

Guyhirn Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

High Road, Guyhirn, Wisbech PE13 4ED

Inspection dates	6–7 July 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

- Guyhirn Primary is a good school. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher is the catalyst for change. She has improved the quality of teaching so most pupils achieve well.
- The headteacher, assistant headteacher, staff and governors share a strong determination to drive further improvement.
- Pupils' progress is good because teachers make sure lessons are neither too hard nor too easy.
- Pupils' well-being and mental health are at the heart of the school. Pupils say they feel happy, safe and well cared for by staff. As a result, they thrive.
- The school has rightly earned a reputation for enabling pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to thrive.
- Skilled teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They welcome responsibility and play a full part in shaping the future of their school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They look after one another. The school is a harmonious community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Early years provision is good. Pre-school and Reception work effectively together. As a result, children get off to a positive start, make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The relationship with parents is strong. Parents recognise the improvements in the quality of education provided for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not insist on the highest standards of presentation and handwriting.
- Some Year 5 pupils have gaps in their learning that the school is yet to resolve.
- Attendance, while improving, is still too low.
- A small proportion of older pupils do not display positive attitudes to learning, and this is detrimental to their progress.
- Foundation subject leadership is yet to make a significant impact on standards in those subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - have the highest expectations for the standard and quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work.
- Enable Year 5 pupils to have the targeted support necessary to close their gaps in learning, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Further improve older pupils' attitudes to learning so they make better progress by ensuring that:
 - pupils try hard and produce their best work
 - staff consistently promote the qualities of good learning, such as resilience and perseverance, and teach pupils what they expect pupils to do if they are stuck.
- Develop the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is as good as that in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Seek further ways to intervene effectively and further improve pupils' attendance so that persistent absence is reduced and all groups of pupils attend equally well.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- School leaders, governors, staff and parents share a strong determination to see the school build further on the recent improvements. One typical parent commented, 'The school has come on in leaps and bounds in the last two years and I'm excited to see what is yet to come.' Staff agree. All responding to Ofsted's survey believe the school has improved since its previous inspection.
- Staff and pupils' actions promote the ethos of 'to live, to learn, to love, together' in the daily life of the school. Everyone strives to do their best and respect themselves, each other and their school. As a result, Guyhirn Primary is inclusive, harmonious and aspirational for all pupils.
- School leaders, including governors, clearly understand what the school does well, and where improvement is needed. Future plans spell out clearly and accurately what needs attention.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher lead the school effectively, drawing on their complementary skills. Priority has rightly been given to improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics. Leadership of other subjects, however, is very much in its infancy.
- Staff morale is high. Much is asked of staff, but equally they are given the tools to do the job. High-quality training, for example, ensures that teaching assistants confidently teach programmes to give struggling pupils extra help. Staff responding to their survey are proud to be members of staff at the school, and believe leaders do all they can to ensure that staff are motivated, respected and effective.
- Pupils' positivity is equally high. Fundamental to the headteacher's belief, shared by staff, is that 'happy children learn best'. While rightly driving standards of reading, writing and mathematics up, the headteacher is equally passionate about ensuring the well-being and mental health of pupils.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Every pupil is known as an individual and offered help closely matched to their needs. Parents are fully involved. This is highly effective because parents use the same approaches at home as staff use in school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Enrichment is strong: most topics include either a visit or a visitor to bring extra clarity to pupils' studies. Pupils spoken to said they remember what they learned on these occasions particularly. For example, Year 4 worked with a drama specialist to write and perform a play about a child victim of cyber bullying. This was clearly powerful in getting the message across to them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils' clear sense of 'faith' is matched by their respect for, and interest in, different beliefs. They speak, for example, of their awe when they visited a Hindu temple. They enjoy a range of cultural experiences, such as playing African drums.
- Pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain is promoted effectively. In weekly 'Modern Britain Mondays', they learn about and discuss British and world issues, and what they mean to them in their daily lives.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is strong. Pupils' views about their school are regularly sought and considered. For example, parents' association representatives sometimes attend school council meetings to hear how pupils would welcome their support. This promotes pupils' understanding of democracy.
- Leaders effectively target the use of pupil premium funding. Eligible pupils generally make good progress in their academic development because their needs are accurately assessed and the right extra help given. All gain from wider curriculum opportunities, too. Their personal development is well supported. Effective specialist help fully meets the emotional needs of a small but significant proportion.
- Leaders' prudent use of primary school sports funding benefits pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy a wider range of opportunities. They understand the benefits of exercise to healthy living. They participate enthusiastically. The school is on track to have nine in every 10 participate in sports clubs by the end of the year. Pupils live close to water and, from an early age, learn to swim. Pupils and staff benefit from specialist sports coaches. Pupils learn new techniques, staff how to teach sports more effectively.
- Links with local schools are strong. Pupils regularly participate in competitive sports. Staff work closely together in a range of ways, for example to check the accuracy of their assessment of pupils' work.
- Both the local authority and the diocese play important roles in supporting and checking the work of the school. The headteacher benefits from advice and guidance to support school improvement.
- The school succeeds in its stated aim to make parents an integral part of the school community. Parents particularly credit the headteacher. One said, 'She has turned the school around; there is a lovely atmosphere.' The overwhelming majority responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors' passion for the school is self-evident. Their determination to see it thrive, provide pupils with high-quality education and take a central place in the village life is very strong.
 - Governors' effective use of each member's skills enables the body as a whole to be very efficient. A termly cycle of school visits gives governors valuable first-hand information about the school's work. In addition, roles are shared so the body as a whole is never dependent on one person.
 - Checks on the progress of pupils are analysed carefully to ensure that pupils do well, and to question and challenge leaders if they do not.
 - Governors oversee the performance of staff, including teachers, rigorously. Decisions about pay increases are based on a wide range of evidence.
 - Governors fully understand the importance of balancing the budget and clear financial planning. For example, local businessmen with a good understanding of managing budgets check spending, including additional funding, to ensure that the school achieves good value for money.
 - Governors have learned the lessons of the past, particularly the adverse effect on the school of unexpected and prolonged staff absence. With the headteacher, they have put in place sensible plans to help overcome anything similar in the future.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders and governors ensure that all staff and governor training is up to date and that the school fully complies with the latest safeguarding guidance. Governors and school staff are fully aware of their duty to keep pupils safe. The school clearly explains to parents its role in safeguarding their children. All parents responding to Parent View agree their children feel safe at school and are well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Areas for improvement highlighted then have been addressed successfully. For example, work given to all pupils, including the most able and those who struggle, is neither too hard nor too easy.
- Mutual respect is the basis of the positive relationships in all classrooms. All staff demonstrate the school's ethos of 'to live, to learn, to love, together' so pupils have clear role models.
- Accurate assessment, used effectively, ensures that teachers know their pupils' capabilities and what they have learned and understood previously. This information is used well to organise their next activities.
- Planning is clear, comprehensive and the basis of good lesson structure. Given that all classes include at least two year groups, teachers ensure that all ages and abilities are catered for.
- Teachers give pupils accurate and regular feedback, both through what they say and their marking of pupils' written work. Pupils respond positively, especially to their teachers' suggested improvements.
- Questioning is used effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully ask questions to encourage pupils to think for themselves, reason and deduce their own answers.
- Year 6 pupils have benefited from extra high-quality teaching to make very rapid progress. They say, 'Our tutor is really good at explaining things. She makes us do them for ourselves, so we learn.'
- Teaching assistants are effective. Good training means they fully understand the programmes they use, for example to give extra help to struggling pupils.
- The teaching of speaking and listening is effective. Pupils learn the skills associated with being 'positive listeners' and apply them well. From an early age, pupils are expected to speak clearly with good diction.
- Reading skills are taught well. Well-trained staff teach phonics (the link between letters and sounds) effectively. Pupils clearly enjoy reading and can talk knowingly about a range of authors and genres.
- The teaching of writing is much improved. Improvements in reading mean that pupils know a wider range of styles and approaches to writing, and sometimes use them to good effect in their own writing. Teachers present tasks in imaginative and engaging ways, so pupils are 'hooked' into wanting to write. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught well, a recent improvement, due to clearer teaching.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Staff fully adhere to the new calculations policy so skills develop methodically through the school. Regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills to reason and problem solve deepen their understanding.
- Effective use of homework enables pupils to practise basic skills, such as reading. Pupils speak proudly of the recent projects, such as 'Sporting heroes', they have researched. Their work is of a high standard in content and presentation. Parents' views are regularly sought. As a result, the balance between consolidating prior learning in class and researching new learning will be adjusted.

