the progress made by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the other pupils.
- Pupils who are disabled, have special educational needs or need extra help with their learning usually make progress at similar rates overall to other pupils at the school. They and those who speak English as an additional language sometimes make good progress. In one session, where a teaching assistant was working individually with a pupil who had difficulty with literacy, the pupil made good progress in constructing a 'starter' sentence for a piece of creative writing. This gave the pupil the confidence to continue the work independently on return to the main class.
- The attainment in reading of the current Year 2 and 6 pupils' is broadly average. Pupils tackle texts with confidence. All Year 2 pupils use their learning about the sounds that letters make to read and interpret words they find difficult. There is a common approach across the school to the regular teaching of such skills. In summer 2012, the large majority of Year 1 pupils were successful in the new national phonics screening check.
- Particularly good progress was seen during a combined Year 5 and 6 science lesson when pupils were investigating how air affects our lives. A wide ranging discussion, both as a class and between smaller groups of pupils, showed their depth of understanding, for example how it is vital to life, it can be sensed, and its power can be a valuable source of sustainable energy. This lesson also made an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Discussions with pupils show they appreciate what their teachers have to offer them, and enjoy

the ways their teachers promote fun in learning. These are important teaching skills. However, there are other factors which are less consistent in the teaching across the school and which require improvement in order to help accelerate pupils' progress and raise achievement.

- Sometimes teachers simply talk too much at the pupils. On a few occasions, half the sessions observed were taken up by a monologue to the class, thus leaving the pupils as passive listeners. This restricted the time available for the pupils to get on with their work, which they are keen to do.
- Teachers do not always use questioning well enough with classes as a whole to check pupils' understanding of what it is they are being asked to learn. It is not that teachers do not have these skills; searching questions are often asked of individuals or small groups of pupils. When pupils volunteer answers to whole-class questions, it is often the same pupils who are chosen to provide an answer, and insufficient checks are made on others in the class; consequently, their progress may slow.
- Marking is regular, and very supportive of pupils' efforts, recognising well their successes. However, written comments to focus pupils on exactly what to do to improve are less frequent. Oral feedback to pupils is regular, and appreciated by the pupils. Nevertheless, pupils require more frequent written advice in their books as reminders when their memory of the teacher's oral advice has faded.
- Lesson planning is not always sharp enough in ensuring the needs of individual pupils are met, whether they need extra support because they find learning difficult or require extra challenge because they are higher-attaining pupils. Planning for mixed year group classes often tends to focus only on broad ability groups.
- Sometimes planning for groups is too generalised, such as for some activities in the Reception year. The specific areas of learning Reception children should cover are not always considered in sufficient depth. Occasionally, when Reception children are encouraged to work independently, their progress on their chosen activities is not monitored regularly enough. This is because adults become more focused on other year groups in the class. Discussion with the Early Years Foundation Stage leader for the Federation shows this is recognised as an area for improvement and further development.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. When given the opportunity, pupils enjoy discussion work and the chance to share their ideas and explore their opinions and viewpoints. This was seen to good effect in a Year 6 literacy lesson where pupils explored arguments for and against the construction of a new, imaginary, local road and its potential impact on a small community. Pupils' creative imagination is encouraged well, and this comes out in their writing work. A good range of trips and visits helps to broaden their horizons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good throughout the school. Even when they may be left as more passive learners, the minute they are able to get down to active work they do so without fuss. The pupils develop self-confidence, socialise well, and maintain good concentration levels throughout the day.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the good attendance of most pupils, although the absences of pupils from a very few families lowers attendance rates to average overall.

- Discussions with pupils shows they know how to keep each other safe, and put into practice their care and consideration for others. Older pupils take on readily roles of responsibility such as those of play leaders and peer mediators, for which they receive proper training. They wear their badges proclaiming these duties with pride.
- Pupils show a good awareness of the implications, dangers and consequences of the different types of bullying. They talk about the importance of the school's 'zero tolerance' of any anti-social behaviour. They do admit to occasional silliness or disobedience, but school records confirm such incidents are few and far between. Pupils respect their teachers; school records show that and any behaviour which may disrupt learning is minimal.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is providing good leadership and direction for the school. However, since taking up his post as leader of the Federation, the tasks of checking and evaluating the school's effectiveness have fallen almost entirely on his shoulders, with limited contributions from other leaders. His files and records show these processes are undertaken in depth and in some detail.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and the inspection judgements reflect the school's own, realistic view of its current position. The joint observation and subsequent discussion with the headteacher confirmed the accuracy of his understanding and evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching.
- Monitoring by the local authority has been adequate. Regular reviews of the school's performance have helped identify weaker areas in the pupils' achievement. The local authority has been supportive of the headteacher in his drive for improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.
- A team has now been built, across the federation, where teachers are willing to take on the expected responsibility for analysing and evaluating the work of the school. Subject leaders are now starting to take on their proper roles, for example in the monitoring of teaching and learning, but some lack skills or experience in these areas.
- A foundation for future success is being built. It has taken longer than expected to establish full and effective working partnerships between the two federated schools. However, both are now at a point where they can take mutually beneficial advantage of each other's skills and expertise. The federation is also looking to broaden its horizons through wider, supportive partnerships with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has not been rigorous enough in the past in identifying and holding the school to account for the quality of teaching and learning, or in checking on pupils' achievement and progress in comparison with other schools nationally. Governors still rely on the headteacher for much of their information. The Chair of the Governing Body has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but the governing body as a whole has not pursued school improvement with sufficient urgency to raise its effectiveness. The governing body takes the safeguarding of pupils very seriously; systems, training and processes for safeguarding pupils are secure. Governors are aware of the ways additional government funding is spent. This funding is used effectively to provide additional learning support, specialist resources and subsidies for initiatives such as the breakfast provision. They are told about the targets set to improve the quality of teaching, any related professional training, and links with the school's salary structure.

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	120409
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	401931

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Howard
Headteacher	Luke Whitney
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2009
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