

Gedney Church End Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120409
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339683
Inspection dates	15-16 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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 of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Howard
Headteacher	Mrs J Stillwell
Date of previous school inspection	27-28 March 2007
School address	Church End Gedney Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 0BU
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation records, assessment records, individual educational plans, minutes of meetings and the reports of the school improvement partner. The responses from the pupil and staff questionnaires were analysed as were the responses from the 18 parents' questionnaires.

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

- pupils' progress and the standards they reached in the academic year 2008 to 2009, especially in writing
- the work of pupils who find difficulty learning, to determine how well they are progressing
- how effectively pupils' learning is assessed and their progress recorded, and how well teachers use the information to help pupils' make further progress
- the school's partnership with parents and the impact it has on pupils' learning and attendance.

Information about the school

This small school serves a scattered rural community. Pupil mobility is high as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is very high. The uptake of free school meals is well above average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and few have any pre-school experience. The school is part of a hard federation with another small school. One governing body and one headteacher serve both schools. The headteacher divides her time equally between the two schools. The school has a Healthy Schools Award.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher's clarity of vision and her determination to make the federation work for the benefit of both schools are the driving forces behind the teamwork that is evident among staff, pupils, governors and parents. The close working partnership between the two schools is enabling staff to become more secure in their assessments of pupils' learning, and in the management of their subjects.

Senior leaders and governors have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and plans have been agreed to bring about the required improvements. However, the plans lack measurable targets which would help managers at all levels to monitor progress towards the school's priorities. Nevertheless, through their work so far, all staff demonstrate the determination and drive to improve achievement and raise standards, and this gives the school satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The drive for overall improvement is sometimes hindered by the large number of pupils joining or leaving the school, especially in Years 5 and 6. Nevertheless, overall there has been an upward trend in standards in recent years despite the fluctuations seen.

The school has established positive relationships with parents and carers. Where parents have concerns, the school leaders do their best to deal with them. For example, the school has worked hard with parents to achieve the satisfactory attendance of pupils, and several parents of pupils new to the school commented on how well their children are doing.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their well below average skills on entry to the school. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, progress and overall achievement are satisfactory. Because numbers are so small, any comparisons with national averages have to be treated with caution. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average. The work seen in the books of pupils who were in Year 6 last year, which shows satisfactory progress in 2008 to 2009, belies the disappointingly very low test results for writing in 2009. Writing remains a weakness in Years 3 to 6, although it is improving as the impact of work to improve pupils' spelling and extend their limited vocabulary and experiences begins to feed through the different age groups.

The large number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. They make satisfactory and often good progress in their learning. The

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very small number of non-English speaking pupils make particularly good progress, acquiring good facility in the English language and quickly reaching the standards expected for their age.

Pupils are polite, friendly and enthusiastic and they behave well in and outside of lessons. They know how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy, and they make a good contribution to the school community through, for example, the school council. Their understanding of the wider community and of cultural diversity is limited, as is the governors' understanding of their role in promoting community cohesion. Overall, governance is satisfactory.

Staff know their pupils very well and provide good care, support and guidance for them. Safeguarding procedures are good. Assessments of pupils' learning are accurate and assessment information is used effectively in planning. Most pupils know their targets and the steps they need to take to reach them, and most teachers regularly refer to the targets in lessons. However, when marking pupils' written work, they do not always give enough guidance on how to improve it. Nor do they mark writing when it occurs in other subjects, thereby missing valuable opportunities to show pupils how to reach their targets faster.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by:
 - embedding the new assessment systems fully throughout the school
 - improving pupils' spelling and ensuring that writing is properly marked in all subjects
 - improving the consistency with which teachers give pupils development points related to their targets.
- Sharpen all improvement plans by including measurable success criteria that will enable senior managers and governors to monitor progress towards the school's targets more effectively.
- Increase governors' understanding of their role in promoting community cohesion and improve pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, including in writing. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in writing is improving, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Assessments of writing are accurate and the work in pupils' books confirmed their satisfactory progress. Strong emphasis is placed on extending pupils' experiences through, for example, 'reading' pictures, and participating in well planned speaking and listening,

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including drama activities prior to writing. This approach is beginning to increase pupils' motivation to write. Throughout the school, spelling remains weak, although most pupils do manage to spell words in ways which are phonetically plausible.

Pupils enjoy learning and participate well in tasks in most lessons. The school council's resounding 'Yeah!' and 'I love it!' on being asked if they enjoy school indicated their depth of affection for their school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those joining the school in different year groups, feel well supported in their learning. The school assesses pupils' abilities at whatever point they arrive and works hard to provide for their individual needs. Pupils report they feel safe because the school keeps them safe and they know how to deal with any potentially unsafe situations. They trust the staff, secure in the knowledge that they will always get help from an adult in the school should they need it. Pupils report that there is no serious bullying, and say bullying is simply not tolerated. They contribute satisfactorily to the school community, for example as school councillors and playground leaders, and by running their own healthy tuck shop. School meals and healthy snacks encourage pupils to eat healthily and pupils understand the benefits of taking regular exercise. They do not have a good enough understanding of the wider community or of the range of cultures in the United Kingdom because this has not been integrated well enough into the curriculum. Overall, their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, and their moral and social development is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

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

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Lesson plans focus consistently on improving pupils' learning. Improvements in assessment procedures have given teachers a firm grasp of pupils' progress. Teachers regularly build on pupils' responses, adapting lessons accordingly. They explain new concepts clearly and sometimes creatively so that pupils understand their work and remain enthusiastic about learning. A strong feature in all teaching is the focus on extending pupils' vocabulary and ensuring pupils understand unfamiliar words. Activities successfully consolidate new language and learning, and give pupils many opportunities to work together or independently. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them. They relish the challenges they receive, saying: 'Well we won't learn if we're not challenged, will we?' They contribute to their own learning by checking and marking their own and each other's work. Much of this is relatively recent and has not had time to have much impact on achievement and standards. However, there are clear signs that progress is improving as a result. Despite this, teachers' marking still lacks consistency. Changes made last term to ensure pupils are always given development points are not yet being used to full effect. Additionally, teachers rarely mark writing in subjects other than English, therefore missing opportunities to focus pupils on how to reach their targets faster.

