

The Gedney Hill Church of England VC Primary School

North Road, Gedney Hill, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 0NL

Inspection dates 8–9 December 2015

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The vast majority of parents regard the school highly. 'The school is now a great asset to our village', reflects the views of many parents.
- The headteacher, working closely with the assistant headteacher, has ensured that the school has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- Leaders know the school inside out. They have a strong track record in bringing about improvements. The school is therefore well placed to continue to improve in the future.
- Governors also know the school well. They ask searching questions and are very keen to ensure that the school continues to provide the best for its pupils.
- Children enjoy and benefit from good-quality early years provision. They are well prepared for Year 1 and their later school life.
- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now much better than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are now consistently good. Staff show pupils how to overcome any difficulties they may have.
- Well-trained and effectively deployed teaching assistants play a strong role in helping all groups of pupils progress well.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are given high priority. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are robust and fully meet requirements. Pupils say they are well cared for and that they feel safe in school.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils are well prepared, both academically and socially, for the next stage of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although standards of writing are now much higher, chances are sometimes missed to develop writing skills and extended writing in other subjects. Pupils, especially older pupils, do not always present their work as well as they could.
- In mathematics, problem-solving is not taught as effectively as calculation and measures.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment in mathematics and writing by:
 - ensuring staff develop pupils' writing skills not only in English lessons, but also in other subjects
 - expecting all pupils, especially older pupils, to present their work well
 - introducing an effective system to teach pupils to solve mathematical problems.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, working in close partnership with the assistant headteacher, provides strong leadership and management. Middle leadership, especially in English, mathematics and the early years, is much improved and now effective.
- All leaders and other staff expect the best of pupils' behaviour and their learning. Pupils respond well to these high expectations.
- The school's formal federation with Shepeau Stow Primary School, its collaborative partnership with six other schools and the work of the local authority have done much to account for the school's considerable improvement over the last two years.
- Parents who have moved their children from other schools comment on how well their children are now progressing following their change of school.
- Leaders have a clear view of where improvement is needed and take action to make things better. For example, spelling was identified as a weaker aspect of writing. Staff have been trained to teaching spelling more effectively, the curriculum has been modified and standards of spelling have risen.
- Effective management of teaching and learning has ensured that the quality of teaching is now consistently good. Staff training for teachers and teaching assistants is of a high standard. Good systems are in place to ensure that staff learn from one another in the federation and collaborative partnership.
- Staff training is followed by careful checks by leaders to ensure that all understand and implement school policies and approaches. This has resulted in a consistent approach to such issues as how pupils' work is marked and corrected.
- Performance management is effective and teachers know that salary decisions are made in the light of the progress of pupils in their classes.
- The school is fully committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. Leaders make good use of pupil premium funding to support the small number of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they progress at the same rate as others and achieve well. The most-able pupils are also well catered for.
- Additional funding, such as primary sport funding, has been used well to extend pupils' participation in sport. The use of expert coaches has not only developed staff skills in teaching physical education and sports, but also extended the range of sports on offer.
- The school improvement plan is a useful document in guiding school improvement. However, the school recognises the need to use its recently revised assessment system to include in the plan clear and measurable criteria so that the effect of the plan on pupils' achievement can be evaluated.
- Regular meetings are held between senior leaders and each teacher. At these meetings, the progress and achievement of each individual pupil are reviewed and staff make plans for how any potential underachievement will be addressed.
- The school's curriculum is good. It is rich and varied. It gives suitable emphasis to developing basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, but not at the expense of other subjects. Pupils say that they enjoy their weekly Spanish lessons, for example.
- The curriculum is suitably modified to meet the needs of all learners. Consequently, the most-able pupils, pupils with disabilities, those with special educational needs and those who find learning more difficult all progress well.
- There is a good range of clubs and visits for such a small school. Pupils show good concern for the needs of others, for example, by raising funds for charities.
- Relationships and pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are very well led and managed. This has resulted in pupils' excellent behaviour and good personal development. The curriculum and the school's Christian ethos help pupils understand and adopt British values such as tolerance and respect for other ways of life.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The knowledgeable governing body carries out its role very effectively. Governors have worked closely with senior leaders to tackle weaknesses and to ensure a good pace of change. They check that funding is used to good effect. For example, they check that pupil premium spending results in disadvantaged pupils making good progress and that recent spending on a new approach to teaching spelling has had the desired effect.

