

The St Gilbert of Sempringham Church of England Primary School, Pointon

West Road, Pointon, Sleaford, NG34 0NA

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved since the previous inspection and attainment is now above average.
- Pupils in Years 4 to 6 are making rapid progress, especially in reading and writing.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Teaching is good overall. Pupils' books and records of their progress show that there is some outstanding teaching in Years 4 to 6.
- The school has provided intensive support this year for pupils in Years 2 and 3 in English and mathematics. This has helped to fill gaps in their learning.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. There has been a distinct improvement in pupils' attitudes to learning.
- The headteacher and senior teacher have worked well to increase the school's effectiveness. There has been good improvement in pupils' achievement and in the quality of teaching.
- The governing body has been strengthened and is now more effective than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Governors are well informed about the school's work and provide suitable challenge to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards at the end of Year 2 have not improved as much as those at the end of Year 6. The many changes of teacher in the class for pupils in Years 2 and 3 have slowed their progress.
- Pupils are not all confident in solving mathematical problems.
- The most-able pupils are not always challenged enough in the younger classes. They are not always given enough chances to write at length.
- Teachers' marking does not always make clear what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons. All lesson observations were done jointly with the headteacher. The inspector listened to the reading of some pupils in Year 1, sampled an assembly and observed pupils in the playground.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior teacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, with four members of the governing body and with a group of pupils. The lead inspector spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took into account the 11 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and also looked at the outcome of a recent parental survey conducted by the school. Eight completed staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- The inspector looked at the school's work and at key documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; the school development plan; and information relating to safeguarding. Inspectors looked at records of pupils' attainment and progress; and at pupils' books.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school.
- Pupils are organised into mixed-age classes: the Reception Year and Year 1; Years 2 and 3; Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below that found in most schools. (This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to those who are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Pupils nearly all come from White British backgrounds and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2013 to report on whether the school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has received support from a National Leader in Education from Bourne Abbey Primary Academy.
- There have been a number of changes in teaching staff since the previous inspection, especially in the class for pupils in Years 2 and 3. Following the departure of a teacher who had been on long-term absence, a teacher for this class was appointed temporarily in January 2014. This teacher is leaving at the end of this term and a permanent replacement has been appointed to start in September 2014. The senior teacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader both joined the school in September 2013.
- All but three members of the governing body have taken on the role since the previous inspection. A new Chair of the Governing Body is due to take over in September.
- St Gilbert's Kindergarten, which is based in the school grounds, provides childcare for children aged two to four and there is also a breakfast club and after-school care. It is managed by the school's governing body but separately registered and, therefore, inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement and build on existing strengths in teaching by:
 - improving teaching in Years 2 and 3 so that more pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - developing pupils' skills in using their knowledge of numbers to solve mathematical problems
 - always giving the most-able pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 2 and 3 work that is difficult enough for them
 - providing more opportunities for younger pupils to write at length
 - making sure that marking always informs pupils about how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen since the previous inspection and the oldest pupils are now making rapid progress.
- Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is broadly in line with that typically found. A few children start school with skills that are more developed than those usually seen while some join with skills that are below expectations for their age in literacy and numeracy.
- In 2013, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage was above average. Currently, the attainment of most of the children is at least in line with expectations for their age and progress is mostly good.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics in Year 1 and they are working at least in line with expectations for their age. In a mathematics lesson, pupils made good progress in learning about halves and quarters and their books show that they produce a good amount of written work.
- The school's results in the Year 1 screening check on pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) improved in 2013 and were above average. A further improvement in pupils' knowledge of phonics is evident for pupils in the current Year 1.
- There was a significant improvement in standards at the end of Year 6 in 2013. Attainment was broadly average in mathematics and writing and markedly better in reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Further improvement is evident in the current Year 6 where pupils' attainment is well above expectations in writing and above the expected level in reading and mathematics. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have made good progress this year in mathematics and many have made outstanding progress in reading and writing. Their progress is good in other subjects.
- There were too few pupils eligible for pupil premium funding in 2013 to compare their attainment in English and mathematics with that of their classmates without identifying individuals. Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding are making similar progress to other pupils, with the fastest progress evident in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in most lessons. Pupils of minority ethnic heritage make similar progress to their classmates.
- The most-able pupils are making rapid progress in Years 4, 5 and 6. They do well in most areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average in 2013 in writing and mathematics though somewhat better in reading. They are currently average in all three subject areas. Over time, a number of staffing difficulties had led to gaps in pupils' learning in Years 2 and 3 and slower progress than that in the other classes. The school put in place a programme of intensive support in English and mathematics which has led to an improvement in pupils' progress in recent months.
- The school has been very successful in raising standards in writing, especially in Years 4 to 6. Most children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1 are making good progress in

writing. The progress of the most-able in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 3 is sometimes restricted, because they are not given sufficient opportunities to produce lengthy pieces of writing.

