

Gamlingay First School

Green End, Gamlingay, Sandy, SG19 3LE

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achieve well, with most working at or exceeding the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 4.
- Good teaching means that pupils' skills improve quickly. There is a good pace to learning, and teachers make good use of resources to bring subjects alive.
- Reading is taught especially well, with specialist support very successfully helping pupils who are struggling to catch up.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are sociable and articulate and have good manners. They work hard in lessons, are keen to learn and get on well together.
- Activities both in and out of lessons make learning fun and contribute well to pupils' great enjoyment of school and their personal development.
- Good leadership and management ensure that the school continues to move forward quickly. Pupils' attainment is rising and the amount of good or outstanding teaching is increasing.
- Leaders' planning for improvement is based on an accurate understanding of current priorities, and the school is doing the right things to iron out remaining, relatively minor, inconsistencies in progress across the school.
- The governing body is very knowledgeable about the school and provides good challenge to other leaders.
- Parents are very pleased with the work of the school. They support it extremely well through fundraising and by helping their children with work at home.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a small number of mathematics lessons in Years 3 and 4, pupils' progress slows. This is because teachers do not always pitch work at the right level for all pupils. In addition, they have too few opportunities to improve their numeracy skills by using them in problem solving or investigations.
- Teachers in charge of subjects or other aspects of the school's work do not play a full part in driving improvement because they have too little responsibility for analysing data on pupils' performance and checking the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, seven of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, with members of the governing body, with members of staff and with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 60 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also talked to some parents individually at the end of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information about pupils’ learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding documents.
- The inspectors analysed 18 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This average-sized first school has eight classes. Pupils transfer to other schools at the end of Year 4.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding given to the school for specific groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and provides support to other local schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 is consistently good by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan work that is always pitched at the right level for all pupils
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise and improve their numeracy skills through investigations and problem solving.
- Strengthen the role of teachers in charge of subjects or other aspects of the school's work in driving improvement by involving them more in analysing data on pupils' performance and visiting lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from attainment on entry which varies from year to year. Around half of children show a typical level of development for their age when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in most years. Pupils' attainment has been rising and, by the end of Year 4, most pupils are working at or exceeding the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn quickly. They make very rapid progress in phonics (learning about letters and the sounds that they make) because skills are introduced very systematically. They soon begin to make marks on paper, with the more-able already writing recognisable letters and words. When counting, most children recognise numbers to ten, and around a third are already beginning to explore how to make larger numbers.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, leading to above-average attainment by the end of Year 2. Pupils do especially well in reading and writing because they use their phonics knowledge well to read unknown words and to spell accurately. In the national phonics screening checks at the end of Year 1, the school has exceeded national averages for the last two years.
- In mathematics, pupils in Year 2 add and subtract accurately. All pupils, including the more-able pupils, make good progress, especially when encouraged to think for themselves by, for instance, making Carroll diagrams based either on their own criteria or one given by the teacher.
- In Years 3 and 4, pupils make good progress most of the time. Reading and writing skills improve quickly for all pupils, including the less-able. The more-able achieve well and they are given good opportunities to use and apply their literacy skills to support their learning in other subjects. However, in mathematics, progress, while never less than adequate, is sometimes uneven because work does not always build successfully enough on pupils' different starting points. The most-able improve numeracy skills quickly most of the time because they are given additional support outside lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well because they receive good support from members of staff. Consequently, most reach the nationally expected Level 3 by the end of Year 4, reflecting good progress over time.
- There are not enough pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding in each year group to comment on their attainment without identifying them. Funding provides good-quality individual support where needed and ensures that these pupils make the same good progress as others.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and is sometimes outstanding ensuring that pupils learn quickly and are keen to learn. All parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are pleased with the teaching.
- In the Reception classes, children quickly acquire new skills, especially when supported by an adult. Teachers make good use of the well-resourced outdoor areas to support learning. Phonics is taught exceptionally well, and children are given many opportunities to practise and reinforce

their skills throughout the day. Children get many opportunities to explore their own ideas, for example, working together to build a bridge outside and, most of the time, adults intervene well to move learning on quickly, although just occasionally they do not receive enough help in developing their ideas.