Teaching assistants contribute effectively to pupils' learning and progress, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The good relationships and mutual respect between staff and pupils mean that pupils are confident to ask for help or further explanation when needed. Teachers also recognise that, within the ability groups for English and mathematics, there is still a range of ability, and they adapt their planning to suit this.

Subjects are brought together well in Years 1 and 2 through topics that inspire pupils and contribute to their enjoyment of learning. This work is not yet complete in Years 3 to 6 but a good start has been made, and checklists are being drawn up to ensure that skills are taught progressively when subjects are linked. The curriculum is enriched by good partnerships with nearby schools and the local authority but it does not focus sufficiently on promoting pupils' understanding of life in a culturally diverse society. The school provides a caring and welcoming learning environment for all pupils. There are good arrangements for transition between different stages, and pupils described the benefits for them of the 'moving up' days held each year to introduce them to their new classes, teachers and work. Overall, the curriculum is suitably matched to the needs of the pupils. This, and their satisfactory progress in basic skills, mean pupils leave the school satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their lives.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff respond well to the headteacher’s clear direction. Middle and senior managers and governors are beginning to take greater responsibility for different subjects and aspects of school life. This work is being facilitated by the good relationships between the two schools in the federation and its governing body. The headteacher has successfully communicated an appropriate sense of urgency in bringing about the required improvements in standards. Governors support the school well. They are increasingly challenging it to do better but do not have sufficiently detailed, measurable outcomes against which they can hold the school to account. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily and there have been no reported incidents of racial harassment or discrimination. Parents and carers are regularly consulted about the progress their children make and the school works hard to involve them in their children’s learning. The school’s contribution to community cohesion is satisfactorily addressed within the school community. It is relatively limited beyond this, being confined mainly to teaching pupils about different world religions or bringing visitors from other communities into school for specific activities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management ensure that children learn and develop well. In

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most years, they reach average standards at the end of Reception. Staff know the children well and do everything possible to ensure they quickly settle into school routines. High levels of care and good liaison with parents ensure that children's safety, health and well-being are attended to well. As a result, children currently in Reception are already beginning to work and play happily with and alongside each other, and to communicate with adults. Staff deal sensitively with children who lack confidence and they make careful notes about what each child does and achieves during each session. They use the information effectively in their planning. There is rightly a strong emphasis on developing literacy skills, including speaking and listening, and also personal skills, all of which are very weak when children start school.

Activities present a good balance between those directed by an adult and those children can select for themselves, building their independence skills. However, children do not have spontaneous access to outdoor learning because the outdoor area is small and not readily usable as an outdoor classroom. Staff do everything possible to compensate for this by using the playground when it is available and the school has clear plans to deal with the issue later this year.

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

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the school's work and the efforts of the staff. Comments such as 'Since he has come to this school he has improved beyond belief', were echoed in several questionnaires from parents of pupils new to the school. A few responses indicated that the school did not always deal effectively with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view, either in the school's records or in discussions with pupils during and outside of lessons.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gedney Church End 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 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 52 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	61%	6	33%	0	0%	0	0%
The school keeps my child safe	12	67%	4	22%	1	6%	0	0%
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	39%	7	39%	2	11%	0	0%
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	44%	7	39%	0	0%	0	0%
The teaching is good at this school	11	61%	4	22%	1	6%	0	0%
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	50%	6	33%	1	6%	0	0%
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	44%	9	50%	1	6%	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)	6	33%	8	44%	0	0%	0	0%
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	39%	9	50%	0	0%	0	0%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	44%	7	39%	0	0%	2	11%
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	33%	8	44%	2	11%	1	6%
The school is led and managed effectively	10	56%	4	22%	1	6%	1	6%
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	56%	5	28%	1	6%	1	6%

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 all 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

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 pupils' 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.

17 September 2009



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gedney Church End Primary School, Gedney PE12 0BU

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I was impressed with your good behaviour and how much you enjoyed telling me about your school. The resounding 'Yeah!' from the school council in response to my question about whether they enjoyed school, told me so much. The staff know each one of you very well and it was reassuring to hear how safe and well cared for you feel. They work hard to make sure you receive all the support you need, carefully checking how well you are learning, and planning carefully to ensure they build on what you already know and can do. I was pleased to note that you are getting better at checking and marking your own and each other's work, and that you understand your targets and the steps needed to reach them. Your teachers are good at reminding you about these in lessons. Your headteacher has lots of good ideas to improve the school and help you reach higher standards, and the staff and governors support her well in this.

Children in the Reception class and pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in their learning. Although I could see that progress is improving in Years 3 to 6, I would like all teaching to bring about good progress and help you to reach higher standards, especially in writing. Therefore I have asked the adults to:

- help you improve your writing by constantly checking it, marking it well in all subjects, helping you to spell better, and giving you pointers as to how to correct your mistakes and reach your targets faster
- add more details to the various improvement plans to help governors and senior managers measure whether they are actually helping you to learn more quickly
- help you to learn about the community in which you live, and the various cultures that make up the population of the United Kingdom today, and to increase governors' understanding of their responsibility for ensuring this happens.

Thank you again for being so helpful. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Doris Bell
Lead Inspector

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