

St George's Church of England Community Primary School, Gainsborough

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131490
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	328599
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	111
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Gibson
Headteacher	Mrs K Barry
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lindsey Close Gainsborough DN21 1YN
Telephone number	01427 612553
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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

St George's Church of England Community Primary School is smaller than many primary schools and serves an estate on the outskirts of Gainsborough. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties/and or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is exceptionally high. A very high proportion of pupils qualify for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at other than the usual times is high.

There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS). Children join the Reception class as they turn four years old and are educated full-time in a modern classroom. The Reception class is part of the main school building and there are extensive outdoor facilities for them to use. Young children's knowledge and skills on entry to school are exceptionally low.

The school has gained the Activemark for sports provision, recognition as a Healthy School and the Gold Clean Air Award.

There is a breakfast club on-site that is not managed by the governing body.

At the last section 5 Inspection in October 2007, the school was given a Notice to Improve. The school's progress was monitored in June 2008, with issues for improvement identified.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St George's now offers a good quality of education for its pupils and in accordance with Section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Parents are positive about the school's work. Typical of their comments is, 'I am very pleased with my children's education and progress...They are both very happy and confident...'

Since the last inspection, the leadership and staff have raised standards in reading, mathematics, science and, particularly, in writing. The school's assessment information shows that over the last two years pupils have made accelerated progress in both key stages and achieve well from their well below average starting points. Standards of pupils' work this term at the end of both key stages are below those expected in English and mathematics. Assessment information and work seen in lessons this term indicates that the improvement in standards and progress continues. Good leadership and management and good teaching are important in bringing about this positive change. The staff have correctly identified three factors that are limiting pupils' further progress. Pupils at both key stages have difficulty in reading more complex words, do not use their mathematical knowledge enough in other subjects to practise the skills they have gained and they have gaps in their scientific knowledge. There are good plans in place to address these issues in the coming year.

The extensive work undertaken to improve writing standards, which were very low indeed previously, has been successful. The whole staff set out to make improvements in the way writing was taught, such as spending more time giving help and encouragement to pupils' own ideas for their work. Improvements in writing and in other subjects show that the school has a good capacity to continue improving.

The 'nurture room' provides a calm environment, enabling small groups to progress well in their work and responses to school life. This room meets the needs of pupils requiring extra help in their learning very well and the whole school has benefited from less disruption in lessons. The number of exclusions has reduced significantly. Pupils join their usual classes for selected activities and the provision is successful in reintegrating those pupils who have had difficulty learning back into their classes.

Pupils' personal development is good. The staff provide them with a wide range of opportunities to develop a good moral code and other personal skills. Praise and rewarding comments from adults are highly valued by pupils who respond positively by working hard. They know that school provides many interesting lessons and many enjoy coming very much. They respond well because work is well matched to their abilities. The school is a friendly community that serves itself and the local and wider communities well. Pupils are well looked after and many have responsibilities that they enjoy performing. They have a good understanding of the importance of exercise and of staying safe. The school has good links with other nearby schools and agencies, and pupils' needs are well supported.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in Reception receive a good education. By the end of Reception, a small minority reach the standards expected nationally, but most do not because their grasp of language and number is extremely limited when they start school. The ratio of adults to children is good and children

make good progress with their personal skills, which helps them to do well in other areas, such as in their initial reading skills and knowledge of the world. The teaching offers children a wide range of EYFS activities. Children have many opportunities to make choices between activities, and to work in small groups with adults. They enjoy the new 'outdoor classroom' very much. It is very well equipped and has a very wide range of activities for them to experience, including a play building-site that mirrors the building going on around the school. The provision is well managed by the team of adults, who have begun to embrace the latest developments in the curriculum and to use these as opportunity to meet the needs of children even better. Staff acknowledge that the new curriculum is in its infancy and aspects are not yet bedded in. The children are well looked after. Reception children learn good working habits and begin to know what to expect in school when they are older.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' reading skills to raise standards in English.
- Give pupils more opportunities to use their mathematics knowledge and skills in other subjects to raise standards in mathematics.
- Analyse the gaps in pupils' knowledge in science and adapt the curriculum to help them catch up.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

At Key Stage 1, pupils enter with standards that are well below average. In 2008 standards in the national assessments were below average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. This is an improvement on previous years. There has been a significant improvement in standards at Key Stage 1 in all subjects since 2007.

Standards in national tests in Year 6 in 2006 and in 2007 were exceptionally low. Indications are there has been improvement in test results in English, mathematics and science for all pupils in Year 6 in 2008 but that they are below average. Most pupils made average progress in English and half did so in mathematics. However, three-quarters of this year group had joined St George's during their school career. The results for pupils who had been educated at the school for seven years show good progress and preliminary test results demonstrate that they reached broadly average standards in 2008.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with statements of special educational need achieve well. The large majority of them reach standards similar to this group nationally by the end of Year 6. Pupils who attend the 'nurture room' make good progress because class teachers liaise closely with colleagues to ensure that they complete their usual curriculum in this setting.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The 'healthy school' initiative and physical education support pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and encourage them to exercise regularly; this has been recognised in the Activemark award. Pupils often enjoy using the field and playground for running and games activities at break times. They have a good understanding of staying safe. They know how to cross the road safely, and how to behave responsibly in the playground. Behaviour is good and many pupils say how much they enjoy their time at school. Despite the best efforts of the school, attendance