- Good staffing levels mean that pupils enjoy extra help during most lessons, especially mathematics and writing. This can be very helpful. However, some older pupils are overly dependent on adults. When given an activity to do for themselves, or when stuck, they sit and wait for help.
- While teachers demonstrate high expectations of the content of their pupils' work, they accept much more variable handwriting and presentation of work.
- All parents responding to Parent View and expressing a view agree their children are well taught and making good progress. They added, however, that the high teacher turnover has been disruptive. One parent said, 'There was no real routine; my child got used to one thing, then it changed.'
- All pupils responding to their survey agree that teachers help them do their best, and that they enjoy learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Overwhelmingly, parents responding to Parent View feel their children are happy at school.
- Younger pupils' good attitudes to learning positively impact on their achievements. They want to learn and persevere with hard work. Some older pupils demonstrate similar attitudes. However, others give up too easily and wait for an adult to help.
- Older pupils welcome opportunities to help those younger than themselves, and see this as a privilege not a chore. For example, they act as play leaders and look out for lonely pupils at playtimes. Members of 'eco-club' look after the school, provide homes for birds and animals, and water the plants. One young child said, 'We should be thankful and look after what God has given us.'
- Pupils with low self-esteem or poor social skills are helped by pupil-led groups who find ways to support vulnerable pupils through their challenges.
- The school succeeds in its aim to put pupils 'firmly at the centre of everything we do and every decision we make'. Pupils have a say in many aspects of school life that impact on their schooling.
- Assemblies are special occasions. Some are run by pupils themselves, for example organising the celebration of one another's achievements. This includes a 'lucky dip' for pupils who have attended all week, pupils' own idea to improve attendance. This group also inspects classrooms and awards the 'tidy tiger' to the class with the neatest room, reinforcing life skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive because they are happy and content. For example, some benefit from excellent use of specialists, including therapy. Parents are very positive, for example 'he is calmer, able to concentrate better' and 'therapy teaches coping strategies'.
- Pupils' thorough understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe is promoted very effectively through many relevant activities. For example, because they live so close to water, and because lorries are relatively frequent where they live, pupils are taught what to look out for and how to avoid putting themselves in harm's way. Pupils receive regular reminders too, such as how to use the internet safely.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The new approach builds empathy for others, and an understanding of how our actions can impact on them. There have been no exclusions in the last four terms.
- Every parent responding to Parent View believes the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved. Of those expressing an opinion, every parent also agrees that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- Pupils' understanding of right from wrong is clear. The school's approach, to teach them self-discipline, is effective. They understand and comply with the school's behaviour approach and procedures.
- The care provided for pupils is exemplary. Staff believe that pupils must be nurtured if they are to thrive at school. Every parent responding to Parent View agrees that their children are well cared for.
- Staff know pupils as individuals, and use this skilfully to tailor provision. For example, teachers have discussions with pupils individually, asking questions such as, 'How do you learn best?'
- Staff and pupils also write the 'pupil profile' to discuss with parents. This gives parents a full picture of their children's school life, including important aspects such as attendance.
- Pupils say incidents of bullying are very rare. Every pupil responding to their survey strongly agrees that they feel safe in school, and that there is an adult at school they can talk to if they are worried.

