

Gayton Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121071
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	291992
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Grant
Headteacher	Mrs Melanie Duggan
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001
School address	Lynn Road Gayton King's Lynn Norfolk PE32 1PA
Telephone number	01553 636267
Fax number	01553 636267

Age group	4–8
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves pupils from the village of Gayton and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and only two speak English as an additional language. Children's attainment on entry is generally below that expected of four-year-olds. Although the number with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average for a school of this size, relatively high proportions in particular year groups cause standards to vary from year to year because the year groups are so small. There has been a high turnover of staff, including the appointment of a new headteacher, during the last three years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Gayton CofE First School gives its pupils a good education and provides good value for money. The school has the strong approval of parents, one of whom commented, 'I am 100% happy that my children attend this school'. After a period of unsettled staffing, which caused standards to fall, the headteacher has successfully built a stable team of committed and able staff. Teachers and support staff work well together. They use the school's improved systems for tracking progress effectively to meet pupils' needs. Teaching and learning are now consistently good and, as a result, pupils' achievements and the standards that they attain have got better and are good.

Children in the Reception class do well. For many, starting points are below those normally expected of four-year-olds. Nevertheless, by the time that they move into Year 1, most have attained the early learning goals and are well prepared for their work in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Years 1 to 3 continue to make good progress. Overall standards at the end of Years 2 and 3 are above average. Pupils do particularly well in reading. The school has worked hard to improve pupils reading and the results that are now coming through demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement. However, standards in writing are currently lower than other core subjects, because fewer pupils attain or exceed the expected standards for their age and so this remains an area for improvement.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They result in extremely positive attitudes, excellent behaviour and a quality of response that is a key factor in the good standards that they achieve. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because much of the teaching is lively and engaging. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Effective pastoral care, along with clear guidance on both personal and academic development, builds pupils' self-esteem and confidence. As a result they readily rise to the challenge to do their best. Procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet current requirements. Staff promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to a high standard. Pupils receive a good grounding in how to be safe. Positive attitudes and values, along with secure basic skills, prepare pupils well for their on-going education and for later life.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school premises restrict the scope of outdoor learning for children in the Foundation Stage. However, pupils' excellent take-up of healthy activities does much to offset limitations in the physical education (PE) curriculum caused by the lack of a school hall. The school is upgrading its resources and facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) but much remains to be done to ensure that pupils benefit from the use of ICT in all subjects.