is below average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; they know right from wrong. Pupils were highly respectful and quiet following a short film clip about the work of the British Legion and what Remembrance Sunday is about, during the school's Remembrance service. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. They like to express their views on the school council and get involved in improving the school. Pupils take a keen interest in other cultures and enjoyed the enrichment week very much. They responded well to activities, such as African mask and music-making. The gains that pupils make in their skills and knowledge, plus their developing teamwork and social skills mean that they are prepared well for the next stage of their education, and as young citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils have good attitudes to their work because of the good teaching. Teachers demonstrate their good subject knowledge when answering pupils' questions, and plan interesting lessons. Teachers use a good range of teaching styles to vary the learning. For example, role-play is used to develop pupils' thinking skills and to help them gain confidence before they write down their ideas. Displays across the school are of a high quality and many assist learning by valuing pupils' good work or by telling them something important. Behaviour in classes has improved because of teachers' consistent expectations of how pupils should behave and the meaningful rewards that they receive. Teaching assistants work successfully with all groups and are well deployed. They are particularly good at repeating key points to groups to ensure understanding, so that all can complete tasks successfully. Small group support for pupils who need extra practice, such as in reading and number, help pupils to make better progress.

Teachers keep a close day-to-day watch on how individual pupils are progressing. Work in lessons is successfully matched to the needs of all pupils. The tracking of groups' longer-term progress is also good, a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, teachers do not make enough use of pupils' mathematical skills as a tool in other subjects to raise standards in mathematics further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Topics begin with an exciting event. Pupils in Key Stage 2 started the year with a residential two-day trip to Sherwood Forest. Pupils loved it and several thought it was the best visit they had ever done. Teachers have built aspects of the term's curriculum around this exciting event to motivate pupils and to give them many ideas to use in a variety of lessons. The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of clubs, which many pupils attend.

The organisation of lessons for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) has improved. The school provides well for many subjects, for example making use of the local area and the extensive school site. The curriculum is increasingly based on developing pupils' key skills that can be used in many subjects. Subject leaders have, nevertheless, identified that more can be done to improve standards in subjects. For example, a legacy of gaps in pupils' scientific knowledge and in their reading skills limits their further progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff show an exceptional commitment to encouraging pupils to enjoy their education and to achieve well. They provide well for learners' health and safety on a daily basis and the school meets the latest regulations for safeguarding children. The personal, social and health education programme is a strength. Pupils learn to deal with their feelings and gain positively from learning how to cope well with all kinds of social situations. The school works strenuously to improve attendance, such as by working with families and sending regular reminders home about good attendance.

Each pupil is very well known to the adults who teach them. Individuals receive daily verbal and written guidance in their exercise books to help them to improve their work. Consequently, pupils reach most of their challenging individual targets. Support for pupils who find learning difficult is good. Pupils with particular extra needs flourish in the quiet and calm 'nurture room'. A strength in the guidance is the work with pupils on their individual targets in English and mathematics that gives them more responsibility for their learning and reasons to work hard.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and staff lead the school well. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has provided excellent leadership and been pivotal in the development of the school, such as by appointing staff with the required expertise and involving all staff in decision-making. There is therefore a high degree of teamwork, which allows the school to set and reach its targets for improvement.

There has been good improvement in subject leadership. Evaluation of the school's work is accurate, well considered and the priorities adopted, such as improving pupils' reading skills further and closing the gaps in pupils' knowledge in science, are the ones most likely to bring about further improvement. Governors make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school. They ask important questions of the school and have an increasingly wide range of skills that they use to the school's benefit, such as in child protection and finance. Governors make more frequent visits to the school, for example, to work with groups of pupils, but do not meet staff responsible for subjects to evaluate the quality of the school's work. The school's commitment to equal opportunities is good. Community aspects, within school and more widely, feature strongly in teachers' thinking. Learning about the local area and further afield is an important part of the school's work, and is effective in broadening pupils' horizons.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's Church of England Primary School, Gainsborough, DN21 1YN

It was good to meet so many of you, see you at work and to listen to your views when I inspected your school recently. Special thanks go to the council members I met after lunch on Monday and to those of you I joined at lunchtimes. This letter is to give you a flavour of what is in the full report. Here are some of the best features of your school.

- You make a good start to your school life in Reception.
- You make good progress with your work in Years 1 to 6 and your standards of work have improved in English, mathematics and science.
- The nurture room is working really well and you are happy in each other's company.
- The headteacher, governors, teachers and all the staff organise the school well for your benefit. Everyone has a chance to do well.
- You enjoy school because teachers make extra special efforts to make lessons very interesting by using different ways to teach you.
- You know a lot about being healthy and keeping safe.
- The school council is doing a good job.
- You work hard and behave well.

I agree with your teachers that to improve your standards of work further, the school now needs to:

- develop your reading skills even more
- give you more chances to use what you know in mathematics in other subjects
- help you to improve your science knowledge.

You can help by asking when you do not understand an idea, always paying attention and coming to school as often as you can.

I wish you all the very best in the future.

Roger Fry

Lead inspector