

Gamston CofE (Aided) Primary School

Stanboard Lane, Gamston, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 0PE

Inspection dates	22–23 March 2016
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 school has greatly improved since the previous inspection due to more effective leadership by the headteacher and other senior leaders. As a result, pupil outcomes have improved.
- Governors are effective at holding the school to account. They closely monitor all aspects of the school's work, always having the interests of the pupils at heart.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the early years and are well prepared for transition into Year 1.
- The school is very inclusive. It is welcoming and friendly. Pupils and parents express their joy at being a part of it.
- Better teaching has improved pupils' achievement in all areas. Assessments are much more frequent and teachers move their pupils on at a quick pace throughout the year.
- Most pupils behave well. They are polite, kind towards each other and work collaboratively in lessons. They rightly feel safe and secure in school.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about British values.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all of the many improvements that have been made since the last inspection have yet become fully secure. For example, middle leaders need to take a fuller part in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility.
- On occasions, teachers do not accelerate learning during lessons. This includes ensuring that pupils fully understand what it is they are learning and how they are going to achieve it.
- Staff are not yet fully conversant with the school's new assessment system. It is not giving them the information they need to track pupils' progress effectively so that they can inform parents exactly which stage their children have reached in their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that pupils:
 - are clearer about what they are learning and the steps they should go through to succeed in each lesson
 - are making sufficient progress during lessons so that, if necessary, learning tasks can be reshaped or redirected to accelerate their learning.
- Develop the roles of middle leaders so that they monitor their areas of responsibility effectively and improve pupils' achievement.
- Ensure that assessment systems are fit for purpose by giving teachers, leaders, governors and parents accurate information about:
 - where pupils are in their developmental stage at any given point
 - where there are any gaps in their learning
 - what their next steps should be in learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

is good

- The school has improved since the last inspection and many of the areas requiring improvement have been successfully addressed. Pupils are now achieving well because of much stronger leadership across the school.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's improvement and is well supported by leaders, governors and staff. This includes a determination to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities throughout the school and that discrimination is not tolerated.
- The headteacher is using much more robust and rigorous systems to monitor the impact of the new curriculum and evaluate the practice seen across the school. As a result, teachers receive the appropriate support, guidance and training, which is now leading to higher standards.
- Others are now taking on areas of responsibility and are being held accountable by the governing body. The early years leader and the special educational needs coordinator have particularly benefited from training to gain the appropriate skills to lead their areas effectively. However, some middle leaders are not monitoring their areas thoroughly by, for example, visiting lessons, looking through pupils' books or attending meetings about pupils' progress.
- The special educational needs coordinator has done a lot in a relatively short amount of time to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive the correct support to enable them to thrive. He is passionate about these pupils achieving and works hard with other staff and parents to make this happen.
- The school has a broad and balanced curriculum that pupils thoroughly enjoy participating in. It is rich in variety and enables pupils to use the skills they acquire in mathematics and English across a wide range of subjects. It is further enriched by educational visits and residential periods at places such as Hagg Farm outdoor activity centre. Pupils also benefit from a range of extra-curricular clubs such as craft, film, cooking, cricket and football.
- The school promotes British values effectively. Pupils are proud of the fact that they have helped create the school's vision, values and mission statement which can be seen on entering the school. Pupils explained that they used British values as a starting point to create Gamston values. When asked what British values are, one child proudly announced, 'Well, they are what makes Britain Britain!'
- Governors and leaders think very carefully about how they spend the pupil premium that they receive for disadvantaged pupils. They monitor and evaluate the impact of this spending to ensure that it is being put to good use and raises achievement. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- The school spend their allocation of the primary sports funding effectively. They buy in quality sports coaches who teach the pupils and professionally develop staff. The funding has also enabled the school to access sporting events facilitated by the local secondary academy. All pupils attend these events and the school has also seen an increase in the proportion of pupils attending Gamston's own after-school sports clubs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although their spiritual development is a relative weakness.
- Parents recognise the improvements that have taken place in the school and are generally pleased with the way the school involves them in their children's education.
- The local authority and the diocese have worked hard to support the school over the last two years. They have provided training and brokered support from other schools, which has had a positive impact on the school and helped it to improve.
- The school's tracking system informs leaders and teachers which pupils are on track to reach their end-of-year target, but does not inform teachers and leaders where pupils are at any given point along that journey. It does not focus enough on pupils who need to catch up in order to achieve their end-of-year target.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are now relentless in their drive for improvement. They hold the school to account through their probing and questioning. They seek an independent view of the school by asking for performance information and getting outside bodies to validate the work of the school. In addition to this, they attend school on a regular basis as part of their monitoring procedures.