- Attendance has improved in the recent past, but remains below average. The school does a great deal to encourage good attendance and punctuality. However, there remain a small number of pupils who are regularly absent. This impacts on their achievements. School data shows that every year these pupils fall a further term behind other pupils. This group also includes some eligible for additional support, who consequently do not gain from the extra investment.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. The strong focus on improving the quality of teaching has eradicated the variations in pupils' progress reported at the previous inspection.
- The school's checks on progress, and the quality of work in pupils' books, show that the vast majority of pupils now make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. These improvements are the result of leaders taking effective action.
- Leaders' thorough assessment identified gaps in learning in the eldest class. The inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' progress reported at the two previous inspections mean that, even though teaching is now good, it has not been over time. This particularly affects these older pupils who have been in the school longer and have a legacy of lower standards. High staff turnover has also been a factor.
- Leaders and governors moved swiftly to provide extra teaching for Year 6. In effect, each of this small group received personalised teaching, tailored precisely to their needs. Misconceptions were spotted and corrected immediately, gaps in learning filled. They were taught how to tackle problems, and given the time to figure them out for themselves. As a result, these pupils made rapid progress and achieved well.
- Year 5 have similar gaps in their learning. They currently make good progress, but it is not the quicker progress they need to catch up. As a result, they remain behind where they should be at this age.
- This year, every Year 1 pupil reached or exceeded the expected standard in the phonics screening. Last year the figure was nine in every 10 pupils. Over time, the proportion has increased because of good-quality training for all staff teaching phonics, and the greater involvement of parents.
- Year 2 outcomes are similarly positive. All pupils reached or exceeded the level expected for their age in reading and science. In mathematics, the figure was nine in 10. In writing, it was three quarters. Writing was lower because the recent improvements leaders have put in place are still to be fully embedded.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress similar to that of their peers. If they struggle, they receive extra help tailored to their needs. If they excel, they are given harder work.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, although often from lower starting points. Accurate assessment means that these pupils have work that is neither too easy nor too difficult, an improvement since the previous inspection. Extra help is used well. In mathematics, equipment is used effectively to help pupils visualise, understand better and move from the concrete to the abstract.
- The most able pupils make good progress, too. These pupils regularly receive harder work that challenges them sufficiently. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum, too, gives them opportunities to pursue their interests and curiosity and deepen their understanding.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children enter pre-school with skills and knowledge typical for their age. A small but increasing proportion enter with speech, language and communication needs. Children settle quickly and make good progress because activities are closely matched to their needs and interests. This good progress continues in Reception. In 2016, three quarters of the children reached or exceeded a good level of development.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Well-trained staff effectively meet their speech, language and communication needs. The most able children particularly benefit from working alongside Year 1.
- Pre-school and Reception work very closely together. This is of enormous benefit to children on many levels. For example, children regularly learn and play together. Younger children often learn more quickly because they watch and follow the example of older children. When the time comes to move to the older class, pre-school children are already familiar with the staff and their new surroundings. Equally, Year 1 pupils enjoy familiar surroundings and benefit by learning from the staff who know them very well.