- Governors receive concise and helpful reports from the headteacher about key aspects of the school’s work. They have good systems for checking the quality of provision for themselves so that they are not over-reliant on the information provided by the headteacher and other senior leaders.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching in the school and how the school continues to improve teaching. They ensure that performance management is effective and that staff undertake their roles effectively.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding procedures are very thorough and pupils’ safety is given the highest priority by governors and staff. Procedures and training are comprehensive and kept under regular review by school leaders, including governors.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Pupils learn well because the quality of teaching and assessment is good.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent relationships with pupils and meet their needs well. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They listen carefully when adults are talking and work hard when working independently.
- Although both classes have a wide age range, careful planning and organisation result in adults taking full account of the different starting points of pupils so that work is not too easy or too hard.
- Well-trained teaching assistants are very well deployed and provide good-quality support to pupils. They work with individuals or groups as needed and help pupils concentrate and learn well.
- Reading is particularly well taught throughout the school. Pupils use their well-developed knowledge of letters and sounds to read new words. Daily reading lessons and an effective home reading programme result in pupils of all abilities making good progress in their reading.
- The teaching of writing is much improved and standards of writing, especially spelling, are higher throughout the school. Pupils’ extended writing in English lessons is good, but in other subjects, chances are missed to undertake extended writing. The school has introduced an improved way of teaching handwriting and this is having a good impact on the handwriting and presentation of the work of younger pupils. Some older pupils, however, do not present their work as well as they could.
- In mathematics, the school has a clear and effective way of teaching calculation and number. However, the school has not developed an agreed approach to teaching pupils how to tackle problem-solving in mathematics. Consequently, although pupils make good progress in mathematics overall, problem-solving is the weakest aspect.
- Adults continually assess pupils’ learning to pick up any misunderstandings. Timely feedback is given to pupils and they are shown how to improve particular aspects of their work. Work is carefully marked and pupils show a clear understanding of where to concentrate their efforts. They are also usefully given time to correct or improve their work in the light of teachers’ marking.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good. Pupils feel very safe in school. They show a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and they say there is no bullying in their school. They trust and respect school staff and are confident that adults will tackle any incidents that arise.
- Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility. They carry out roles as play leaders, Reception class buddies, library helpers, mentors to other pupils, or school councillors.
- Attendance over the last few years has been below average. The school has strong procedures to reward and assure regular attendance. Since September this year, rates of attendance have risen well to above last year’s national averages, but this improvement is too recent to securely evaluate attendance as above average overall yet.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good. The strongest elements are their social and moral development. They relate very well to one another and show a clear understanding of right and wrong. The school appropriately plans to enhance pupils' cultural development by providing them with more experience of other ways of life and faiths through visits and visitors to school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils, parents and staff all say that the excellent behaviour in class and around school seen during the inspection is typical for their school.
- Pupils' manners are very good. They relate politely one to another, to staff and are able to hold mature and sensible conversations with visitors.
- Their excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to school and learning are a key reason why standards are rising.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points and achieve well throughout the school.
- Due to consistently good teaching, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has risen well since 2013 and standards in Year 6 in July 2015 rose to above-average levels in national assessments.
- Pupils' work and school records show that pupils currently in the school are making good progress in both classes and that standards are continuing to rise in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able are fully challenged. The school's accurate records and pupils' books show that more pupils throughout the school are attaining above the standards expected for their ages.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs progress well because teaching is well modified to meet the needs of each individual.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in the school is small and it is not possible to use national data to make a valid comparison between their progress and attainment and those of other pupils nationally or in the school. However, school records and pupils' books indicate that disadvantaged pupils do as well and sometimes better than other pupils in the school.

The early years provision

is good

- Staff have established a strong partnership with parents who are very positive about provision in the early years. They rate the arrangements to introduce their children to school and recognise that they settle in quickly and confidently. The school's good links with pre-school providers also help the school to quickly gain an accurate view of the needs of each child when they start school.
- At the time of the previous inspection, many children began Reception with knowledge and skills below those typical for their ages. This is not the case more recently. The majority of children currently in Reception and Year 2 (there are no pupils in Year 1) entered the school with expected knowledge and skills.
- Owing to consistently good teaching and the effective use of assessment by the teachers and teaching assistants, all pupils make good progress from their various starting points. They are thoroughly prepared for Year 1 and school life beyond.
- There are good systems for checking children's learning and for using this assessment information to fine-tune the ways that adults interact with each individual child to best meet his or her personal needs.
- Children behave very well indeed and respond well to adults' consistently high expectations. They work hard, concentrate well and enjoy their learning. They are taught how to keep themselves safe and act with care for the safety of others.
- Reading is particularly well taught and children make very good progress in their reading. They are very skilful in using their knowledge of letters and sounds, for example, to read words and captions in the classroom and in the outdoor learning area.
- The children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of interesting and exciting learning activities available and benefit from a very good adult-to-child ratio and lots of individual attention.

- Child protection and safeguarding requirements are fully met and parents recognise that their children are kept very safe. Staff know each child very well and individual needs are carefully catered for.
- Early years provision is well led and managed, by the headteacher, the early years leader based at Shepeau Stow Primary School and the class teacher. Adults work well as a team in the early years and children receive consistent teaching and guidance, whoever they are working with.

School details

Unique reference number	120548
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10001823

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Goose
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Alison Buddle
Telephone number	01406 330258
Website	www.gedneyhillschool.co.uk
Email address	alison.buddle@gedney-hill.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 October 2013

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average.
- Although recent data indicate that there is an average proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower this year. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- An unusually high proportion of pupils do not spend all their primary school years in this school. Last year, only half of the pupils who left in Year 6 began the school in the youngest class. Some who left in Year 6 in July 2015 had only been at the school a few terms.
- Recent data suggest that the proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is well above average. The proportion has reduced this year to average levels.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school entered a 'hard federation' with Shepeau Stow Primary School in September 2012. The executive headteacher and assistant headteacher lead both schools and the schools share a governing body. The school is also in a collaborative partnership with six other primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector saw teaching and learning in both classes in both mathematics and English, including a joint observation of a full lesson with the headteacher. In addition, a number of shorter visits were made to the early years and to see particular aspects, such as the teaching of spelling and reading, or pupils participating in support programmes. A range of other school activities including playtimes, lunchtimes and an assembly, were observed.
- Past and current work of pupils of all abilities in all year groups was scrutinised and some pupils were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff and with three members of the governing body.
- Documents, including plans for school improvement and reports showing the school's view of its own performance, safeguarding documents, and policies and records relating to personal development, behaviour, welfare, safety and attendance were inspected. Information on the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally was analysed. The school's records of pupils' progress were also inspected.
- The inspector held short discussions with 12 parents of a total of 18 children at the beginning of the second day of the inspection. The views of 21 parents who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire were also analysed, as were the results of a recent survey of parents' views carried out by the school in September 2015.
- The inspector received the views of staff through discussions and by analysing the seven responses to the inspection survey of staff views. The inspector also received the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

Roger Sadler, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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