



St George's Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120607
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291798
Inspection dates 25–26 January 2007
Reporting inspector Derek Pattinson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kesteven Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Stamford
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lincolnshire PE9 1SX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01780763654
Number on roll (school)	165	Fax number	01780763654
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Linda Pattison
		Headteacher	Mrs Carole Dunlop
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 25–26 January 2007	Inspection number 291798
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St. George's Church of England Primary School is smaller than most other primary schools with 166 children on roll, from the ages of 4 to 11. The school is situated in the historic town of Stamford, in Lincolnshire. The school has close links with St George's Church which has a new congregation who meet on the school site. Pupils come to the school from three different wards and from a variety of social backgrounds. The school has a privately run on-site nursery called Meadowview. Most pupils have pre-school experience. The range of attainment on entry is wide, but broadly average. The number of pupils eligible for free-school meals is broadly average. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Most pupils are white British. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as a second language. The school is set in spacious and attractive grounds which have recently been improved with extra playground facilities. The school achieved an 'Investors in People' Award in 2005. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2006.

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 is of the opinion that the school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to: pupils' achievement in English, notably that of boys; teachers' use of assessment; the quality of academic guidance to pupils; and the contribution to school leadership made by staff with management responsibilities. It currently provides inadequate value for money.

By the time pupils leave the school their overall test scores are broadly average and the progress of many pupils falls within the expected range. However, achievement and standards are currently inadequate because there is marked underachievement in both reading and writing on the part of boys, particularly in Key Stage 1. This has had a knock-on effect in Key Stage 2, where standards in English have declined.

The new headteacher has quickly diagnosed the situation. Her evaluation of school effectiveness is accurate and clearly identifies the most important things the school needs to do to move forward. She provides strong leadership, clear direction and has begun to establish a whole school approach to secure improvement. As a result, 'green shoots' have started to appear. School development planning is now more focused. The headteacher has begun to track pupils' progress carefully and consequently the school has only just become aware of the extent of boys' underachievement. Strategies have been introduced to improve teaching and learning and to eliminate unsatisfactory teaching. Consequently, teaching is now satisfactory overall, although teachers' use of assessment information to guide pupils in their work is not consistently effective.

Personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Cultural development, a weakness at the time of the last inspection, is now better represented in the curriculum. The successful promotion of positive attitudes to work and learning ensures that pupils are adequately prepared for life beyond school. Fitness and healthy lifestyles are given sound emphasis and pupils enjoy their lessons. However, although the curriculum is generally satisfactory, teachers do not use literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills enough in other subjects to help reinforce their development.

Standards of care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Levels of personal care and support for pupils are generally good and the school is conscientious in the measures that it takes to keep pupils safe. However, the guidance that pupils receive is inadequate. This is because teachers' marking and their use of individual targets do not yet give pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work, and so restricts their rate of progress. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher is a skilled leader. She has begun to develop the management roles of other staff. However, without a deputy headteacher to share the burden, too much still rests on the headteacher's shoulders. As a result, some key issues from the last inspection have not been met, notably standards and progress in

English. Under the headteacher's good leadership, the governing body is now more actively involved in school improvement and is starting to hold the school to account for what it achieves. This is establishing a firm platform from which developments can build. Given the good rate of progress since September, and the support of the local authority, the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. However, much still remains to be done.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, especially in writing, by giving all pupils, and especially boys, the opportunity to write more.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers use assessment information more systematically to match activities to pupils' precise needs.
- Develop the skills of subject leaders to enable them to be more effective in driving up standards and to strengthen the management of the school.
- Ensure that all pupils have personal targets to guide their learning and know how to achieve them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievements and the standards are inadequate because there is marked underachievement on the part of a significant group of pupils and unacceptably low standards in writing throughout school. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is broadly average and the results of the most recent national tests and assessments indicate that it remains average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Since 2004, standards have improved in Years 1 and 2. In 2006, Year 2 girls achieved well. In relation to girls nationally, their scores were above average in all core subjects. However, in the same year, boys underachieved badly. Their progress in reading, and particularly in writing, was inadequate because they were substantially below those of girls and below the average for boys nationally. Results in 2004 to 2006 saw a slight drop in overall standards at the end of Year 6 and a marked decline in pupils' achievements. This decline is due mainly to a drop in standards and achievement in English and particularly in writing. This is largely attributable to the poor performance of boys, although their performance in other core subjects was satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in both key stages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Through assemblies and constructive links with the local church community, the spiritual dimension develops well. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and willingly support charitable and community events. Moreover, opportunities for pupils to develop cultural awareness have improved since the last inspection. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy

school, value the friendships they form and develop positive attitudes to work that provide a sound foundation for later life. Attendance has risen above the national average because the school has taken effective steps to promote improvement. Pupils know the importance of safe and healthy lifestyles and show this in the sensible choices that they make for sports and healthy eating. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly if and when they occur. They make a positive contribution to school and community life, for example by their involvement in the school council, by entertaining local old folks and by supporting charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Secure relationships and effective control successfully underpin satisfactory teaching and learning. Whilst teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are generally satisfactory, children have too few opportunities to choose activities and resources for themselves to show initiative or develop independence. 'Teachers are always polite and listen to us' one pupil commented, although some lessons are too heavily directed by teachers, which restricts learning. Where teaching is occasionally good, pupils find lessons interesting and challenging, resources are used well to facilitate learning and time is used to good effect. Teachers give pupils plenty of encouragement, which helps keep them interested and involved. Teaching assistants sometimes contribute well to the quality of pupils' learning, but their use is inconsistent. Although assessment arrangements are satisfactory, teachers do not match work to pupils' precise needs to enable them to make the best possible progress. Marking varies in quality, and often does not make pupils aware of what they need to do next to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils. The youngest children get off to a sound start because they have some interesting things to do. Pupils steadily develop knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. However, work is not always matched carefully to pupils' precise needs to enable them to make the best possible progress. Pupils' literacy, mathematical and ICT skills are not yet used widely enough in other subjects. Personal and social development are given sound emphasis. Visits to places, such as to Robin Hoods Bay, and visitors, such as folk singers, help to bring learning to life. Pupils enjoy and benefit from a satisfactory range of popular clubs and activities, such as sports clubs, chess and the Good News club, which help pupils from Key Stage 2 to develop healthy and varied interests and contribute to their spiritual development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Standards of care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is good and pupils thrive in the positive atmosphere that the school promotes. Pupils feel secure because teachers and other staff respond to their needs and readily provide guidance, especially in matters of personal development. A good example is the lengths that the school goes to in order to welcome and settle pupils who arrive speaking little or no English. There are good arrangements for safeguarding pupils who say that bullying is rare, and that staff deal effectively with any incidents that occur. Checks on the suitability of staff, procedures for child protection and the management of site security are thorough and meet current requirements. The school is developing systems for tracking pupils' progress. However, teachers are not yet using performance data effectively to guide pupils in their work to help raise achievement. They have recently introduced individual pupil targets but discussions with pupils show that they do not fully understand what these are or how to use them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good. Since her arrival, there is a much greater sense of urgency around the school. In a short time, she has formulated ways to move the school forward. Her clear vision and direction are increasingly shared by her staff, the governing body and parents. As a result, a strong sense of team work is developing. However, the leadership of other staff with management responsibilities is unsatisfactory. This is part of the reason why some issues from the last inspection have not yet been tackled effectively. Plans to develop the skills and roles of subject managers are underway, but until fully in place, the headteacher remains directly responsible for too many aspects of school improvement, which again restricts the school's rate of improvement. Nevertheless, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further because governors are much more actively involved in evaluating the work of the school. As a result, they are starting to hold the school to account for what it achieves and are much clearer about what needs to be done to drive up quality and standards.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	3

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.

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	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
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

26 January 2007

Dear Children

St George's Church of England Primary School, Kesteven Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1SX

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school and for taking time to talk to us and answer our questions. We thought that you would like to hear what we found out about your school:

- Most of you are friendly, kind and polite towards each other, the teachers and other adults who work with you.
- You say that you feel safe and are well cared for and we agree with you.
- You enjoy your lessons and the clubs the school organises, and appreciate being taken to different places to help you enjoy your learning even more.
- Mrs Dunlop is a good headteacher, who is working hard to make the school an even better place for you.
- Attendance has gone up; very few children stay at home when they should be at school
- Some of you, especially some boys, are not making enough progress in English.

We have asked Mrs Dunlop, the staff and the governing body to help you make even better progress in English, especially in writing, by giving you more opportunity to write in all subjects. We have asked them to make sure that teachers always give you work that will help you learn as well as you can and that their marking tells you what you should do next to improve. You can help your teachers by telling them if you find the work that they give you is too easy or too hard. Finally, we have asked Mrs Dunlop to allow more staff to check how well you are doing, so that nobody gets left behind.

Over the next twelve months other inspectors will visit your school to see how you are getting on. We hope that you will do all you can to help your headteacher and teachers improve your school. Can you think of a way to help them? One way is to try your best at all times. That will please everyone and help to make sure that you will make good progress with your work.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Pattinson

Lead Inspector