

St George's Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120607
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	313692
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev M Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs C Dunlop
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2007
School address	Kesteven Road Stamford Lincolnshire PE9 1SX
Telephone number	01780 763654
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage, although a small and growing proportion comes from a range of other ethnic backgrounds, in particular Eastern European. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who need extra support with their learning is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. Attainment on entry covers the full range, but overall is in line with that for the children's ages. At the time of the previous inspection in January 2007 the school was given a Notice to Improve. It currently receives intensive support from the Local Authority. The headteacher has been in post since September 2006. There have been further changes to staff this academic year, including a number of new class teachers, two of whom are on temporary contracts pending the appointment of a new deputy head. There is currently an interim deputy headteacher. The school has attained Investor's in People accreditation and an Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with legislation, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This is now a satisfactory and improving school, which provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There had been a decline in standards and a slowing of pupils' progress in the recent past, particularly in writing. A major factor for the current upturn is due to the good leadership and management of the headteacher and in particular, her monitoring of standards. She has a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement across the school and a determination to continue improvement. Many co-ordinators are new to their post and are developing leadership and monitoring skills. As yet, their monitoring is at an early stage. Because of this, leadership and management remains satisfactory. Improvements made since the last inspection just over a year ago show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

The school provides a satisfactory level of care and support for pupils overall. Pastoral care is a strength and is good. As a result, pupils are positive about the school and clearly enjoy their lessons. This is demonstrated by their better than average attendance and good personal development. Pupils' behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They make a good contribution to the wider community and a satisfactory and developing contribution to the school community. However, their understanding of what they need to do next to improve their work, and the responsibility they are given for their own learning, varies from class to class.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils who need extra help with their learning or those with English as an additional language are identified quickly and provided with appropriate support. The recent work to improve writing skills has been successful and this is beginning to be evident in the accelerated progress pupils, especially boys, are making. Standards by the end of Year 6 are now in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. These average basic skills mean that pupils are being prepared satisfactorily for their future lives.

Although there are good aspects to much of the teaching, these are inconsistent so the quality remains satisfactory overall. Teachers plan lessons in detail and make good use of information and communication technology (ICT). In too many classes, however, the teachers do not use marking of work as well as they might to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. The satisfactory curriculum benefits from a good range of enrichment and extra curricular activities and a good range of clubs, particularly for the older pupils. This enlivens the curriculum and is enjoyed greatly by the pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle happily into the Reception class because of the good emphasis placed on their induction into school. They have a sound start to their education in the Foundation Stage because of the satisfactory quality of the provision. The attention that the school pays to ensuring children's happiness and well-being is good. They settle quickly and parents are very pleased with the care staff take to help their children enjoy their first days at school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. As a result, boys and girls from all groups, make steady, satisfactory

progress overall. By the time they start in Year 1, standards are generally in line with those expected for their ages. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is a good emphasis on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. However, the provision for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development through outdoor learning, while satisfactory, is more limited. The outdoor area is small and there are few resources. There is no covered area for children to work outdoors and the headteacher has already identified this aspect as an area for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to learn outdoors.
- Ensure the quality of marking is consistently good in line with the school's policy.
- Develop pupils' sense of responsibility for their own learning and their understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Develop co-ordinators' roles in monitoring within their subjects.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. There has been significant under-achievement in the past, particularly for boys in writing, but this is no longer the case. Children settle well into the Reception classes and make steady gains in their learning, due to the sound quality of the provision. This satisfactory progress continues through Years 1 to Year 6, and achievement is currently satisfactory overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language are supported effectively so that they achieve as well as their peers in relation to their abilities. Writing standards for boys have improved recently because of a number of initiatives and a strong emphasis placed upon this aspect of learning throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. They like their lessons, because, as one Year 6 put it, 'You learn a lot from them.' They show concern and respect for each other. They are adamant that bullying is not an issue in their school. Behaviour observed during the inspection in lessons and around the school was predominantly good, only occasionally being less so when the teaching was of variable quality. Attendance is now above the national average, reflecting pupils' increasing enjoyment in their learning. Pupils' well-being is successfully developed through good links with the local church and wider community. Pupils are keen to help take responsibility for improving the quality of their own community through the school council, but are not given sufficient opportunities to take the lead in meetings. They understand what is meant by a healthy lifestyle, and by and large put this into practice. By Year 6, they have matured into thoughtful, well-adjusted and confident young people ready for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

This is a steadily improving picture. The amount of good teaching has risen since the previous inspection, and there are no unsatisfactory lessons. The better lessons are marked by learning that is lively, exciting and well planned to meet the diverse needs of all pupils. Lessons that are only satisfactory usually lack sufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Similarly, they are where teachers do too much talking and pupils are not encouraged to take suitable responsibility for their own learning. Teaching assistants have a more significant impact on pupils' learning than was evident previously, especially for those pupils needing extra help. Marking of pupils' work is of variable quality, and not always used well enough to help them improve. Only in the better lessons are teachers' assessments of how well pupils are doing having a meaningful impact on the way lessons are planned, in order to raise pupils' achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is suitably broad and well balanced with an appropriately strong emphasis placed upon literacy and numeracy. Pupils who need extra help are provided with suitable support, as are those with English as an additional language. The school is now developing systems to provide extra challenge for potentially higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils. The leadership has identified the need to further develop the curriculum for children in the Reception class. Good attention is given to enrichment activities, such as providing opportunity for pupils to learn from a number of well-planned visits and visitors. Visits to places such as to Robin Hood's Bay and visiting musicians and writers who come into school to work with the pupils make learning exciting and interesting. There are a good number of new clubs and other activities, although many of these are for older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

St George's justifiably prides itself on the quality of its care and all pupils benefit from good pastoral support. Good systems are in place for keeping pupils safe and child protection and risk assessments meet requirements. Pupils feel safe in school and, importantly, know that if the need arises their concerns will be listened to by staff. Good links with outside agencies, as well as the school's internal support systems, mean that help is quickly provided if required. For example, pupils experiencing emotional difficulties or arriving in school with little or no spoken English are supported well. Academic guidance presents a rather different picture. The school has made an effective start in establishing school-wide procedures for involving pupils in assessing their progress. However, these are still at too early a stage of development and implementation to ensure uniform application in all classes. As a result, their full benefit is not yet being felt in setting pupils individual targets, based on previous work, and then involving them in assessing how successful they have been.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. Routines and daily systems are well established and the school runs smoothly. The leadership of the headteacher is good and has had a positive impact on moving the school forward. She has a good overall knowledge of standards throughout the school, as a result of her accurate and rigorous monitoring. She uses this information effectively to focus priorities and improve the quality of education. This results in accurate school self-evaluation and the school's steady progress towards the challenging targets it sets. The school has correctly identified the major areas for improvement and these have already been built into the development plan. Governors are supportive, take their responsibilities seriously, and satisfactorily hold the school to account. Co-ordinators are hardworking and enthusiastic but they have not all, as yet, developed fully their leadership roles. While many good policies have been produced, such as for marking, these are not always fully and consistently applied in daily practice.

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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?	3
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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.

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	2
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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St George's Primary School, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1SX

I am writing to thank you for the way you made us feel welcome when we visited recently. I also want to share with you what we found out about your school. I especially want to thank all those of you we met in groups and talked to at lunchtime. This was very helpful to us and we enjoyed hearing about your work and how much you enjoy being at school.

The really good things about your school are:

- your behaviour is good
- you come to school regularly
- you enjoy your lessons and make satisfactory progress in your work as a result
- you have lots of interesting clubs, and visitors who teach you exciting things
- your school has good links with the church and other people who can help you
- your headteacher knows a lot about how well you are all doing and how to make the school even better.

The things we have asked your teachers to do next are:

- for children in the Reception class to have more opportunity to learn outdoors
- for teachers to tell you more about how well you have done and what you need to do next when they mark your work
- to help you understand even more and be responsible for how well you are doing and how you can improve your work
- for teachers in charge of subjects to find out more about how well each one of you is doing.

We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes

Lead inspector