- Governors now focus much more on school improvement planning. They have identified areas for improvement as a direct result of the school's own self-evaluation and they ensure the leaders then carry out very specific action plans. Governors regularly review these action plans to measure their impact and review progress towards the headteacher's performance management targets every six weeks.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Stringent checks are carried out on all who come to work in the school. Safeguarding leaders and governors ensure that the relevant training and information is available to all staff in order to keep all pupils as safe as possible. Parents say that their children feel safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers know their pupils well and plan learning activities which, on most occasions, meet the pupils' needs and ensure that they make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. They talk positively about what they have learned recently in lessons and what they have learned in the past. Pupils say that they particularly enjoy investigations and making things. Teachers skilfully teach core skills in mathematics and English through such activities.
- Teachers use praise effectively and celebrate pupils' achievements, which makes pupils immensely proud and in turn makes them want to achieve more. Their work is celebrated by displays along the corridors and on the website. 'Writer of the Week' and special mentions in Friday assembly mean a great deal to the pupils.
- Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons as they are well directed by the teacher and know what to do.
- Pupils show that they can work with concentration for extended periods. Pupils use the many prompts and reminders of what they have previously been learning, on classroom walls and desk tops, to help them improve their work. This means that they do not have to interrupt the teacher for help, who may be working with a group of pupils.
- Homework is purposeful and relevant and extends what pupils learn in class. One parent commented that homework used to be 'fluffy' but it now serves a real purpose.
- Teachers follow the school's marking and feedback policy closely. This means that pupils are clear about how to improve their work, especially in writing.
- Teachers communicate well with parents and keep them informed through regular consultations. Parents comment that they know whether their child is on track, or not, to be where they should be by the end of the year. What parents do not know, though, is what stage their child is at now and what skills, knowledge and understanding are required to reach the next stage of their learning. Such 'targets' are not shared with pupils or parents. This limits what they can do to bring about rapid improvement.
- On occasions, pupils are not clear what they are supposed to be learning. Furthermore, pupils are sometimes not aware of the steps they need to take to achieve success by the end of the lesson.
- Teaching of the most-able pupils is good. Teachers challenge them appropriately in most subject areas and, as a result, they make good progress.
- At times, teachers do not sufficiently check on the progress of different groups of pupils during the lesson. They sometimes do not know how the pupils who are either working with the teaching assistant or working independently are doing. This means that the teacher cannot rectify misconceptions or move learning on more rapidly in a timely manner.
- A systematic and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) throughout the school has led to a sharp rise in standards. The equally improved teaching of punctuation, spelling and grammar has resulted in much stronger outcomes in this area for current pupils than in previous years.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities. The school council, which is democratically elected, makes decisions that are in the best interests of all the pupils.

- One pupil was rather to the point when explaining part of the role of the school council: 'We make sure that the pupils are getting things that the pupils want not just what the teachers think we should have.'
- Pupils report that bullying is rare, but are confident that it would be dealt with effectively if and when it occurred. Pupils feel that staff are very approachable and say that they could go to them with any problems, knowing that they would be listened to and helped.
- Careful planning ensures that pupils learn about being safe and healthy. For example, sport is heavily promoted within school and pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe online.
- Staff react quickly to address any safeguarding concerns. Parents talk positively about how approachable staff are with the 'open door policy'. One parent commented on how the school will go 'the extra mile'. Where staff have concerns about pupils and think they need extra support, they will lobby outside agencies until the pupils and their families receive the assistance the school feels they require.
- The school promotes pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem through activities such as residential trips, which are thoroughly enjoyed by all.
- Arrangements for children to start school are good and parents say they feel informed about their child's well-being and progress. The school has recently taken steps to admit children the term after their fourth birthday, which has had a positive impact on getting to know children and their families earlier.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attendance is good. Published attendance figures may suggest otherwise. However, these figures included pupils who had left the school but remained on role due to external factors. Pupils love coming to school, current overall attendance is good and a typical comment from a parent was that their children even want to come to school when they are ill.
- Pupils are respectful of others and their differing beliefs, views or cultures. They work collaboratively in class and are polite, kind and helpful to both their classmates and adults around school.
- Pupils are very clear about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. They have a good understanding of the reward systems in school, which acknowledge good behaviour and equally what the consequences will be if they do not act appropriately in school.
- Pupils arrive at school in a calm and orderly manner with a cheery disposition. They are quick to find their friends and play. From this point onwards they conduct themselves in a positive way throughout the rest of the school day – in lessons, at break, in the dining hall and as they leave at the end of the day.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Since the last inspection, standards have improved across the school, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2015, standards in reading and mathematics were above average. In previous years, these standards had been below average. Although standards in writing in 2015 were broadly average, they were much better than in 2014.
- Phonics teaching, which is now a real strength of the school, has led to much-improved outcomes. Less than one fifth of pupils achieved the required standard in the end-of-Year 1 phonics check in 2013. This was well below average. In 2014, three quarters achieved the standard and in 2015 all Year 1 pupils achieved the required standard.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2015, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were all well above average. This was a marked improvement on previous years. Spelling, grammar and punctuation outcomes were below average. However, current performance information shows that this is also now improving.
- The proportion of pupils who made expected progress from the end of key stage 1 in 2011 to the end of key stage 2 in 2015 was well above that seen nationally. In fact, the entire cohort made the progress that is typically expected of them. The proportions of pupils who exceeded this amount of progress were also well above those seen nationally in writing and mathematics.
- To comment on the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability would risk identifying them in such a small school. However, the progress of these pupils seen during the inspection would indicate that they are making good progress from their individual starting points.

