

Guilden Morden C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110790
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325222
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Heavey
Headteacher	Mrs J Major
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2006
School address	Pound Green Guilden Morden Royston Cambridgeshire SG8 0JZ
Telephone number	01763 852318
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This very small rural school serves pupils from Guilden Morden and surrounding villages. Most pupils come from White British families and there is a growing number from different minority ethnic backgrounds, although this proportion is still much smaller than in most schools. A few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational needs. Their needs are mainly associated with behaviour, complex or moderate learning difficulties. The school roll has dropped sharply over the last year though it is set to rise, with a larger than usual number of children starting in the Early Years Foundation Stage in September 2009. The current headteacher began at the school in September 2008.

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the September of the academic year in which they become five years old. Their attainment on entry varies widely but overall is broadly as expected for children of their age.

The Out of Space Club, a privately run organisation offering before- and after-school care and holiday sessions, operates from the school site. This is inspected and reported upon separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher has taken a strong lead in analysing where performance needs to improve and has implemented several initiatives over the last year which are contributing to better teaching and faster progress by pupils. These include structured planning for literacy and numeracy, rigorous assessment procedures and a review of the school's curriculum.

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Progress in science is improving as teachers focus more sharply on investigations and experiments, which is helping pupils to become more independent in their learning. Progress in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, reflecting the satisfactory quality of teaching overall. Teachers are beginning to plan more carefully to ensure that pupils develop specific skills. However, the teaching does not always challenge the more able pupils enough or enable those who need particular help to move on in their learning. The curriculum is satisfactory and there are good links between subjects, which add relevance to pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. They like the practical work, especially in design and technology and art, which provides them with good opportunities to work together and develop their skills. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils appreciate the small size of the school and the fact that everyone knows each other. They say they feel safe because adults are always on hand to help them if they have any problems. They have a good knowledge of how to keep fit and healthy and contribute well to their school community as play leaders and monitors. A few parents expressed concern about behaviour but inspection evidence showed pupils to be well behaved in assembly, in lessons and in the playground. In one assembly, taken by a community volunteer, some pupils dressed up to act out a Bible story. Pupils in the audience valued their efforts, applauding them warmly at the end. Older pupils help younger ones in the playground and involve them in their games. The quiet area is used well by pupils for less boisterous activities.

Adults know the pupils as individuals, which makes for a pleasant informal atmosphere where pupils thrive and grow into responsible young people. School leaders are rigorous in their systems to ensure pupils' safety, carrying out regular safety checks and fire drills. Good attendance is encouraged and pupils' efforts and good behaviour are recognised in assemblies where certificates are awarded. Assessment and target-setting procedures have been introduced but these are not yet embedded fully into practice to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning. The marking of pupils' work is regular but includes only limited advice to help them improve.

The headteacher has made a good start in implementing change and many more changes to support pupils' personal and academic development are planned for the future. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are developing but are not robust enough to check that initiatives are being followed through in the teaching and to

assess what impact these are having on pupils' learning. Nonetheless, the headteacher's clear vision, coupled with the good support from governors and staff mean that the school has a good capacity to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage **Grade: 2**

Children make a good start to their formal education in the Reception class. Effective induction procedures mean that parents have confidence in school staff and that the children settle quickly into school life. They enjoy all the experiences that are organised and these are carefully planned to ensure that they develop well in all aspects of their learning.

Good leadership and management contribute to a well-organised and exciting curriculum where children's views are recognised and their needs met effectively. Consequently, by the time they transfer into Year 1, children's achievement is good, with most meeting the goals expected for their age. Children develop good levels of confidence and work very well independently and cooperatively, as when they planned a puppet show to present to their friends. 'I am the introducer,' explained one child, 'reading' from a script he had prepared earlier. They wrote simple sentences about their trip to the Folk Museum and drew detailed pictures of the activities they had undertaken.

Adults know the children well and provide good levels of care and support for each one. They record their achievements carefully, reviewing progress regularly to ensure that they plan activities to help individual children move on in their learning. The classroom, though small, is used well to provide a good range of activities. The outdoor area is developing and there are plans in place to provide a sheltered area so that the outdoor curriculum can be fully available throughout the year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that activities in lessons meet pupils' individual needs more effectively.
- Monitor and evaluate teaching more rigorously to ensure that initiatives are implemented consistently across the school and raise pupils' achievement.
- Involve pupils more effectively in their learning by providing targets in other subjects and by improving the quality of teachers' marking.

A small proportion of the 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**

Standards in Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Fewer pupils than in most schools reach the higher Level 5 in the national tests, especially in science. Apart from a dip in 2008, standards in the Year 2 national assessments have been above average for the last few years. The dip last year reflected

differences in pupils' capabilities in that particular group. Standards this year look likely to be above average again in reading, writing and mathematics, with a high proportion of pupils reaching Level 3. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, based on the levels at which they transfer from the Early Years Foundation Stage. Throughout the school, pupils with complex or moderate learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because of the additional support provided by teaching assistants.

