

Gomersal St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided First and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107747
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	336944
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Loker
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Scott
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, examined the school's assessment and tracking system, and evaluated samples of work in pupils' books, documents including governing body minutes, monitoring records, reports from the School Improvement Partner, and a range of other school documents. Responses from 34 parents to the Ofsted questionnaire were analysed and considered, along with the responses of staff and pupils in Year 3 and Year 4.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The progress being made by pupils of all ages in the school.
- The consistency of the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
- How well the school meets the requirements for promoting community cohesion and the regulations for safeguarding pupils.
- How well the school has met the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection.

Information about the school

This smaller than average school serves the small town of Gomersal. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. All speak English at home. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, are broadly average, though this varies widely from one year to the next. The school holds the Healthy Schools Gold Award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is making steady and consistent progress in improving almost all aspects of its work. It has clear strengths in the very successful way it encourages pupils to accept, respect and celebrate diversity and equality, and adopt healthy lifestyles. These strengths ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Pupils make consistently good progress from the time they join Nursery class to the time they leave school at the end of Year 4. This is because teaching is good overall, despite the marking of pupils' work being inconsistent and not always letting pupils know what they need to do next to improve. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 4, attainment is typically above the national expectation in English and mathematics. The school is a welcoming and stimulating place in which to learn. Even though the mobile classroom accommodation for Year 4 pupils has seen much better days, pupils of all ages say they feel happy and secure here. This is reflected in their good attitudes to learning in all lessons. The curriculum is good with many exciting enrichment opportunities, recorded in class 'WOW' books, to widen pupils' horizons and to inspire reflection. Pupils say they like the way subjects are often linked together, encouraging them to think and 'whether to answer from my heart or from my head'.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. The school has moved forward in those areas identified for improvement at the last inspection that are within its control. The close attention paid to writing and mathematics by leaders at all levels has led to significant progress in raising standards in these areas. Self-evaluation is accurate, and based on the objective analysis of information provided by the school's reliable assessment system. All teachers contribute to ensuring that the system rigorously tracks the progress being made by pupils from term to term. Throughout the school, there is an ambition to raise attainment even further. Subject leaders focus their attention closely on learning, though first-hand monitoring by them is not yet routine.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement and raise attainment by ensuring, through consistent written feedback, that pupils are always clear about what they need to do next to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils consistently learn well and make good progress. They have good attitudes to

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

learning because teachers set interesting and demanding work, well matched to pupils' learning needs, which grabs their attention quickly. This challenges them to think things through for themselves, and they rise to these challenges well.

When children join the Nursery, the very large majority have much lower than expected skill levels than are normally seen in children of their age. By the time they leave Reception class, some are reaching the early learning goals. From Year 1 to Year 4, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, continue to make consistently good progress. National assessment results and inspection evidence confirm that attainment is average at the end of Year 2, with a rising trend of improvement.

Pupils are also achieving well personally. They are polite, well mannered, and considerate to each other and to the environment. They report enthusiastically their pride in their school, especially the Gold Healthy School Award that 'we hold', and are not afraid to approach visitors to the dining room to check 'are you getting your five-a-day sir'. They are confident that any adult in school will help them should the need arise. They say they like school because, 'learning is always fun', and because, 'we all get on well together'. When asked about keeping safe, they report with well-balanced common sense about how to avoid the dangers they may encounter. Their behaviour is good and this contributes strongly to the good progress they make. They are willing to take on responsibility, for example when the whole class swoops to tidy away resources very quickly at the end of lessons. They raise important amounts of money for charitable causes, both locally and internationally, at Lent and at Harvest Festival. Attendance is at the national average. By the time they leave school, pupils are confident, sensible and satisfactorily prepared for the next phase of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. Some examples of outstanding practice were seen. Common features of all lessons include excellent relationships between adults and pupils, clear learning objectives so that pupils know what they are going to learn and a range of tasks, well matched to pupils' learning needs, which encourage them to work independently. In all lessons seen, pupils made good or better progress. This confirms the picture portrayed by a range of monitoring methods. However, the marking of pupils' work is, at best, satisfactory. There is wide variation in its effectiveness. Some is very informative, regularly and clearly guiding pupils towards what they need to do to get better. Some other marking is cursory, irregular, merely acknowledges some of the work done, and gives little or no guidance.

