

Gooderstone Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121118
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313885
Inspection date	23 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	54
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	8
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Chalkey
Headteacher	Mr Douglas Dale
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Street Gooderstone King's Lynn Norfolk PE33 9BP
Telephone number	01366 328280
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well the school supports the achievement of Reception children within the mixed-age class
- whether the more able pupils are challenged sufficiently
- the effectiveness of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The inspectors gathered evidence from observations of lessons, samples of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of the governors, and from the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Most pupils travel from outside Gooderstone to attend this very small primary school, which serves three villages in south Norfolk. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds and free school meal eligibility is below average. A large number of pupils join during the school year. There are many more pupils on roll needing support with their learning than in most other schools. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught as a Reception group, within a class including Year 1 and 2 pupils. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in two mixed-age classes. The school hosts a committee-run pre-school group for children aged two to four. The headteacher left at the end of the summer term and a successor is not yet in post. The school is currently led on a part-time basis by a local authority headteacher.

The school has gained the Activemark award for its provision and success in physical education, and recognition from the 'Campaign to Protect Rural England'.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Staff and governors are accurate in their view that Gooderstone Primary is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has some good features, which contribute to making for a happy school in which the pupils are keen to learn. Parents are delighted with the school. Recently, many valuable developments have taken place, although these have not always been reflected in consistent improvement in the pupils' academic achievement.

The pupils' qualities, such as teamwork and showing initiative, allied to their sound skill development, give them a secure platform for success in the future. From levels below those expected for their age on entry, particularly in literacy, pupils make satisfactory progress. Much of the teaching is interesting and engages the pupils' attention. Pupils greatly enjoy the practical activities that are a feature of many lessons, and the opportunity to work on a problem with others in pairs or small groups. Reading is taught well throughout the school. Where pupils fall behind, intensive help from teaching assistants helps them to catch up so that few leave the school failing to reach standards expected of an eleven-year-old.

Standards are average in general but fluctuate because each cohort, being very small, has quite different characteristics. Year 2 assessment results have fallen slightly in recent years, but are broadly average. Improvements in test results at Year 6 in 2007 resulted in performance in line with the national average, but these improvements were offset by a sharp fall in 2008 from a cohort that had very low attainment on entry to the school.

Progress is less consistent in writing and mathematics than in reading. While some pupils do well and exceed what might be expected of them, given their starting points, several struggle to meet their individual targets. One factor is the inconsistent use made of assessment data to move pupils forward from their current level to the next. Expectations are not always high enough, and it is not made clear to pupils how to be successful in each lesson, or how they could extend their learning. This slows progress, particularly of the more able pupils. Pupils' personal targets are not used sufficiently to plan lessons or focus their learning. Marking and feedback to pupils are also inconsistent in helping them to identify the next steps in their learning or to follow up on any advice given.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The wide range of activities both within and beyond the school day add much interest to the pupils' experiences and are a major reason for their enjoyment of school. This is reflected in their positive attitudes in class, regular attendance and good behaviour. They take plenty of exercise in school and understand the importance of their diet in helping them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Lunchtimes are a pleasant occasion as pupils of all ages sit together served by one of their friends. The introduction of cookery classes is a source of much enjoyment and pride in the completed meal. This also gives the pupils an appreciation of how healthy food can be easily prepared.

The school makes clear its high expectations for the pupils' personal and social development. Pupils of all ages are considerate towards each other. They are very sociable, working and playing happily together, and welcoming newcomers so that they quickly become full members of the school family. Pupils are polite and courteous. Given its rather isolated position and the lack of resources in the immediate area, the school has to work hard to develop the pupils' understanding of other cultures. It does this well, helping pupils to learn about and to respect the customs of others, and develop an understanding of their role and responsibilities in a modern society. They are environmentally aware and take their responsibilities seriously, as

seen by their attitude to recycling waste. Pupils play an important role in school, helping to establish how they should all behave and participating in important events, such as the interviews for their new headteacher. They are keen to take the initiative when raising funds for charity. They have close links with the church and make a considerable contribution to village life, such as through activities on May Day. All of these activities help to prepare them well for their future education and adult lives.

