

Gainford CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114222
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	311520
Inspection dates	16–17 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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 on roll	
School	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andie Mackay
Headteacher	Mr Howard Blindt
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Low Road Gainford Darlington County Durham DL2 3DR
Telephone number	01325 730274
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Gainford Church of England Primary School is a small school situated in a rural area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below that found nationally. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. All pupils are of White British background.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Gainford Church of England Primary offers a good standard of education to its pupils. They are well cared for and make good progress because teaching is good. It is a school at the heart of the community that cares deeply for its pupils and gives them good care and support. The school's reputation is good and parents appreciate the way teachers help their children to feel safe and secure in school.

Children start Reception with levels of skill and knowledge well above those usually found in children of this age. They make good progress in the Reception class, particularly in communication, language and literacy. This good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. The school's results in the 2006 national assessments for seven-year-olds were well above average. Standards in mathematics have been above or significantly above average since 2003. Standards in writing were average and are lower than those in reading and mathematics, especially at the higher levels. The school's results in the 2006 national assessments for eleven-year-olds were very high being significantly above average. This has been the case each year since 2003. In mathematics, their progress is particularly good, but writing is a relative weakness of the pupils' performance. The school's results in the 2007 national tests for both seven and eleven-year-olds showed that pupils exceeded the expectations for their age, except in writing at the higher levels.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Classrooms are bright and welcoming. Lessons are tailored effectively to the needs of pupils of different abilities. Teachers set targets for pupils to improve and make good use of marking to do this. The curriculum meets requirements and is enhanced by a good range of well planned and stimulating activities.

Very good relationships and sensitive support from a caring staff strongly promote good levels of pupils' personal development. Pupils know that there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Attendance is above the national average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. The large majority of pupils are well behaved, although a small number find sustained concentration in lessons difficult. They are keen to participate in the wide range of after-school clubs and activities provided. They readily take on responsibilities, such as participating in the school council. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay fit, as the school strongly promotes these qualities. The school's good focus on developing pupils' academic and personal development gives pupils an excellent preparation for their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has developed a strong team ethos and encourages others to develop their leadership roles. There is a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has brought about good improvement since the last inspection, especially in the monitoring of teaching and learning. It knows that the key to raising standards further is to improve pupils' writing. The school has a good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress. Children are well nurtured and cared for in a safe and stimulating environment. There are strong links with parents and outside agencies and Nursery visits ensure adults get to know the children

prior to starting the school. Both the indoor and outdoor curriculum is well planned with a good range of activities that excite and support new learning. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and ensure that adults plan well together as a team. Staff have a clear understanding about how young children learn. Good planning is based on the meticulous assessment of children's skills and abilities. As a result, children develop increasing levels of knowledge and skills and become more confident and independent. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified within a very short time of starting school and support is provided.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to write in a variety of contexts and by improving the concentration of some pupils when writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are very high. At the end of the Foundation Stage, children reach levels of development that are well above what is expected for their ages. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Standards are well above average at the end of Key Stage 1, reflecting the continuing good progress that the pupils make in Years 1 and 2. The school's results in 2006 were well above average overall; in mathematics they have been above or significantly above average overall since 2003. There is a rising trend in mathematics in Key Stage 1; increasing numbers of pupils exceed the levels expected for their ages. While standards in writing are also above average, they are lower than those in reading and mathematics. Pupils continue making good progress in Key Stage 2 and the school's results in the 2006 national assessments were well above those expected. In mathematics, their progress is particularly good, but writing remains as a relative weakness of the pupils' performance. In 2007, test data provided by the school shows that pupils again exceeded expectations at the end of both key stages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Children make a good start in Reception, learning how to share and socialise together. Pupils enjoy coming to school, work hard and are friendly and polite. They say they feel safe and secure and on the very rare occasions when bullying occurs, it is dealt with swiftly. Behaviour is good overall although a small minority of pupils find it difficult to concentrate for sustained periods of time, slowing their progress, particularly in writing.

