

St George's Church of England Aided Primary School

Kesteven Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1SX

Inspection dates

4–5 December 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are effective in improving standards in a wide range of aspects of the school's work. The impact of their work is evident in the quality of teaching and the good progress pupils make.
- Leaders are taking effective action to address the historically poor outcomes at the end of key stage 2.
- Outcomes are improving rapidly. Pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They skilfully question pupils and plan sequences of lessons that build pupils' depth of understanding effectively over time.
- Children in the early years make a good start to their school life. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above the national average for the last three years.
- Pupils behave and conduct themselves well at all times of the school day. Relationships are positive. There is an ethos of mutual respect.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- The proportions of pupils attaining the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 have been close to or above the national averages for two years.
- Middle leaders are increasingly effective in improving the quality of teaching. However, they do not act on findings from their work as well as they could to help further improve pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not check carefully enough that their initiatives are fully put into place by all staff.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work and the accuracy of their spelling, grammar and punctuation are not consistently high.
- Teachers sometimes do not ensure that pupils are as confident as they could be in applying their early reading skills in their writing.
- The governing body has not been as effective as it could have been in holding leaders to account for pupils' progress and attainment, including that of those who are disadvantaged.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still too low.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should bring about even more rapid improvements by ensuring that:
 - their initiatives are implemented fully and consistently
 - they continue to develop the effectiveness of middle leaders so that they have greater impact in further improving pupils' progress and raising their attainment
 - they refine further their use of the pupil premium to improve the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils and to raise their attainment
 - the governing body is more stringent in holding leaders to account for the progress made by pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work in different subjects
 - make sure that pupils have secure reading skills, which they are able to apply in their writing
 - more carefully check that pupils use accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling in their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and the governing body identify that disruption to staffing arrangements and other contextual factors have contributed to previously low outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Staffing and leadership are now established and stable. There is a cohesive leadership team. Leaders are effective in improving standards. Currently, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes across the school are good.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and their plans for improvement identify relevant priorities. Leaders ensure that staff have received effective training and support. Many initiatives being developed further from last year show demonstrable impact in improving standards in reading, writing, mathematics and other subject areas. Members of staff who spoke with the inspectors commented on how their teaching had improved as a result of the support leaders provide.
- Leaders ensure that standards are securely and rapidly improving in mathematics. Leaders and other staff have a consistent approach to creating classroom displays and relevant resources, which support pupils' learning and progress effectively. Leaders have rightly made improving standards in reading a focus. They have devised a cohesive approach, which develops pupils' oracy, reading and writing skills in concert. Leaders have put into place a structured guided-reading programme, and the focus on developing vocabulary is evident.
- The additional funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used effectively. The new coordinator for the provision for pupils with SEND has reviewed existing processes and is bringing greater rigour in identifying pupils' needs and supporting the planning of appropriate support. Most pupils make good progress. Leaders are refining the ways in which they check the impact of their work.
- Leaders use the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sports effectively to improve the skills of teachers in delivering lessons and to raise pupils' participation in school sporting events. The school recently achieved the Sportsmark award in recognition of the quality of the school's PE and sports provision.
- External support from the local authority has been effective. Through regular visits and meetings and the brokering of relevant training, the local authority has supported improvements in leadership. Leaders ensure that staff work effectively with other schools, for example, to support teachers to develop further the accuracy of their assessment of pupils' learning. The school is part of a range of local and county projects, and external consultants and other key personnel support continued improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The very large majority of parents and carers are positive about all aspects of the school's work. They say that staff are friendly and approachable, and that their children are making good progress and enjoy going to school.
- Leaders and the governing body have ensured that the pupil premium funding is more carefully targeted. This has not been the case in the past. Leaders use the pupil

premium funding to provide additional teaching to support pupils' learning as well as to work more closely with families. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is similar to, and sometimes stronger than, other pupils in the school. However, this has not been reflected in published outcomes and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains lower than that seen nationally.

- Leaders have ensured that the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which is enriched by school trips, visitors to the school and a range of extra-curricular clubs. Leaders have carefully considered how they have structured the curriculum. Different subjects are linked together meaningfully to promote pupils' interest. Staff, for example, recently looked together at pupils' topic work to evaluate how well pupils were taught to use English and mathematics skills in different subjects. The curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. However, some pupils in key stage 2 are not as confident as they should be for their age in articulating the fundamental British values.
- Middle leaders are well supported by senior leaders and have a good understanding of their roles. They lead staff training and regularly check standards by, for example, looking at pupils' work, analysing information about pupils' learning and visiting classrooms. They work with members of the governing body to produce focused reports of actions taken and the impact these have. However, they are not as effective as they could be in using findings from their work to address inconsistencies in teaching.
- Leaders have established effective structures to review the performance of staff. They hold regular meetings with teachers to carefully check the progress made by pupils in each class, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. They also regularly check standards on an ongoing basis. However, senior leaders are not as fully effective as they could be in ensuring that their initiatives are applied consistently to further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and attainment.