- In Years 1 to 4, teachers meet differing needs well most of the time. There is usually good challenge for the most-able, although just occasionally in numeracy lessons, work is not pitched at exactly the right level for all pupils, slowing learning. Members of staff manage behaviour consistently through the constant use of praise. Pupils are given good opportunities to work together and to reflect on the progress they have made in each lesson.
- In Years 1 and 2, teachers are especially successful at making learning practical. For example, pupils very quickly improved their knowledge of data-handling because they made 'human graphs' in the playground. This is less evident in some mathematics lessons in Years 3 and 4, where there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to use their skills in investigations and by problem solving so that skills improve more quickly.
- Throughout the school, specialist teachers and well-planned support outside lessons, especially in reading, have a highly positive effect on pupils' learning, helping to ensure that the less-able, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents and pupils agree that behaviour is typically good. Inspectors found that pupils' positive attitudes towards learning are a key factor in helping them to make good progress and prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school making comments such as, 'I am always happy,' and 'I never know what is going to happen next.' Pupils are keen to learn and they sensibly share their ideas in lessons, happily celebrating each other's successes.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and work hard, but behaviour is not outstanding because there are a few occasions in lessons when they do not pay enough attention to the teacher. In the Reception classes, children have good independence and they concentrate well, behaving very sensibly all of the time.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They say that there is very little bullying, but when it does happen, it is tackled quickly by staff. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to avoid dangers in the outside world, including how to use the internet safely.
- The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination very effectively. The pupil premium is used to good effect to ensure that all pupils are able to take part in every activity.
- There is a good emphasis on encouraging healthy lifestyles and promoting pupils' well-being. Pupils enjoy physical activity, and 'playleaders' promote this well at break-times. The school is beginning to use the new primary sports funding (additional government funding to support the development of school sports) to access different sporting activities and to use specialist coaches to extend teachers' skills.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders set high expectations for staff and pupils and, consequently, there have been good improvements since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment has risen and leaders have ensured continued improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. The local authority has supported the school well over this period.
- Systems for checking provision are thorough and the headteacher evaluates the school's work accurately. The school has a wealth of data on pupils' progress and this information is used well to identify groups or individuals who are doing less well than others so that they can be given support to help them catch up. For example, steps are already being taken in the current year to support pupils who have in the past been doing less well in mathematics.
- Senior leaders work closely with teachers to identify what they need to do to make teaching even more successful. The headteacher's judgements on teaching are accurate and, consequently, training is selected on a good understanding of what will help teachers and the pupils most.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because teachers in charge of subjects or other aspects of the school's work such as special educational needs, while very enthusiastic, do not have enough responsibility for analysing data and checking the quality of teaching for themselves. Consequently, they are not able to take a full part in driving improvement.
- The school's partnership with others makes a strong contribution to its success. For example, good practice is shared with other local schools. As a local leader of education, the headteacher has provided valued support to other schools or academies.
- The curriculum (the topics and subjects taught) promotes good learning in numeracy and literacy. It provides a good variety of interesting and meaningful activities both in and out of lessons, although in mathematics too little time is allowed in Years 3 and 4 for reinforcing learning through practical work.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a positive contribution towards pupils' learning. There is good involvement in the local community and pupils show good concern for the needs of others by, for example, raising funds for a school in Ethiopia.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides good challenge to the headteacher. It has played a good part in the continued improvement since the previous inspection. Governors make good use of training to keep abreast of national developments and they regularly review their own work to ensure that it meets the needs of the school. Visits to school and the thorough analysis of data about pupils' progress mean that governors are knowledgeable about both the quality of teaching and how well the school is performing in comparison to others. Governors ensure that the pupil premium is being used to good effect to improve the attainment of eligible pupils and they check that systems for improving teaching only reward good performance. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet 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	110609
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	425351

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Mingay
Headteacher	Jonathan Newman
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2008
Telephone number	01767 650208
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