

Great Ponton Church of England School

Mill Lane, Great Ponton, Grantham, NG33 5DT

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good because pupils make good gains in their attainment in every year group.
- Teaching is good. Staff use questions well, both to assess what pupils know and to encourage them to work things out for themselves.
- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership that focuses on improving teaching and drives the school forward. Governors are knowledgeable about and supportive of the school and so contribute to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of their social responsibilities and helping others less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils' exceptional attitudes to learning have a very positive impact on their progress. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they have an exceptionally clear understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Children in early years make good progress because they are developing very effective learning habits, such as staying on task, listening attentively and working together as a group.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While there is some high-quality marking in pupils' books, providing clear guidance as to what they need to do to improve, this good practice is not always evident across all classes.
- Standards in reading in Key Stage 2 have not improved as much as those in writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed learning in parts of eight lessons, taught by four teachers. This included one joint observation with the headteacher. The lead inspector also listened to several pupils read and looked at samples of recent work.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Discussions also took place with mixed-ability groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector took account of the views of 12 parents as noted on the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View). He also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. The lead inspector noted the 11 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The lead inspector observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring information, and minutes of governors' meetings. He scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes. Provision for the early years' children in Reception is in a full time class. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who are looked after, is below the national average.
- This proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for primary schools, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - giving pupils clear advice when marking their work, so that they always know what they need to do to improve
 - checking that pupils act on the advice they are given through marking.
- Accelerate further the progress pupils make in reading in Key Stage 2, by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to apply their reading skills both in English lessons and in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Teachers and governors are ambitious for the school to do well. The headteacher provides very determined leadership, promoting a clear focus on continual improvement. He drives school improvement, with a clearly articulated vision for the future, shared by the small staff, who take on management responsibilities as appropriate.
- The analysis of pupils' progress and accurate evaluation of the school's work provide all teachers, and the governing body, with a clear understanding of the school's performance, including the early years. This ensures that improvement planning focuses on identified weaknesses. The successful action taken to raise attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 2 demonstrates the school's capacity for continued improvement.
- The leadership of teaching is good and the school places a high priority on improving teaching through good-quality training. Checks on teachers' performance are rigorous. Leaders use information from lesson observations and from information about pupils' progress to set teachers targets for improvement. There is a clear understanding that decisions about promotion and pay rates are based on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- The school is working towards its preferred approach to assessment. A scrutiny of pupils' work and its assessment by teachers in both Key Stages 1 and 2 demonstrated many pupils' understanding of how well they had achieved and what they needed to do to improve. However, this high quality of assessment and marking is not completely consistent in all classes.
- The range of subjects and topics covered in all years is good. The curriculum recognises local, regional and global differences, including different cultures and beliefs, and it promotes an understanding of others' point of view. Planning promotes fundamental British values around democracy, liberty, and respect and tolerance of faiths and beliefs. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Information about what is taught in the school is published on the school website and meets statutory requirements.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also important in this Christian school. This small school emphasises social responsibility and helping others less fortunate. For example, the school sponsors a school in Sierra Leone and one in Ghana. Pupils throughout the year work hard to raise funds for these schools, as well as their other charity work including 'Children in Need'.
- The school's view of itself is accurate. School improvement plans reflect the correct priorities.
- The funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively and has helped to develop the role of the teaching assistants. The school evaluates its expenditure on the support provided through data showing how well pupils achieve. This shows that all groups, including disadvantaged pupils, are making similar progress to that of their classmates.
- School leaders ensure that different groups of pupils have an equal chance to succeed, and they tackle effectively any instances of discrimination.
- The school has allocated the primary school sports funding to good effect. There has been a particular focus on working alongside the Youth Sports Trust. In its role as a lead Health and Well-being Primary School the school is promoting health and well-being in this and other schools in the area. Pupils talk enthusiastically about sport activities available after school, which are already having a positive impact on many pupils' lifestyles and physical well-being.
- Leadership and management in the early years are good. The good achievement the small number of children have made and maintained during this academic year and evidenced in their learning journals during the inspection demonstrate this.

- Leaders, including governors, ensure the safety of the pupils is paramount and the school has an approach to safeguarding that is meticulous and caring at all times. As a result, the arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements
- The parents who responded to Parent View were unanimously positive about the work of the school.
- The local authority is fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and has worked well with the headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well informed and effective. It challenges school leaders and holds them to account for pupils' achievement. By using the data available, it compares school performance with that of schools nationally. Governors also strongly support the school and its leaders. They have a good insight into the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. They manage the performance of staff well and ensure that the salary progression of staff is justified by the outcome of pupils' progress and achievement. They also have an understanding of new National Curriculum requirements, including the rigour needed for assessment processes. They ensure that the curriculum promotes tolerance and respect and prepares young people positively for life in modern Britain. Governors check carefully on the use of additional funding in improving the achievement of the small number of disadvantaged pupils. The governing body oversees the management of finance and resources expertly. Governors rigorously check safeguarding practice and, as a result, safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The children develop their exemplary attitudes to learning in the early years, where they learn to follow instructions and listen to others. Throughout the school, pupils are proud of their well-presented work and are keen to share it with visitors. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning ensures they make more than expected progress over time.
- Pupils' behaviour outside the classroom is exemplary. Incidents of difficult behaviour are almost unheard of and school records support this.
- Pupils are respectful to their classmates and adults alike. 'Bronze Ambassadors', a 2012 Legacy Challenge initiative from the London Olympics, has strengthened older pupils' understanding of sporting values including friendship, respect and honesty. As a result, the vast majority of pupils respond immediately to instructions and their manners are exemplary.
- Attendance is above average and has been so over the past three years. The school's persistent absence during this same period has been below average.
- Pupils' work is always neatly presented, and pupils take an exceptional pride in themselves, their school uniform and their school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The pupils say they feel safe and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they have a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves safe outside school. They have a clear sense of road safety and they are very aware of the dangers of talking to strangers.
- Older pupils are particularly knowledgeable about the dangers of cyber-bullying and understand the importance of not sharing personal details online. Parents also believe that pupils are very secure in school.

- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and if it did occur, they know staff would quickly sort it out. School records support this. Pupils describe everyone as kind and that is why they like school so much. They also know that this helps them to learn and they are proud of their learning. The awareness of such positive attitudes also helps to contribute to school life, adult life and work.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have a clear understanding of all of their pupils' needs; pupils respond well to this care and guidance and make good progress as a result.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers provide a range of tasks that motivate their pupils and encourage them to want to succeed. Pupils are also keen to live up to the expectations of the adults around them and this helps them to make good progress. This was particularly noticeable in a literacy lesson, where pupils in Years 5 and 6 had the opportunity to practise their use of persuasive language techniques. The pupils were extremely enthusiastic to share their responses with their classmates. Throughout the lesson, they showed a clear understanding of the strategies needed to develop their work to reach the highest level.
- Teachers use time well in lessons, so that no learning time is lost. As a result, pupils settle quickly to their tasks, work productively and maintain high levels of concentration.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively. They give help which responds effectively to the accurate assessment they make of pupils' individual learning needs. This means that pupils of all abilities, including the relatively few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and the most able, make good progress in all subjects.
- Teaching in early years is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know the children well and frequently challenge them to begin thinking more deeply so that children make good progress over time.
- Teachers understand how to teach the skills of reading, writing and mathematics effectively. Consequently they help pupils build knowledge systematically. This helps pupils use these skills to support learning in other subjects.
- Over time, the teaching of reading is good. The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is also effective because of the additional support teachers provide for those who may be falling behind. Pupils say they enjoy reading, and they read confidently and with understanding. Teachers have identified the reasons for the recent dip in standards in reading, particularly in Key Stage 2, and have designed strategies to tackle this relative underperformance. Early indications are that the vast majority of pupils are now making good progress with reading.
- Pupils complete homework to a good standard and this gives them a strong platform for tackling work in the following lesson. Parents agree and are very supportive of the progress that homework helps their children to make.
- Teachers provide good-quality, constructive feedback to pupils verbally but written feedback, in the form of marking, varies. In the best practice, teachers' written comments show pupils what they need to do to improve their work and often contribute to the progress that pupils make. However, occasionally, marking does not result in prompt improvements because teachers do not always ensure that pupils act on the advice they receive.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start at the school with attainment typical for their age. They progress well and make good gains in their attainment through the school, including the most able. Cohorts are very small so comparison with national averages is unreliable. The school makes accurate internal assessments of how well pupils are doing. The high quality of pupils' recorded work in English and mathematics indicates that standards

continue to rise. Pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups.

- The most-able pupils achieve well because the school provides additional challenge and sets high expectations for what they can achieve.
- Results of the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 were close to the national average in 2014, and an improvement on the previous year.
- There were no disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs in Key Stage 2 in 2014. Such pupils in the lower school receive appropriate support and none fall behind. They progress equally as well as their classmates.
- The school has used additional funding very well to provide extra one-to-one support for disadvantaged pupils. Last year there were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 to comment on their progress in English and mathematics without risk of identifying individuals. However, throughout the school, they make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Children in Reception sit quietly when listening to stories and follow simple instructions. They recognise some letters and know some numbers. They build on these skills so, by the time they begin Year 1, they are ready to start the National Curriculum.
- Over time, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has been broadly average. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with writing being consistently the strongest subject.
- In Key Stage 2, mathematics has been a recent priority. School data and the work seen indicate that current pupils are making strong progress, with many working at levels above those expected for their age.
- In 2014 standards in reading in Key Stage 2 were not as high as the school had expected. The school has thoroughly investigated this. As a result it has been involved in initiatives in Key Stage 2 aimed at developing pupils' ability to infer more from their reading, further raising attainment in this key skill. Recent school information on progress in reading suggests a much stronger picture, with the vast majority of pupils now achieving well for their age.

The early years provision

is good

- Children's levels of skills and understanding on joining Reception vary from year to year. Usually they start with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. Many are able to listen to stories, follow simple instructions and say some number names in order. They make good progress, including the most able, and are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Well-planned activities are linked to children's interests and cover all areas of learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at identifying the children's next steps and closing the gaps in their understanding. The high-quality recording in children's 'learning journeys' (a collection of children's work and adults comments) means that their progress is regularly and accurately assessed.
- The early years' classroom and the outside learning area are very attractive. This stimulates children's interest and enjoyment of learning.
- During the school day, children carry out activities they choose for themselves, as well as working with adults. This ensures that children develop independence and curiosity. The variety of experiences are well planned and encourage children to practise skills such as counting and recognising letters so they can, for example, read their own name. This helps them make good progress.
- The number of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is small. Staff identify

their specific needs quickly so that these children make the same good progress as their classmates.

- The close partnership with parents ensures that children form secure bonds and develop confidence. They learn to share, take turns and care for one another's feelings. They behave well in class and move around the school sensibly.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Staff work well together. They have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development and use this knowledge to plan for improvement.
- Arrangements for keeping children safe are highly effective because teachers and teaching assistants are extremely conscientious monitoring at all times to ensure children are kept safe.

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	120602
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	449613

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	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Walton
Headteacher	Jon Clack
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2010
Telephone number	01476 530306
Fax number	01476 530306
Email address	Jon.clack@greatponton.lincs.sch.uk

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