Parents are very pleased with the way the school cares for their children. One parent's comment, 'I find the quality of care my children are given is excellent,' accurately reflects the way the school safeguards the welfare of the pupils. The pupils say that they feel safe and any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Older pupils enjoy looking after younger ones, and one advantage of the mixed-age classes is that younger pupils have good role models to follow. Pastoral care is of a high quality because all adults know the pupils' needs and circumstances, and tailor support accordingly, including calling on expertise from outside agencies when necessary. This is backed up by rigorous processes for checking on the progress of each pupil in reading, writing and mathematics and using this to identify where extra help is needed. This is particularly effective in supporting the personal and academic development of pupils who need extra help with their learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff team has become more cohesive since the last inspection, and all pull together to meet the school's priorities. Systems introduced focus on how they can support each other and improve their individual performance. This enables everyone to have an accurate picture of the school's strengths, upon which they can build, and the priorities for improvement. Subject leaders have developed their skills and expertise considerably. However, their impact in securing sustained improvements in areas such as writing and mathematics has been limited because their efforts are spread thinly by carrying a large number of responsibilities. This means that they have not been able to focus their attention sufficiently on one or two key priorities for raising achievement. Governors support school developments, but have only recently introduced structures to scrutinise progress towards meeting their priorities. The school is going through a period of transition supported well by the temporary headteacher. It is soundly placed to meet its priorities for becoming better in all that it does.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have established an effective EYFS. Children get off to a good start and make good progress from their varied but often quite low starting points. However, by the time they move on to Year 1, several have not reached the standards expected for their age, particularly in literacy. Children enjoy school and work and play well together. Members of staff have a good understanding of the EYFS and how young children learn. Learning is skilfully organised by the class teacher who works in partnership with an experienced teaching assistant. The very interesting curriculum, firmly rooted in developing children's skills across all areas of learning, makes each day relevant and fun. The teacher and teaching assistant work well together to provide a stimulating and exciting environment, both inside and outside. This encourages children to explore the world around them and develop their independence. Although the outdoor area is very attractive and offers many opportunities for the children to explore the natural world, it is not yet used to its full potential. The children benefit considerably from working alongside Year 1 and 2 pupils because they learn from them and it raises their

expectations of themselves. Regular observations of the children are used to plan their next steps in learning, matched to the needs of each individual child.

A good induction programme and links with the pre-school ensure that the children quickly settle into the life of the school. The partnership with the parents is very strong. Parents greatly value the care and support given to their children. Regular meetings are organised so that parents can discuss their child's progress and ways in which they can support at home. The children are very happy in school and all show a high level of confidence in talking with any adults about what they are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in mathematics and writing by using assessment information and pupils' targets more effectively when planning lessons.
- Raise expectations for the achievement of the more able pupils by providing consistent challenge for them in lessons.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gooderstone Church of England VA Primary School, Gooderstone, PE33 9BP

You will probably remember that inspectors visited your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. Before I do, I would like to say 'thank you' for making us feel welcome and for being so ready to share your thoughts about your school. We had a chance to talk with many of you, and I have told your teachers how very helpful and polite you were. In our discussions with you, it was great to hear how much you enjoy school. It was also good to hear that there is always someone to talk to if you are worried.

Everyone cares for you well and makes learning fun through the clubs and other activities. We enjoyed watching your cookery lesson and tasting the food you produced. You make satisfactory progress during your time at school. Those of you who find learning difficult are given good support.

There are two things we think would help to improve the school. We have asked your teachers to push learning forward more rapidly in writing and mathematics by matching work more closely to your individual needs. We also feel that some of the pupils who find learning easy need more challenge in lessons.

All of the staff and governors want the school to improve and we know you will play your part by continuing to behave well, attending regularly and working hard. We wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector