

Gooderstone Church of England Primary Academy

The Street, Gooderstone, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE33 9BP

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards at key stage 2 are not high enough. Pupils do not make enough progress from their individual starting points.
- Teachers do not consistently provide learning activities that meet pupils' needs. As a result, too few pupils have previously reached age-related standards in writing.
- The most able pupils do not make enough progress. This is because they are not provided with sufficient opportunity to excel.
- Not enough pupils achieve as well as they could do in mathematics. This is because the activities provided are at times too easy or too hard. Older pupils still have gaps in their learning.
- Pupils' achievement and their accurate use of spelling and handwriting are not good enough. New initiatives have not had enough time to impact on pupils' achievement.
- Although leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for, leaders do not check precisely the progress these pupils make.
- The roles and responsibilities of the local governing body and the academy trust are not as clear as they need to be. Consequently, the governing body does not hold leaders to account as well as it could for the progress that pupils make.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and other school leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have the capacity to continue to make rapid improvements.
- Pupils are happy and safe. Their behaviour and conduct is good and they are well cared for.
- Children start well in the early years. As a result of good teaching children make good progress.
- School leaders provide well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils have positive relationships with each other and adults based on strong school values.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by:
 - providing appropriate learning opportunities for the most able pupils in mathematics so that greater proportions of these pupils reach the higher standard by the end of key stage 2
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who reach age-related expectations in writing across the school.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - use assessment information on reading, writing and mathematics consistently in order to plan activities that meet pupils' needs well
 - improve pupils' accuracy of spelling and quality of handwriting across the school
 - provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their reading and mathematical skills.
- Strengthen the impact of leaders and managers further by:
 - implementing a system for tracking and analysing the progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make
 - building on the effectiveness of governance by clarifying roles and accountabilities with the academy trust.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This school became a sponsored academy in March 2015. Its predecessor school had been graded as outstanding in 2011 and was exempt from routine inspections. Due to fluctuating results at the end of key stage 2, the school was re-inspected to determine if the excellent standards were being maintained. Over recent years, there have been a number of changes in leadership. Since September 2015, as a result of the new leadership and governance structure, the school has been improving rapidly and pupils' achievement is rising.
- School leaders have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have clear improvement plans, and their actions are leading to better outcomes for pupils. These plans are rigorously adhered to and actions evaluated.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They use the information they gain from this monitoring to provide appropriate training for staff. Staff work effectively with colleagues from the nearby federated school to ensure that assessments of pupils' work are accurate. Staff also have the opportunity to develop their subject leadership skills across the federation. Adults spoken to during the inspection were full of praise for the training and opportunities they receive.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Each pupil's needs are known and good progress can be seen in their books. Leaders have ensured that these pupils have equal opportunity to access the curriculum. However, leaders do not yet have an assessment system that tracks the smaller gains that these pupils make. Consequently, leaders are not able to precisely analyse the impact of their actions so that pupils receive timely intervention and support to meet their needs further.
- Middle leaders know the areas for improvement in their subjects. They have rightly focused on improving the quality of English and mathematics and have credible action plans that are well underway. In English, pupils now experience a greater range and quality of text to read and study. Consequently, pupils are using their broader understanding of vocabulary to improve their writing.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. Through a focus on the school's values of 'honesty, respect and kindness', pupils learn how to develop positive relationships with each other and adults. Pupils learn in a calm and purposeful environment built on mutual respect.
- The curriculum is well planned. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their work in their topics and how involved they are in the planning of their learning. For example, there is much evidence of high-quality work on display from the current Africa topic that the pupils have been learning. While, in some classes, there are many opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subject areas, older pupils do not have the same opportunities to put into practice their writing skills at a high-enough quality.
- Leaders use additional government money, such as the funding to support disadvantaged pupils, increasingly well. They identify the barriers to learning that some

pupils face and develop effective strategies to overcome them. In-school assessment information demonstrates that disadvantaged pupils are now making stronger progress.

- Most parents spoken to during the inspection are very happy with the school, its leaders and teachers, and the provision that their children experience. These parents have full confidence that the school is now a much better place. One parent commented, 'my child cannot wait to get to school'. Parents of children in the early years fully appreciated their role 'as partners in my child's learning'.
- School leaders benefit from the sponsorship of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust. Staff from the trust visit regularly and work closely with school leaders to provide additional support and challenge. They agree with leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance. The trust holds leaders to account for the improvements that are being made and for the standard of education at the school.