- There has been an improvement in standards in mathematics and pupils are generally more confident now in their knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Not all pupils are confident yet in applying what they know about numbers to investigate and solve mathematical problems.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is mostly good with some that is outstanding in Years 4, 5 and 6. Improvements in teaching are evident in pupils' books, in the school's data and its evaluations of teaching as well as in the lessons observed.
- Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and explain tasks clearly to pupils. In most lessons, they give pupils work that provides a good level of challenge for everyone. Classrooms are attractive and teachers have high expectations for the way pupils present their work.
- High quality teaching in the class for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 is leading to a rapid improvement in standards. Pupils themselves show considerable insight into what it is about the teaching that is enabling them to make such fast progress. They said, 'All our levels have gone up quite significantly' because the teacher 'makes us want to learn' and he has given us an 'I can attitude'. They also focused on the way he talks to them in detail about their work and pushes them to think deeply, instilling in them a belief that outstanding progress is possible for everyone.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff carefully observe and record children's attainment and provide good opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning. A good range of learning activities indoors and out engages children's interest, and teachers use questioning well to get children to talk about what they are doing.
- Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage usually provides a suitable level of challenge for most children. In a lesson focusing on mathematical development, the teacher made her expectations for children's work and behaviour exceptionally clear. Her high expectations saw children counting in unison to 100 and readily sorting objects into different equal piles to find out about fractions. All children made rapid progress in this lesson and focused exceptionally well on the activities.
- Teaching is good in Year 1 and children in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 benefit from the small sized groups. Teaching assistants have a clear role, both in supporting and leading teaching sessions for part of the class so that the needs of different ages can be met.
- In the class for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, the teacher provides pupils with excellent guidance on how to achieve different National Curriculum levels. Clear information is displayed showing the level at which pupils are working, alongside targets about what they need to learn next. Pupils said, 'We constantly look at our target boards and try to reach the next level. If someone is doing better than us, we think about what they are doing that we could do to improve our work.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils are focused and engaged. They listen carefully, concentrate well and take an increasing pride in their work. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour makes a good contribution to the progress they make.
- Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly way and play well together at break times. When they come together as a whole school for assembly, pupils are well behaved and respectful.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and pupils interviewed talked about how much behaviour has improved over the last two terms. They say that everyone is now much clearer about what is expected and the teachers are 'firm but fair'. Just occasionally, a few pupils become restless when work is too easy for them.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and they know about how to keep themselves safe, for instance, when using the internet.
- Pupils say that there used to be some bullying but that there is none that they know about now. They are able to talk about different types of bullying, including physical bullying, name calling and cyber-bullying. They are confident that 'if anything happened, the school would sort it out'. They say that pupils are kind to each other and they show a good level of understanding about similarities and individual differences.
- Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the school's effectiveness and to take responsibilities, for instance, as members of the school council.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average. Their increased enjoyment of school is reflected in an improvement in the rate of attendance this year. To increase the rate of attendance, the school has been closely tracking individual pupil's attendance and reporting this to parents. It has also been publishing attendance figures for each class in its weekly newsletter.

The leadership and management are good

- Following a difficult period with many staff changes, there has been an increase in the rate of school improvement since September 2013. The school is being led and managed well and it is well placed to improve further.
- There has been good improvement in the areas for development identified at the previous inspection. The school has been particularly successful in raising standards in writing which are now well above average in Year 6. Leaders have also significantly raised expectations for behaviour so that pupils are much more focused on learning and have higher expectations for themselves.
- The headteacher has tackled past weaknesses in teaching and she is now receiving excellent support from the senior teacher in raising achievement and improving teaching. Inexperienced staff have received a great deal of support and regular checks on teachers' performance provide clear guidance on how to improve.
- Leaders, including those responsible for subjects, keep a close check on pupils' progress to

identify those who need extra help and to find out where there are gaps in learning. This is helping to provide pupils with equal opportunities and to prevent any discrimination. For instance, the decision to provide intensive support for pupils in Years 2 and 3 this year has helped to counteract past underachievement for these pupils.

- In this small school, teachers have responsibility for a number of subjects and specific aspects of the school's work. Staff have received leadership training and are, rightly, giving priority to raising achievement in key areas, for example, focusing on raising achievement in mathematics. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the school works very well with the staff of St Gilbert's Kindergarten.
- The range of learning opportunities is enabling pupils to make increasingly good progress. There is strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and educational visits contribute well to pupils' enjoyment and learning. Strong links with the church and careful attention to extending pupils' knowledge of other cultures make a particularly good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is making good use of its primary school sport funding to increase pupils' participation in sport and promote their health and well-being. It is using the money to provide equipment for indoor gymnastics, to fund specialist sports clubs and to create more opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport. Innovative and inspired plans have been drawn up, partly funded through the sport funding, to develop outdoor learning and greatly extend the school's Forest School involvement.
- The local authority has a detailed knowledge of the school's work. It has been involved, alongside the National Leader in Education, in supporting the headteacher and other staff since the previous inspection. Staff and governors have benefited from training and help in setting appropriately focused targets for development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Nearly all the governors have taken on their roles since the previous inspection and the governing body's effectiveness has improved a great deal in this time. Governors now hold leaders much more closely to account for pupils' progress and they have a clearer understanding of what data reveals about the school's performance. Governors regularly visit the school and check that appropriate action is being taken to move forward on identified developments. Individual governors have been involved in interviewing pupils, looking at their work, visiting classrooms and looking at best practice in other schools. Governors have a detailed knowledge about the quality of teaching and have been involved in tackling past underperformance and making sure the most effective teaching is rewarded. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met, including for the safeguarding of pupils.

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	441964

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	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Harding
Headteacher	Emma Hunt
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2013
Telephone number	01529 240465
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