

St George's C of E Community Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131490
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	315813
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2007
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Pearson
Headteacher	Mrs Katie Barry
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Lindsey Close Gainsborough Lincolnshire DN21 1YN
Telephone number	01427 612553
Fax number	01427 612553

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. It serves an area of economic and social disadvantage. Pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. Attainment on entry is well below national expectations. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, and those identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities are well above the national averages. The headteacher took up her post in April 2006. Six of the seven teachers were appointed within the last twelve months. A 'nurture class' for pupils with learning difficulties was opened in September 2007. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards. However, this is an improving school. Effective steps have been taken since the appointment of the headteacher to halt its decline and bring about its recovery. Pupils' behaviour has improved considerably. It is now satisfactory. Pupils are more positive and want to learn. The recent appointment of six teachers has strengthened the school's position. They work together well and are committed to providing the pupils with a good education. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows they are beginning to make satisfactory progress because of improvements in teaching. However, progress is inadequate overall because until recently, teachers' and pupils' expectations were not high enough and systems to support pupils' learning were not in place. As a result, standards in the school are exceptionally low and pupils' achievement is inadequate. The school does not give value for money.

Standards at the end of Year 2 have varied significantly over the last six years. In the last two years, they were exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics. The high number of pupils with learning difficulties contributed to standards in 2007 being much lower than in previous years. Standards in writing were very low when compared to reading and mathematics. The Year 6, 2007 national tests results in English are slightly higher than in 2006. In mathematics and science, they were similar. Standards remain exceptionally low in all three subjects. Based on the pupils' Year 2 test results, their achievement is inadequate. Current standards are also well below expectations. The creation of the 'nurture class' is making a significant contribution to promoting a calmer environment and enabling all pupils to concentrate more effectively and enjoy their learning.

Teaching is satisfactory with some good teaching evident. Teachers and support staff are successfully developing good relationships with pupils and increasingly engaging them in their learning. Sound assessment procedures are developing satisfactorily. Assessments are more accurate and used satisfactorily to help plan lessons and to set challenging targets. However, there is still work to do to ensure assessments are consistent and used effectively to raise expectations further. The care, guidance and support given are satisfactory. Health and safety, child protection and safeguarding requirements are met. Teachers offer sound academic guidance. Pupils know their targets in reading, writing and mathematics. There are good examples of marking in English, but it is not as informative in other subjects.

Overall, pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are keen to take part in the recently introduced programme of visits to places of interest and to receive visitors to the school. The visits underpin the school's philosophy that 'Every learning journey begins with an experience' and is contributing much to the development of the satisfactory curriculum. Overall, the curriculum supports pupils' personal development satisfactorily. They are gaining a good understanding of healthy living and enjoy sporting activities. However, pupils do not have the basic literacy and numeracy skills to help them in their future lives.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The vision, drive and enthusiasm of the headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, are leading to improvements. The school improvement plan is good. It is based on an accurate evaluation of the school's performance

and focuses on raising standards. Subject coordinators are newly appointed and have still to develop their roles in challenging and supporting colleagues to raise standards. Governors have a reasonable understanding of the school. They are supportive and are now beginning to ask searching questions. They set suitably challenging statutory targets in English and mathematics. Given the recent improvements in the quality of provision, the school has sound capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

Most children enter the Reception class with levels of attainment well below those expected for their age. Their social, communication, mathematical and language skills are particularly weak. Very few attain the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Pastoral care is good. Children settle quickly into school, interact well with the class teacher and gain in confidence. Satisfactory emphasis is placed on developing their social skills and encouraging them to talk. However, the curriculum is not matched sufficiently well to their needs to enable them to make enough progress. There are too few opportunities for them to initiate and develop their own ideas or undertake creative activities. The fenced outdoor area is too small to be used effectively to support children's learning. Opportunities to work outside are limited. This hinders the development of their physical skills and their ability to play together. The school is aware of the shortcomings. Suitable plans are in place to improve provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in writing, mathematics and science
- Improve provision in the Foundation Stage so that it matches the needs of the children
- Consolidate assessment procedures and use the outcomes more consistently to inform teaching and raise standards.
- Develop the role of subject co-ordinators in supporting teachers to raise standards and pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate because pupils have not made sufficient progress since starting school. The standards reached by boys and girls are exceptionally low. Girls tend to do better than boys in English, mathematics and science. The standards reached by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are below those of similar groups of pupils. However, the recent changes in staffing and the effective leadership and management of the headteacher are having an impact. In the spring and summer terms 2007, pupils in Years 3 and 6 made considerably more progress in mathematics and reading than in previous terms. This term, pupils in other year groups are making sound progress. This is because the teachers are focusing on raising standards and teaching assistants are deployed more effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, but their knowledge and understanding of other cultures is limited. Pupils are increasingly enjoying school and attendance is improving. It is broadly satisfactory. Pupils are gaining a good