Governance of the school

- Over the last year the governing body's structure has changed. The governing body is now responsible for two schools, since federating with another school in the same academy trust. The local governing body has many strengths and recognises accurately what it needs to do to improve itself further.
- The governing body is ably led by a knowledgeable and experienced chair. Governors are determined that pupils at the school will achieve well. Their regular monitoring visits are proving effective in working with school leaders to provide for pupils' safety and education.
- Minutes of meetings show that governors are kept well informed about the school's performance by the headteacher. Governors carry out their statutory duties diligently and ensure that appropriate policies are in place and regularly reviewed.
- Although the governing body has a strong understanding of its role and responsibilities, within the academy trust accountabilities are not clarified as well as they could be. As a result, the local governing body is not consistently effective in holding school leaders to account for the progress that pupils make.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Processes and procedures for the recruitment of staff are compliant with current legislation. Staff receive appropriate child protection training at the start of the academic year, together with regular updates. They are alert to any potential safeguarding issues.
- The leadership of child protection is robust. Documents and records are well kept and actions are followed through in a timely way. Leaders work effectively with other agencies and ensure that children are provided with the help and support they need.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school. Adults teach the older pupils strategies for keeping themselves safe, especially when using the internet, through assemblies and in lessons. Pupils know who to speak to if they are concerned and are confident that an adult would listen and help them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving at pace but remains variable. This is because there is now a stable and permanent teaching team after a period of high staff turnover. Now adults receive additional training and development to improve the learning for pupils and are starting to change and develop their practice. Pupils told the inspector, 'last year we were lacking teachers but this has changed; they are kind, nice and well trained'.
- Where inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching, it is because teachers are not using the school's assessment information well enough to plan learning that meets the needs of groups of pupils. Work is sometimes too easy or too hard for a few pupils and as a result, for these pupils, their progress slows.
- In mathematics, the most able pupils are provided with the same work irrespective of their ability or age in the mixed class. As a result, although these pupils are diligent and complete tasks extremely well, they are not provided with sufficient opportunity to deepen, use and apply their understanding in different ways.
- Teachers do not deploy teaching assistants consistently well in lessons. Therefore, teaching assistants are not always as effective as they could be when working with individuals or small groups. However, teaching assistants who work individually with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure that these pupils are well cared for and make gains in their learning.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain learning clearly and well across the curriculum. However, they do not always move pupils on to attempt greater challenges often enough. Older pupils in the school are not given enough opportunities to write at length in order to demonstrate their abilities.
- Reading is taught well. Children develop their reading skills quickly in early years and are very keen to show their skills by reading aloud. Younger readers who read to the inspector used their knowledge of sounds and the pictures well to work out unfamiliar words. Parents commented that their children enjoy reading at home. Younger boys maturely and confidently gave their opinion of types of books they enjoy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are kind and respectful. For example, during a church assembly seen, pupils were respectful and participated well. They sang a Christmas carol tunefully and all joined in confidently when reciting 'The Lord's Prayer'.
- Pupils are taught effective strategies to deal with differing emotions. For example, in one lesson seen pupils were learning how to calm themselves if they were feeling cross. The younger pupils were able to confidently explain how they hug themselves, say stop and take a deep breath.
- Pupils are confident that they are kept safe when at school. Older pupils willingly take

care of younger ones and ensure that they are happy during less structured times.

- Where learning is not as well planned to meet needs, then pupils make the most of what they have and still work well.
- Pupils' presentation of work is often better in English than it is in mathematics. Adults do not consistently insist on pupils presenting their work as well as they could.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Adults have positive relationships with the pupils and have high expectations of behaviour and conduct. Leaders make sure the behaviour policy is applied consistently and pupils review the policy regularly to ensure that the policy is fair and appropriate. The school is a happy place in which to learn and pupils are well cared for.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Staff follow up absences swiftly and ensure that processes are in place for pupils who do not attend school regularly enough.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Lunchtimes and breaktimes are characterised by friendly interaction and playing of games. Older pupils play well with younger children. Year 6 pupils take care of the small amounts of play equipment and take their responsibilities seriously.
- Pupils have an accurate understanding of what bullying is. They are certain that if bullying were to occur, then adults would listen to their views and deal with this well. School records show that behaviour issues are few and dealt with effectively and in line with school policies.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- From their individual starting points, the proportions of pupils making consistently good progress have not been high enough in reading, writing and mathematics. Published data shows that for some time progress has not been strong enough for individuals across the school.
- In 2016, although pupils' achievement in Year 6 met the government's floor standards, the pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils nationally from the same starting points. This was particularly the case in writing and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books indicates that the progress pupils make is varied. For some pupils, they are now making accelerated progress over time in mathematics and are catching up on lost ground. For others they are not being provided with learning activities that stretch their mathematical thinking so more pupils make better progress.
- Too often the most able pupils are not challenged well enough. The older pupils often have to complete work that demands the same level of knowledge and skills rather than deepening understanding and challenging them to think differently. In 2016, no pupil reached the higher standard in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils do not apply their understanding of sounds well enough in their spelling. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 in 2016, pupils achieved below the national

expectation in spelling. Work in books demonstrates that pupils are still not consistently applying well-developed skills in spelling.

- Due to the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, it is not possible to report on their achievement in 2016 without identifying them. However, leaders use the additional government funding increasingly well so that any barriers to learning are overcome. Disadvantaged pupils on the roll are making strong progress in their learning from their starting points when compared with other pupils nationally.
- At key stage 1, pupils continue to make to least expected progress from the early years. Achievement is strongest in reading and pupils who do not achieve the expected level in phonics in Year 1 have generally caught up by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities and learning in other subjects. Through whole school topics such as 'Africa', pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in subjects such as geography, history and art. The work on display around the school was of a good quality. Pupils commented that their learning is 'fun' and they have fewer worksheets this year.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Adults say this has not always been the case. This year, the head of school is teaching the Nursery and Reception children. Individual starting points vary widely from year to year due to small numbers in the class. This year, whatever their starting points, children are making good progress in all areas of learning.
- In the afternoons, the Reception children join with Year 1 to experience other subjects in the curriculum and learning with older pupils. These young children contribute their views and opinions easily in lessons. For example, in one personal, social, health and economic education lesson, a child confidently explained that when a person shows a happy face, 'the face twinkles'.
- Children are gaining their reading skills quickly and effectively. When they are learning about sounds they are provided with activities that are engaging and fun. During these lessons, children also practise their writing skills. Through adults' clear instructions and modelling, children are learning to form their letters correctly. Boys and girls are developing their writing skills equally well.
- Children are very enthusiastic about their learning and are extremely proud to 'be a wren'. During lessons, they praise each other spontaneously when a friend has either achieved a new skill or explains their learning well. Their behaviour and attitudes to their learning are exemplary.
- The outside area is used well. In one lesson seen, Nursery children were finding and collecting plastic bugs in a wheelbarrow. The adult questioned the children so they developed their language. The children clearly explained that 'we are collecting bugs for our hotel and I have ants'.
- The children are taught effectively about taking risks. In one lesson seen, where children were using the apparatus in the hall, they were encouraged to make decisions

about climbing on the bars. Adults used questions and direction effectively so that children gained confidence and skills during the lesson. When practising their 'egg rolls' and 'bunny hops' the children demonstrated perseverance and determination to master their skills. They were very pleased with their results.

- Although children have achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Reception, in previous years the proportion of children who have reached a good level of development has been below national averages. This year, through strong and effective leadership, adults have made appropriate amendments to the curriculum. Children experience all areas of the early years curriculum in a warm and stimulating environment. As a result, this year, children are progressing well in their development and are being well prepared for entry into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	141780
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10012443

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mark Rolph
Executive headteacher	Christina Galletly
Telephone number	01366 328280
Website	www.churchsidefederation.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	exechead@churchsidefederation.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Gooderstone Primary Academy is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- Children attend Nursery on a part-time basis.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportions of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and of pupils with an education and health care plan are above average.
- Due to the small numbers in each cohort, the school does not consistently meet the

threshold to report on the government's floor standard.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. This included observing learning in all classes, jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with pupils, looked at their books to take account of the work that has been done over time and the progress that pupils make.
- During the inspection, the inspector listened to pupils read and talk about their books. The teaching of phonics and a reading lesson for older pupils were observed.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the headteachers of the federated schools, members of the governing body and a number of representatives from the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.
- The inspector spoke informally with parents, pupils and staff to gather their views.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised around the school's own assessment of its performance and improvement planning. In addition, the school's systems for assessing, tracking and evaluating the progress that pupils make were examined.
- The inspector examined documentation around child protection and scrutinised the recruitment checks made by school leaders when employing staff. The arrangements for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were also considered.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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