Year group numbers are often very small and statistics have to be viewed cautiously. However, analysis of assessment information reflects satisfactory achievement over the last few years. Initiatives implemented this year indicate that pupils' progress is improving although this has yet to show in results of national tests and assessments.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They enjoy school and are keen to share their views and opinions with others. They develop good levels of confidence as well as a keen sense of right and wrong. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory; their understanding of life in other cultures and communities is developing. Pupils contribute well to the smooth running of the school through their work as school councillors and as monitors in the hall where they set up equipment for assembly. They play an active role in the community, participating in church services to celebrate Harvest, Thanksgiving and Christmas. They raise funds for national charities and also specific village projects. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, eating healthy snacks at playtimes and participating eagerly in swimming lessons.

Behaviour is good in and around the school. Pupils are confident in sharing any concerns they may have with an adult. They describe how the police and other visitors teach them to keep safe from strangers and to cross the road safely. Pupils' positive attitudes and good levels of confidence, along with satisfactory basic literacy and numeracy skills, mean they are adequately prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally good and help pupils feel confident to try out new activities and develop their skills and understanding. They are not afraid to ask questions if they are uncertain about something and adults are always on hand to provide support. Teachers make their expectations of pupils' learning clear at the beginning of lessons, which helps to focus pupils' attention and involves them more in learning. In writing lessons, teachers often refer to specific development targets aimed at different groups of pupils and this is beginning to help pupils take a more active role in learning. Lesson planning is satisfactory; it identifies activities at different levels but these do not always provide enough challenge for the more able pupils or meet the specific learning needs of others with particular difficulties. Sometimes the pace of learning slows, especially when teachers spend

too much time talking, rather than involving pupils actively in learning. On these occasions, pupils lose interest and concentration and their progress is hindered.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of experiences that engage pupils and make learning interesting. There is a clear focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills and the school's new planning format is beginning to focus teaching more effectively on the development of specific skills. Subjects are often linked to make sure learning is relevant, as in English and history, when pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote booklets about aspects of Tudor life. A recent review of science has led to new plans being adopted to provide better coverage of scientific topics and to ensure that pupils develop their investigative skills more effectively. Planning for other subjects is also being reviewed to ensure that pupils gain secure knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. A good range of visits and visitors to the school bring enjoyment and enrichment to pupils' learning. Visits by volunteers from the local community contribute well to pupils' developing spirituality and their understanding of moral issues. The annual residential trip for older pupils provides good opportunities for them to live and work together and have a range of experiences that contribute well to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust and health and safety issues are appropriately managed. New systems have been introduced this year to track pupils' progress more effectively and these are beginning to provide a clear picture of achievement. Underachieving pupils are identified and appropriate interventions made to help them catch up. The range of interventions currently used is fairly narrow but there are plans to extend these in the forthcoming year. Good links have been established with outside agencies to help the school meet the needs of pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have individual targets for writing and these are beginning to focus them on where they can improve their work. Targets are not yet in place for any other subjects. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers often note complimentary and encouraging comments. However, helpful comments are seldom provided to show pupils what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a good understanding of the challenges facing a small school and, with the support of governors and staff, has implemented a rigorous improvement plan. Leaders have reviewed the school's approach to community cohesion. They have a basic action plan in place to extend links within the United Kingdom and further afield to enable pupils to develop a better understanding of life in other cultures and communities. Governors are regular visitors to the school and offer good levels of support. However, their monitoring role is not sufficiently well developed to enable them to challenge the school about its performance. Staff have

supported the changes, including the developments to their roles as subject leaders, where they are beginning to assume more responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
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 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

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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B



6 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Guilden Morden C of E Primary School, Royston, SG8 0JZ

Thank you for giving me such a warm welcome when I visited your school recently. It was good to watch you working in lessons and chat with you in the playground and around the school.

Your school is satisfactory at the moment and is beginning to improve. You said that all the adults look after you well and that there is always someone to go to if you have a problem. Your attendance is good and you said you like coming to school, especially when lessons are practical and involve you in working things out for yourselves. You know about the importance of keeping fit and enjoy the healthy snacks provided for you at playtime. Your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. You help one another and play safely in the playground.

The people in charge are trying to improve your school in a number of different ways. They have identified the right things to do so that you can make even better progress. Your teachers are going to make sure that lessons are pitched at the right levels so that you are all able to progress more rapidly. They are also going to give you more individual targets for improvement, so that you can take more responsibility for your own learning. The people in charge need to check more frequently that all these changes are working and that you are reaching higher levels in your work.

You can play your part by continuing to enjoy school, work hard and support one another and your teachers.

Thank you once again for your help. Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mrs M Summers
Lead inspector