understanding of healthy living. They eat fruit at break times and take an active part in games. Pupils know the school has introduced strategies to improve behaviour and these are having an effect but the behaviour of a few pupils is at times inappropriate. Members of the school council are pleased to represent their school and want 'to make it a better place'. Their contribution to the community is satisfactory. Some pupils spoke enthusiastically about the harvest gifts for senior citizens. Pupils' social skills are developing satisfactorily but their lack of understanding of other cultures, together with the low standards in English and mathematics, means they are not sufficiently well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are developing a good relationship with the pupils. They make their expectations clear and implement the school's behaviour policy consistently. Most lessons are planned well. The work is increasingly being matched to the needs of pupils as assessment procedures are implemented. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the pupils. There is a strong focus on developing their speaking and listening skills and their ability to work with others. Pupils are regularly reminded of their challenging group targets in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers use a range of effective measures to motivate pupils, for example through drama and the use of electronic whiteboards. As a result, behaviour is improving, and the vast majority of pupils are more attentive and know what they have to strive to achieve. Pupils have a better understanding of what they have to do next in English because marking is better in this subject than in others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils have responded well to the recent changes in the curriculum. They are more enthusiastic and starting to enjoy their learning. The themed approach, the visits, links made between subjects, and the use of resources such as information communication and technology (ICT) have stimulated their interest. They spoke enthusiastically about their topic on Egypt and working in groups on different tasks. There is a good emphasis on promoting pupils' social skills and adoption of a healthy life style. However, the curriculum is not sufficiently well matched to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. In addition, there is insufficient emphasis on promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Sound procedures are in place to ensure that the pupils receive satisfactory care guidance and support. Safeguarding procedures fully meet the latest government requirements. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to ask for help if they are worried. Systems for monitoring pupils' progress are developing satisfactorily. The information is used adequately to target pupils who are performing below the level expected for their age. Links with external agencies and parents are satisfactory. Pupils at risk receive sound support and guidance. The 'nurture class' provides helpful support for its pupils. They are beginning to adopt a more positive attitude to learning and at times, to enjoy school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has brought about rapid improvements in the time she has been in post. The school is much calmer. Pupils are more focused on learning and beginning to make satisfactory progress. The high number of exclusions has been reduced significantly. Systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school are thorough and are used well to provide a clear direction for its improvement. Most subject coordinators took up their post at the beginning of term and have still to develop their role. Nevertheless, they are already gaining a sound overview of their subject and the school's overall performance. They are making satisfactory progress in reviewing the English and mathematics curriculum with representatives from the local authority. Governance is satisfactory. The governors are keen to improve their effectiveness. They are developing their role well in holding the school to account.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

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

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?	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's C of E School. Gainsborough. DN21 1YN

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my visit and talking to you. I thought that you were friendly. I was told that your behaviour in class and in the playground has improved a lot. Well done! It is now satisfactory and I did see a number of you behaving really well. I was very pleased to hear that you are starting to enjoy coming to school and your attendance is improving. You have a wonderful playing field, so I am not surprised you like games and have a good understanding of being healthy. I did enjoy the Harvest Festival and seeing you take part in the service.

Your headteacher has done a lot to improve your school. You now have a team of teachers and teaching assistants who want you to do well. At the moment, the standards you reach in English, mathematics and science are not good enough. The reason why your standards are not higher is because you have not made enough progress while you have been in school. This is changing and the work that I saw in your books shows me that you are now beginning to make satisfactory progress but you still have a long way to go to catch up. For this reason, your school has been told it must continue to improve and help you even more to make better progress so that you attain higher standards. It will be inspected again in about a year from now to check that this is happening.

To help you catch up, I have asked the subject co-ordinators to work with all the teachers to help you make quicker progress in English, mathematics and science. They can do this by carefully checking your work and pinpointing what you need to do next to improve your standards. I have also asked that the headteacher and governors to improve the curriculum and the outdoor area for the Reception class so that they can learn more and enjoy working outside.

I hope that you will play your part by always working hard. I know you can do it.

Thank you once again for being so friendly when I visited.

With best wishes

David Wynford Jones Inspector