Pupils know how to stay healthy; they eat healthy lunches and appreciate the opportunities to take exercise. Attendance is good. There are excellent opportunities to contribute to the school family and beyond. Pupils have a good awareness of the local community and the needs of others. They show this care by raising funds to help others. Older pupils regularly look after younger ones for example, by organising games at playtime.

The school council gives pupils a voice. It is proud of its involvement in planning the new playground and improving the toilets. Their good basic skills, enterprise activities and the development of group work skills prepare pupils extremely well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good resulting in all pupils making good progress. Teachers prepare lessons well to meet the needs of all learners, including the needs of the more able pupils. Clear learning objectives and individual and group targets ensure that pupils know what they have to do in their work. Marking is good and tells pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Lessons are interesting. A range of thoughtful techniques, including role play and paired talk, hold pupils' attention and give lessons pace. Pupils work well independently; teachers use skilful questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply. Relationships in classrooms are good. Whiteboard technology is used effectively as a teaching tool but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use it themselves to develop their learning. Behaviour is good when pupils are actively involved in their learning. In lessons that are only satisfactory, work is less interesting and teachers do not allow pupils to solve problems together or to develop their own ideas. The school is good at meeting the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants offer good support for such pupils and this extends to assisting all pupils in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements and takes account of national initiatives and guidance. There is a strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Although a start has been made to increase opportunities for pupils to develop their writing in different contexts, planning is not rigorous enough to raise writing standards to those of other subjects. There is a growing emphasis on creative subjects in the school, especially art, drama and music. Pupils' personal and academic development is supported effectively by good enrichment activities. They benefit from visits to local castles, art museums and trips abroad to support their work on the Tudors, painting and French which is taught to all pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils appreciate and take advantage of the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities including mixed football, choir, gardening, science club and gymnastics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school's Christian values inform its care for its pupils. All members of staff know the pupils well and are aware of their needs and how to meet them. Support for vulnerable pupils, including looked-after children, and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is both sensitive and effective. There are effective relationships with the many outside agencies who work with the school. The health and safety of all children are paramount and all necessary child protection and safeguarding requirements are met. A good personal, social and health education programme is effective in supporting pupils' personal and emotional development and raising their awareness of how to keep fit and healthy. The school supports pupils well when they first start school and when they move between phases of education. Close social and academic links with the local specialist secondary schools ensure pupils are prepared for their new school.

Reports for parents are clear and informative about pupils' progress and set targets for improvement. Assessment is very effective and used by all teachers to plan work and to support pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher and curriculum leaders, has a clear view of the school. Self-evaluation is therefore accurate and is reflected in the school's improvement plan with suitable areas for development. Curriculum leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning, including evaluating pupils' work, to ensure that pupils are doing as well as they can. The school uses data to identify pupils with particular needs so that work can be provided to support them. The school sets and exceeds challenging targets for pupils across the school, except for the higher levels in writing.

Governance is good. Governors contribute effectively to the development of the school. They get involved in the school's self-evaluation and provide a good level of challenge for school leaders.

A large majority of parents support the work of the school and appreciate what it does for their children. The school has effectively removed the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, especially with regard to the quality of monitoring teaching and learning. It has a good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	1

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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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

18 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gainford C of E Primary School, Durham, DL2 3DR

Thank you so much for making me welcome when I visited your school. Gainford CofE Primary School is a good school. The staff care for you very well and help you to learn well.

I was pleased to see that you work hard and do your best. You come to school regularly and on time and most of you behave well in lessons and in the playground. I found that you are very polite and helpful and I enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told me that you enjoyed coming to school and that you liked your teachers. You said you appreciated the activities the school provides for you like the visits to castles and museums and the work you have done on the school playground. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the way you are cared for.

There is one subject you could do better in. I have asked the school to work with you to do this. I have suggested that the school provides you with more opportunities to write in different subjects and helps you to concentrate for longer when you are writing.

Thank you for all your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector