

Guyhirn CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110806
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337578
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nigel Franklin
Headteacher	Mrs Justine Sands
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Most of the lead inspector's time was spent in lessons, observing learning. Nine lessons, taught by three teachers, were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, teachers, and representatives of the governing body. The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation and a sample of the pupils' work. Questionnaire responses from pupils, staff and 51 parents were analysed.

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

- how well the pupils are learning and making progress in English and mathematics
- how the curriculum is modified to meet the needs of groups and individuals
- the effectiveness of the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is a very small school. The pupils are taught in three classes; two classes currently have temporary teachers. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and that of those who speak a language other than English, are both well below average. Two pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. Five pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

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

2

Main findings

The headteacher is successfully guiding the school through a period of change by retaining a determined focus on improving achievement and by maintaining the school's outstanding care, guidance and support for the pupils and its strong ethos – a feature which both parents and staff value highly.

Attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6, but it has fluctuated over the last few years because the number of pupils in each year group is small and in some groups the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is raising attainment of the younger children, and this is being built upon successfully in Years 1 and 2 so that attainment at the end of Year 2 increased considerably in 2009.

Learning and progress are satisfactory. Progress is stronger in English than in mathematics and science. The school has successfully focused on improving reading and writing. In mathematics and science, more attention is now being given to problem solving and investigation, but progress in these areas is not rapid enough to help the pupils to reach higher levels of attainment. The teaching is satisfactory and the pupils respond well in lessons. However, marking, although conscientious, is not sufficiently focused on helping pupils to improve their work.

The care, guidance and support for the pupils are particularly effective in ensuring that those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well and that all pupils feel safe, behave exceptionally well and have a very good understanding of environmental issues and of staying fit and healthy. The teaching assistants play a central role in delivering effective support for those with special needs and at an early stage of learning English. The curriculum is generally modified successfully to meet the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities found in each class.

There is a strong determination on the part of the headteacher, supported by the governing body, to bring continuous improvement; there is clear evidence that the strong foundations being laid for the youngest children are proving beneficial as they move through the school. However, the school's plans for improvement are too wide-ranging, with the result that some important areas are not getting the attention they need. Together with maintaining some outstanding features of provision and personal outcomes for pupils, this illustrates that the school is well placed to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics and science by
 - improving the teaching of problem solving and investigations
 - ensuring that marking identifies clearly how pupils can improve their work
 - providing opportunities for pupils to make corrections and improvements.
- Refine the school development plan to provide a sharper focus on fewer key priorities.

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

The pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory. The pupils respond well to their teachers, and their behaviour is impeccable in most lessons. Currently, their progress is faster in English than in mathematics and science; there is a more consistent approach to practising skills through a well-established system of targets, which the pupils use to good effect. In a lesson in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class some of the older pupils demonstrated well their ability to identify important information and present their writing in a well-structured manner. Progress in writing in lessons and in the pupils' work is at least satisfactory throughout the school. In mathematics the pupils are developing strategies for solving problems, but these are not understood and used well enough to help them to reach higher levels of attainment. Similarly in science, while pupils demonstrate secure knowledge in their work, they are not developing approaches to investigation systematically enough to accelerate their progress.

The school carefully tracks the progress of every pupil. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with statements of special educational needs, do well because the school is effective in tackling barriers to learning, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. As a result they have positive attitudes and they make good progress.

The results of tests and assessments at the end of Year 6 fluctuate considerably because cohorts are small and their make-up varies widely. Attainment is broadly average overall. Last year, in all year groups, the progress made by pupils in English was at least at the expected level, and often good. In mathematics there was much greater variation, with some year groups making satisfactory rather than good progress. The results of national tests in 2009 reflect this weaker performance in mathematics. Conversely, there was a marked upturn in results at the end of Year 2,

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where the impact of improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage and through Years 1 and 2 are coming to fruition in improved attainment.

The school has maintained the many strong features of the pupils’ personal development since the last inspection. Many outcomes for pupils are strong, because of the good opportunities and enrichment available to them and the outstanding care, guidance and support that they receive. The pupils continue to have a very comprehensive understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and make healthy choices at snack times, which they themselves monitor. Pupils make a good contribution to the school, particularly through the school council, and to the local community. The pupils have a good knowledge of a range of faiths, and links with schools in India and Hong Kong are providing pupils with an increasingly broad international understanding. The pupils say they feel very safe at school, and greatly enjoy a very harmonious atmosphere in which to learn and play.

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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Although the teaching is good in some respects, there are variations and inconsistencies. This means that pupils are making progress in line with expectations, rather than exceeding them. Although the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory, there is a lack of attention to problem solving. This is currently being addressed in lessons, but pupils are not consistently making good progress. There has also been

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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an increase in the profile of investigative science. However, inspection of the pupils’ mathematics and science exercise books shows that, until recently, their skills have not been incrementally developed and extended fast enough. Marking, although conscientious, is not linked closely enough with the well-developed system of setting targets for the pupils, neither does it routinely set out clearly what the pupils need to do to improve.

Pupils have a good foundation in letters and sounds in Reception and Year 1, where these are well taught. There are good features in the teaching of literacy, which have brought improvements to the quality of pupils’ writing.