- Every day, children all come together for an energetic start. They learn to listen to instructions and move as a group: for example, quickly and cleverly forming circles, or changing direction in unison.
- The structure and organisation of the day is clear to children, who quickly learn what is expected of them. Pre-school children know that they will start by discussing the morning's activities, and making choices and decisions about what they do. They know that the 'helper of the day' will have extra responsibilities.
- Children's good understanding of themselves as learners enables them to reflect on their day. 'I am proud. I learned to skip' and 'I had a go at my literacy and kept going' were two typical comments.
- Children's personal development is strong. In pre-school, for example, children understand turn-taking. If an activity is popular and every position taken, they turn the timer over, signalling to those on the activity that they have a fair but fixed time left.
- Inside and out, children enjoy many stimulating activities. They immerse themselves in the wide range of learning opportunities. They sustain interest and persevere until they master whatever skill they choose to pursue, such as shooting baskets. They practise alone and extend further skills taught by staff. For example, a technique taught to them to retell stories in pictures becomes a playground chalk map of a familiar and much-loved story.
- Teaching is effective. Children respond well to the teacher's high expectations, for example that they use 'because' not 'cos' when answering a question. Vigilant pre-school staff look for any and every opportunity to develop and reinforce children's language. Skilled Reception class teaching assistants effectively support children's learning because they are fully briefed on the day's activities. Staff ensure children's safety with constant vigilance and regular reminders, for example how to carry equipment. Occasionally, staff do not recognise when the most able children, particularly, understand and are ready to move on with their learning.
- Learning journeys accurately track the progress of each child in each area of learning. Parents and children themselves add their own contributions. Parents particularly value the 'workshops', practical tips on how to support their children's learning of key skills at home, including number and phonics.
- Relationships with parents are very positive. School staff establish strong relationships earlier because they first meet parents when their children enter pre-school.
- Leadership is very effective. All staff benefit from the leaders' expertise. They share training, so that approaches used in Reception can start in pre-school. Staff collectively check each child's progress, so all staff are aware of their achievements and next steps in learning. Clear plans exist to further develop provision, particularly encouraging children to be more willing to 'have a go' and offer their own ideas.

School details

Unique reference number	110806
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10011809

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Spencer
Headteacher	Jade Betts
Telephone number	01945 450247
Website	www.guyhirn.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	office@guyhirn.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 May 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- All three classes in the school are mixed age: Reception and Year 1, Years 2 and 3 and Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is well above average. This is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- The overall proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- A pre-school is housed in the building. It is managed and run by the governing body.
- The many changes in staffing reported at the previous inspection have only recently been resolved. After a period of uncertainty, the school now has a permanent headteacher. The assistant headteacher and one full-time class teacher are also permanent. One class continues to be taught by a temporary teacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classrooms. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or the assistant headteacher. In addition, the inspector observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspector looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector observed pupils in other activities and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers and governors.
- The inspector met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The views of 23 parents who responded to Parent View were taken into account. The inspector also held informal discussions with parents. The inspector also considered the views of 19 members of staff and 52 pupils who each responded to their respective online surveys.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documents and information. These included the school development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. The inspector also looked at arrangements for, and records of, safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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