- The most-able pupils all make at least good progress across the school. This is because they are set challenging work.
- Because of the uncertainty in the school's tracking data, much time was spent during the inspection analysing pupils' books. These clearly demonstrate good progress across all subjects, but particularly in English. For example, some pupils at the beginning of the year were writing basic 'statement' sentences and were being given instructions by the teacher to improve their work by using full stops and capital letters. However, by March they were writing complex sentences, using commas in a list, accurately using speech marks and exclamation marks and making their writing more lively with adjectives and adverbs.

Early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress through the early years from their individual starting points. Children who enter with attainment typically below that expected for their age often make accelerated progress and where they do not quite meet the age-related expectations for the end of Reception, they receive effective support in Year 1. Most children are ready for the move to Year 1.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The early years leader knows the children very well and has high aspirations for them. The early years team have established good links with parents to ensure these aspirations can be met.
- There are good arrangements to support children when they start school and move into Year 1. The early years leader works very closely with parents and has run initiatives to help parents understand how to assist their child's learning at home.
- Record-keeping is exemplary. Staff track children's progress carefully and record their achievements well in 'learning journey' profiles, which are shared with parents. These profiles clearly explain the children's progress and allow staff to plan appropriate next steps in learning for the children and to share these with their parents.
- Teaching is good and promotes children's independence from the start. In a phonics lesson, for example, immediately after input from the teacher, the children were asked to go and find their 'phonics bags' and take them to the table where they would be carrying out their learning activity. This was not done for them – the expectation was that they would independently gather the required resources and sit themselves down, which they did quickly and obediently.
- Teaching staff carefully think out learning activities so that children can learn and explore with or without the direct intervention of an adult. For example, one child was busily building a cube out of magnetic components and wanted to do so independently, without any interference from an adult. In the early stages of putting the square faces together he was asked how many square faces he would need. 'Five,' he replied without even looking up. A couple of minutes later, as his cube neared completion, he could be heard to say to himself, 'Six, actually!', a discovery that he had made on his own.
- The early years leader deploys other adults well and they all lead activities that are well resourced. The adults question the children skilfully to test their understanding and further their learning. On occasions, though, there is not sufficient reference to what children are actually learning throughout the session to ensure that children remain clear as to what it is they are achieving.
- Children work safely in the early years. They behave well. They handle resources with care and adults ensure they are adequately supervised.

School details

Unique reference number	122801
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10009132

This inspection 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	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Brown
Headteacher	David Fotheringham
Telephone number	01777 838631
Website	www.gamstonschool.com
Email address	office@gamston.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 February 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. There are three classes in the school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national figure. This additional government funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly average.
- There have been a number of staff changes in recent years.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In the early years, children attend part time in the Nursery and full time in Reception.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in parts of 12 lessons. All of these sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke to pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. Two different groups of pupils were also interviewed. The inspector also listened to some younger pupils read.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work during lessons, and also looked through a selection of books in great detail over the course of the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to some parents before school, considered the 29 views expressed through 'Parent View' and within emails, which were received.
- The inspector interviewed members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and with two other leaders from within the school.
- The inspector analysed a wide range of school documents which were both on the school website and in school. These included the school's own monitoring of teaching and learning, current performance information, records of behavioural incidents, the school's own self-evaluation documentation, school improvement planning and safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection team

Mark Mallender, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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