The curriculum is well organised, diverse, and interesting for the pupils. Effective links have been made between subjects in order to create coherent learning opportunities for pupils. While there are good opportunities for the pupils to use their literacy and their information and communication technology skills in other subjects, using and applying their numeracy skills does not have the same high profile. The school plans many interesting and enjoyable activities to enhance and extend the curriculum. These are particularly beneficial to pupils’ personal development. The pupils appreciate the good range of after-school clubs and activities, which are attended by about a third of the pupils every evening.

The school is very effective in creating an ethos in which pupils feel safe and well cared for. Arrangements for promoting very good behaviour and positive relationships are extremely successful and are highly valued by the pupils. The school’s outstanding care and guidance are particularly evident in its support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The circumstances of each pupil are very well known to the headteacher and to the teachers and teaching assistants supporting them. This allows them to work with parents, carers and agencies to very good effect. One parent wrote, ‘The teachers have shown a great deal of understanding, and helped me and my child.’

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 relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher’s strong leadership is focused on improvement and maintaining the very strong ethos of the school. The success of the school’s drive for improvement is

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evident in the increased attainment at the end of the Reception, which is being built on successfully to bring about higher attainment at the end of Year 2. Improvements in writing are now evident throughout the school.

The quality of teaching and the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is comprehensively monitored. The deployment of support for the most vulnerable pupils, together with partnerships with a range of agencies, results in all pupils being equally and fully included in all that the school offers. An ambitious development plan sets out actions and criteria against which success can be measured. However, it is too extensive for a small staff to tackle and consequently some areas, although improving, are not benefiting sufficiently. One such area is science, where the focus on investigation has not brought rapid enough improvement.

The governors give the school considerable support. An audit of their own performance has rightly identified the need for a more incisive analysis of the pupils' performance. Nonetheless, they do have a very well-developed programme of visits to the school to see for themselves how well it is operating.

The school has comprehensive arrangements to keep the pupils safe. The very welcoming ethos of the school fosters effective relationships with parents. Parents support the school very well, and increasing numbers are engaging in activities to promote family learning. The school has taken steps in conjunction with other local schools to audit involvement with the community and development of links with schools in other countries to give pupils an international dimension to their learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

The good provision for the youngest children has been maintained and consolidated since the last inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage has well-established procedures and routines. This is well illustrated by the fact that in the absence of the teacher in charge, a temporary teacher has taken over the role with comparative ease and without any disruption to the children’s progress. An analysis of the performance of the children in the Reception class last year shows that they made good progress.

Many children start school with fewer skills and abilities than expected for their age. The children who have joined the pre-school, which is now managed by the school, are benefiting from the development of their social and language skills.

The small number of children in the Reception Year demonstrates a good understanding of the daily routines. They play and work well together with the Year 1 pupils, and are happy to pursue their own learning interests through the activities planned for them. There is a free flow of activities from inside the classroom to the outdoor area, where they are engaged in, for example, role-play activities. The adults monitor the children’s choices carefully and record their progress. They are constantly developing conversation, encouraging and helping the children to develop their skills.

There are good opportunities for children in the Reception Year to explore the world around them; to develop their language, number, as well as their information and communication technology skills; and extend their personal development. There is a strong emphasis on phonics. This is evident at the start of the school day, when the children were encouraged to identify the sounds in ‘Thursday’.

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

A very high proportion of parents returned the questionnaire. The very large majority of parents hold the school in high regard and are very pleased with the care and

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support that their children receive, and the progress that they make. Inspectors agree that the care and support for pupils are excellent, but found pupils' progress to be inconsistent in some areas, and that more should be done to ensure good progress by all pupils, particularly in mathematics and science.

Many parents feel that they are kept well informed and are warmly welcomed by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Guyhirn CoFE VC Primary School 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 65 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	61	19	37	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	34	67	17	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	53	21	41	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	47	24	47	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	49	24	47	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	59	18	35	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	67	16	31	1	2	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)	25	49	21	41	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	55	20	39	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	59	17	33	1	2	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	45	25	49	1	2	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	31	61	19	37	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	71	13	25	1	2	1	2

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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Monday 8 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Guyhirn CofE VC Primary School, Wisbech, PE13 4ED

This letter is to tell you about what I found when I inspected your school recently and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me. The adults care for you extremely well, and as a result your behaviour is excellent and you have a very good understanding of how to stay healthy and keep fit. The school council does a good job of checking that snacks are healthy!

The teachers make many lessons interesting and you respond very well to their questions. The teachers mark your work, but sometimes they don't give you enough information about how you can make your work better, or an opportunity to correct and improve it. I have asked the headteacher to make sure that all of you are given a clear indication of how to improve, and to have time to make improvements in the future.

You are making satisfactory progress. Your progress in English is better than in science and mathematics. I have asked the school to increase the opportunities for you to solve problems in mathematics and to develop your skills for investigation in science. The headteacher and governors are continually seeking to make the school better. I have asked the headteacher to look closely at the school's plans and to focus on a few of the most important areas – such as mathematics and science.

The school provides you with a wide range of opportunities, both in and after school. Your involvement in many of these activities, and the excellent care and support that the school provides, are helping you to do really well in many aspects of your personal development. The school has good links with your parents and carers. Your parents are kept well informed.

I enjoyed being in your school, and hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Parker
Lead inspector

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