Leadership and management are good. The school is going from strength to strength because the headteacher ensures that everybody is 'pulling in the same direction'. There are secure systems for evaluating the school. Governors, as well as staff with management responsibilities, have begun to gather first hand information. Their rapidly growing understanding of relative strengths and weaknesses gives the school a good capacity for further improvement. However, this work needs to extend to a systematic monitoring of standards and quality by all staff and governors in order to focus the school's improvement planning more tightly on issues that will drive up standards even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that all pupils with the ability to attain or exceed nationally expected levels reach their potential.
- Strengthen provision for pupils to use ICT as an aid to learning in all subjects.
- Give subject leaders and governors a more prominent role in monitoring standards and quality, so that they are better able to contribute to school self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievements and the standards that they attain are good. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start and so most attain the standards normally expected of five-year-olds. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 to 3. Standards in comparison with schools nationally vary from year to year because year groups are very small and the school's average test scores are significantly affected by the performance of just one or two pupils. Nevertheless, standards are generally above average at the end of Years 2 and 3. In the 2006 national tests, overall standards were significantly above average at the end of Year 2. Standards in reading were exceptionally high because all pupils attained the expected level for their age and almost half of all pupils attained the above average Level 3. Most pupils made good progress, although one or two potentially able pupils did not do quite as well as they should in writing and mathematics. Pupils' current work and the school's tracking data indicate that 2007 standards are lower. Reading remains the strongest of the core subjects and, although standards in writing and mathematics remain a little above average, fewer pupils than in 2006 are attaining or exceeding the expected standards for their age, particularly in writing. However, this still represents good achievement and progress over time, because these pupils started from a lower baseline on entry to the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attendance rates are exceptionally high. Because levels of moral and social development are excellent, impeccable behaviour, courtesy and mutual respect are in evidence. Spiritual development is good. Pupils are sensitive to things of beauty and to the feelings of others. Staff broaden pupils' horizons, for example, by sharing their experiences of other lands and cultures and by giving them opportunities to learn about the lives of people in countries such as Burundi, for whom pupils raise money to help fund a new school. Pupils thoroughly understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and this is reflected in increasing numbers of pupils walking or cycling to school and in excellent levels of participation in sports. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example by dealing assertively with those who upset them. Pupils make a positive contribution to school and community life by their participation in the school council and by entertaining local elderly residents and sharing harvest gifts with them. Positive attitudes, along with good basic skills, provide a secure foundation for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are lively and engaging although, occasionally, introductions go on too long and leave too little time for pupils to work independently. Teachers make good use of assessment information to track pupils' progress and to inform them about targets that have been set. Teachers' expectations are, in most respects, suitably high. Pupils' targets are challenging and, because lessons are geared to enabling pupils to meet their targets, these are central to the good progress that most pupils make. However, although teachers have begun to introduce activities for the most able pupils, these are not yet evident in all lessons. Teaching assistants give effective support to all pupils, but especially to those who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties or disabilities. Teaching is most effective when teachers and learners contribute to lessons equally. This is often the case because teachers manage pupils well and successfully instil patterns of positive classroom behaviour that contribute to the overall quality of pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, although opportunities for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage are limited by the school's lack of a separate facility for this purpose. There is a sound emphasis on developing the skills of literacy and numeracy. The school is currently improving its resources and facilities for ICT and an on-going priority is to train staff and to embed the use of this technology as an aid to learning in all subjects. The school has made determined efforts to expand provision for PE, but the need to take pupils to an off-site facility for much of this takes time away from other activities. Staff modify the curriculum effectively to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils benefit from a good range of visits, visitors and special events, such as the making of a Roman museum, which give purpose to pupils' work and add to their enjoyment of learning. Staff do much to foster pupils' personal development. However, though highly successful in its outcomes, this provision is not planned as systematically as the academic curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for care, guidance and support is good. There are thorough arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Checks on the suitability of staff and procedures for child protection are rigorous and fully meet current requirements. The school takes sound steps to minimise potential risks to pupils and staff but there is scope for governors to check more regularly that safe practice is the norm. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that staff deal quickly and effectively with any incidents that occur. Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem because teachers and supervisory staff attend to their needs and readily give guidance in matters of personal and academic development. Staff set targets to guide pupils' learning and, through constructive marking and dialogue, ensure that pupils understand how to improve their work. Teaching assistants give sensitive support, which enables pupils with learning difficulties to progress at a similar rate to most others.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. After a period when disruptions to staffing had a negative impact on pupils' progress, the headteacher has successfully built a stable team. Staff share the headteacher's vision for the school and together they have improved standards and achievement. The headteacher's example sets suitably high standards for staff to follow. Her monitoring ensures that staff receive professional support and that weaknesses are remedied. The leadership provided by other staff and governors is going from strength to strength and so gives the school a good capacity for further improvement. However, school self-evaluation and planning for school improvement are still not as effective as they could be. This is because subject leaders are not yet contributing fully to the monitoring of standards and quality and governors do not collect enough first hand information to enable them to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Gayton CofE First School, Kings Lynn, PE32 1PA

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to the school councillors and others about all of the good things that you do there.

This is what I found out about your school.

- Almost all of you behave extremely well, work hard in your lessons and make good progress.
- You all get on extremely well together, look after one another and do lots to make the school a better place.
- You thoroughly enjoy all of the activities that there are for you and most of you are growing up to be really active and healthy.
- Mrs Duggan, the other staff and governors are working hard to improve the school.

In order to help, I have asked Mrs Duggan and the other adults to do three things.

- I have asked them to find ways to help you to do even better with your writing.
- I have asked your teachers to plan as many ways as possible for you to use the new computers and whiteboards in all lessons.
- I have asked the teachers and governors to check more regularly on how well you are all doing, so that they can plan ways to help you do even better.

I hope that you all continue to work hard and do well at Gayton.

With best wishes

Glynn Storer

Lead inspector