Governance of the school

- In the past, the governing body has not been as effective as it should have been in holding leaders to account. It did not challenge leaders sufficiently about the progress and attainment of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or those with SEND. The governing body commissioned an independent review by a national leader of governance, and has identified strengths and aspects in which it can improve. It is now more effective in holding leaders to account.
- The governing body has a well-structured approach to working with senior and middle leaders, focusing its work on the aims of the improvement plan. Members of the governing body regularly visit the school and meet leaders and create 'impact reports', which they share at meetings of the governing body.
- The governing body is knowledgeable and now has a secure overview of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. It is increasingly asking for evidence of impact. However, the minutes of their meetings show that they are still not as sharp as they could be in challenging leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a secure culture of safeguarding. The record of recruitment checks on staff, governors and visitors is accurate and up to date.
- The designated leaders for safeguarding ensure that staff are trained and kept up to date with the latest guidance on keeping pupils safe in education.
- Leaders take timely action when they have concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being. They are tenacious in involving external agencies when this is appropriate and keep detailed documentation. However, their records of the effective actions they take are sometimes not as sharp as they could be.
- Instances of bullying or derogatory behaviour are rare. The large majority of parents and pupils are confident that staff will respond to any concerns raised.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and the very large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or spoke with the inspectors said that their children are safe. Leaders ensure that the school site is safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is strong across the school and improving. Teachers are positive and enthusiastic. Relationships are a strength. Teachers praise pupils for their good behaviour and efforts in their work. Teachers ensure that classroom environments are positive, productive places to learn.
- Teachers have increasingly high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They usually match work well to pupils' needs and abilities, including for the most able pupils. This is evident in pupils' work over time, particularly in mathematics. Pupils in key stage 2 said, 'Our work has got harder!'
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan lessons that are well organised, sustain pupils' interest and support their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants use effective questioning skills to check and deepen pupils' understanding. For example, a member of staff asked pupils to identify 'root' words to help them learn spelling rules and patterns. This improved pupils' language skills and understanding of challenging vocabulary.
- Teachers in all classes ensure that displays and well-chosen resources support pupils' learning effectively. These include prompts to support writing and spelling, the use of vocabulary, mathematical methods and reading skills, as well as many examples of pupils' own high-quality work. This helps pupils to know what is expected and the process of how they learn.
- Teachers are increasingly effective at making links between different subjects. For example, pupils apply their writing and mathematical skills in religious education work. Teachers explained how they were able to, for example, teach pupils to use reasoning skills gained in mathematics in other subjects.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Staff have received training in delivering the

school's phonics programme. Teaching is focused, positive and keeps pupils interested.

- Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy and as appropriate for the age and stage of pupils. This often consolidates learning and prepares pupils well for work to come. A school homework display shows the interesting homework tasks teachers set for different subjects.
- Teachers are developing a 'mastery' approach to the teaching of mathematics. They are often skilled in teaching pupils how to become fluent in their understanding of mathematical concepts, linking different aspects of mathematics and using visual imagery well. This deepens pupils' learning. Teachers ensure that pupils are becoming increasingly adept in tackling problem-solving and reasoning tasks.
- Teachers teach pupils to be confident readers who have a range of strategies for reading words about which they are not sure. Teachers cultivate positive attitudes to reading. However, sometimes teachers are not as effective as they could be in ensuring that pupils are able to link and apply their phonics and reading skills to their writing.
- Teachers ask pupils to write in a range of styles and in different subjects. Many ensure that pupils' writing is of a high standard. However, this not consistently evident. Teachers do not have equally high expectations of the quality, and sometimes the presentation, of pupils' work between different subjects. Teachers' expectations of the accuracy of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation and of pupils' capability to edit and improve their work also vary.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to develop pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils enjoy and value the range of roles and responsibilities the school offers them, such as the 'mini police', school council or playground leaders. Staff encourage pupils to act on their own initiative. For example, the school librarians are very proud of their new library and work hard to ensure that it is tidy, orderly and well organised.
- Pupils are taught to have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating, and physical and emotional well-being. Leaders and other staff have made it a priority to support pupils who have mental health issues. The school is part of a county initiative in this area. Initiatives, such as 'Resilient Me', help pupils to be independent and have positive attitudes to, and persevere in, their learning.
- Through the curriculum and assemblies, as well as visitors such as the NSPCC and police community support officer, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Pupils can explain what bullying means and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online.
- Pupils are reflective and considerate. Pupils understand the importance of treating each other with respect. Pupils show a good understanding of different faiths and religions.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders and other staff say that behaviour has improved over the last two years. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and apply themselves well to all that is asked of them. Staff ensure that pupils are polite, respectful, positive and confident.
- Staff consistently and positively remind pupils about their expectations of behaviour. Pupils know and understand the school's rules and systems for promoting positive behaviour. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. For example, inspectors observed how staff were able to skilfully and calmly support a pupil who was becoming agitated. Pupils behave and conduct themselves well at all times of the school day, whether in classrooms, corridors or on the playground.
- Attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is below the national average. Leaders check attendance very closely and emphasise the importance of attendance to parents. A small number of pupils have extended absence for legitimate reasons and this has affected overall figures. Leaders work closely with families whose children have high levels of persistent absence and show that they are able to improve attendance for individual pupils. However, this remains a continuing area of focus.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- For the last three years, pupils' progress in mathematics and particularly reading and writing by the end of key stage 2 has been below, and often well below, the national averages. However, current pupils' work, observations of teaching and learning and the school's own information show that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress across the school, including in key stage 2, in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects.
- The proportions of pupils achieving a good level of development in the early years has been above the national average and improved year on year for the last three years. The proportion of pupils who achieved the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 was close to the national average. The proportions of pupils who attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 were close to or above the national averages for the last two years, including at greater depth for reading and mathematics.
- The majority of pupils produce work that is of high quality in different subjects. Pupils' work shows that their understanding is developing and growing in depth over time.
- Because teachers usually match work well to pupils' needs and abilities, all groups of pupils, including the most and least able, those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, usually make good progress.
- Pupils contribute well in lessons. This shows that they have a good understanding of what is being taught and how they are progressing in their learning. They know what they are learning and why. In a typical example in key stage 2, pupils explained their

use of similes and metaphors: 'When we write our own poems we know what we can put in them to make them more interesting for the reader.' This understanding helps pupils to make strong progress.

- The quality of teaching and the commitment of staff to pupils' personal development and welfare ensure that pupils are now well prepared for each new stage of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- Many children join the early years with skills below those typical for their age. The proportions of children achieving a good level of development have improved year on year and been above the national averages for the last three years. Children make good progress and have a good start to their education in the early years. They are well prepared for key stage 1.
- The leader of the early years carefully checks children's learning and development across the different areas of learning, and identifies effectively what is needed to help children make good progress. Teachers and other adults use questioning effectively to take children's learning forward. Activities often provide challenge to stimulate children's curiosity and perseverance, including for the most able.
- The leader of the early years ensures that the indoor and outdoor learning areas are well organised and provide children with a broad range of opportunities across the different areas of learning. Routines are quickly established. Children are resilient and independent in their learning.
- Staff develop children's personal development and behaviour well. Children have positive attitudes to their learning and behave well. They are taught to collaborate well and be respectful of each other.
- Children are confident in explaining what they are learning. Children can concentrate and listen well. This was observed in a lesson in which a parent volunteer and her baby had been invited to visit the classroom as part of children's 'All About Me' topic. They answered questions about people who help us, caring for a new baby and growing up. Children talked about their own experiences.
- The leader of the early years is developing effective transition arrangements with a partner nursery. She is also working to improve the involvement of parents in their children's learning. Parents are increasingly involved in contributing to assessments of children's learning and development. However, this is not yet fully established.
- Leaders ensure that the safeguarding arrangements in the early years are met.

School details

Unique reference number	120607
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10053106

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Blish
Executive headteacher	Mrs Fiona Griffiths
Telephone number	01780 763 654
Website	www.aspire.school
Email address	EnquiriesSG@aspire.school
Date of previous inspection	22-23 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Aspire federation of schools. The executive headteacher oversees both schools in the federation. The governing body also acts across both schools. The school has a head of school.
- The school receives support from the local authority through regular visits and support to arrange training.
- St George's Church of England Aided Primary School is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of pupils who speak English as an additional language, are below those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, middle leaders and other staff. The inspectors met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors observed 12 lessons, including the teaching of phonics. Many lessons were observed jointly with the executive headteacher or the head of school. During these visits, the inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with leaders. The inspectors listened to pupils read and met pupils informally as well as meeting with a group of pupils.
- The inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day and account was taken of the 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 21 free-text responses. Account was also taken of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, and staff performance. The inspectors looked at plans for improvement as well as leaders' evaluation of the school's performance. The inspectors also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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