The curriculum links subjects together around themes, which allows pupils to practice and develop the skills they have learned in one subject across a range of others. A very wide range of visits and visitors support these themes, and help bring pupils' learning to life. This is typified by the recent whole-school visit to a nearby sunflower field, which sparked creative writing, artwork and scientific investigation, as well giving all pupils the opportunity to consider and appreciate the natural world. Pupils say they like this way of learning. This is reflected in their good personal development as they are increasingly able to put themselves 'into another person's shoes', and consider different perspectives. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well as a tool to support learning. Pupils know how to research safely, and are confident to use their skills, for example in Year 3 designing and producing their own unique advent cards.

The small size of the school helps staff, pupils and families to know each other well. This knowledge is used confidently and sensitively to identify and resolve any pastoral issues and academic problems which crop up. Knowledgeable adults in the school prepare short, sharp interventions to address most circumstances, and the school is quick to recruit the help of outside professional and other agencies should the need arise.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support**2****How effective are leadership and management?**

Under the quietly determined leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors are fully imbued with the ambition of helping pupils to reach their full potential. School self-evaluation is accurate and honest, and the school has good knowledge of its own strengths and weaknesses. Staff morale is high, and a spirit of shared responsibility runs throughout all adults in the school. Middle managers are enthusiastically taking on responsibility for their subjects, and all teachers are fully engaged in assessing and evaluating the progress pupils are making. Governance is good. Governors are knowledgeable, active and keen to help the school move forward, and they hold the school to account for its performance.

Provision for the promotion of community cohesion is good, and the school is at the centre of the community it serves. The effective partnerships the school has with parents underpin this. The school works successfully and relentlessly to ensure that all forms of inequality are addressed, and that pupils learn quickly to value and celebrate diversity. There is no discrimination in this harmonious and happy school, where the safeguarding of pupils is good, because protecting pupils' interests is at the core of all its work. Government safeguarding requirements are met.

Though the scope of development planning is realistic in terms of the number of objectives set, the current plan lacks precision because it confuses objectives with tasks, and lacks sharpness because the procedures laid down for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating actions are not specified in sufficient detail.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of good teaching and care, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning and their personal development. The children settle quickly into the bright and welcoming environment, as was demonstrated when one small child turned down mother's offer of a goodbye kiss with a confident 'No, I'm alright', before skipping into registration. Children enjoy their learning experiences and are happy and confident, because good partnerships with parents are established from the start of Nursery, and maintained well throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adults promote children's welfare effectively. They provide good role models for the children who, as a result, quickly develop good social and emotional skills. They play and work together well, and are content to share and take turns. The outdoor areas are attractive, but staff, conscious of the risks associated with the linking stairs, sometimes restrict the free-flow of activity from indoors to ensure the children's safety at all times. This leads to some limitations in the activities that children can choose for themselves. Nonetheless, teacher-led activities take good account of children's own interests and curiosity, and this nurtures a lively sense of wonder at the world around them.

Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are effective in planning the curriculum and managing the provision to ensure that learning goes on continuously. Children's progress is assessed regularly and accurately, though analysis and evaluation rests with the headteacher. Arrangements for transition from Reception class to Year 1 are effective, and pupils move confidently and happily into the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Thirty four parents returned the Ofsted questionnaire. The overwhelming majority indicated a great deal of confidence in the work of the school. Parents agreed unanimously that their children enjoy school; that the school keeps their children safe; that teaching is good; that their children are helped to lead a healthy lifestyle; and that the school is led and managed effectively. They were happy with their children's experience at this school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gomersal St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided First and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 141 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	79	7	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	56	15	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	50	16	47	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	62	12	35	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	65	12	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	44	16	47	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	59	14	41	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	44	16	47	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	47	17	50	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	35	20	59	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	41	18	53	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	56	15	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	71	10	29	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gomersal St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided First and Nursery School, Cleckheaton, BD19 4NA

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently. I particularly enjoyed talking with some of you over lunch when you made sure that I was eating my 'five-a-day' of fruit and vegetables. I was particularly impressed with your good behaviour in lessons and around the school, and how polite and considerate you are with each other and with your teachers. Several of you told me on different occasions how much you enjoy being in school, even though you say you find the chairs a bit hard!

I found that St Mary's provides a good education for you. You all learn well and make consistently good progress because, as you told me yourselves, lessons are interesting and exciting, and teachers encourage you to think for yourselves. All the adults in the school, including your headteacher and the governors, look after you well. They make sure that you enjoy learning, achieve well, and stay safe and happy.

To make St. Mary's an even better school, I have asked that one thing in particular is done to improve it: Teachers to mark your work much more consistently and always try to guide you towards what you must do next to get better, or to reach the next level.

You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard in all your lessons, and by staying the cheerful and friendly young people you already are.

Good luck to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector

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