

St Germans Primary School

School Lane, St Germans, King's Lynn PE34 3DZ

Inspection dates

10–11 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has made significant progress since the last inspection. The high aspirations of the executive headteacher are shared by staff and governors. These have resulted in improvements in pupils' behaviour, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' progress.
- The governors use their extensive skills to good effect. They offer a good balance of both challenge and support.
- The school promotes British values effectively. Tolerance and respect for everyone threads through the school's ethos.
- Teachers know pupils very well as individuals. They have good subject knowledge and give succinct explanations. This enables pupils to learn new skills successfully.
- Most parents are fully supportive of the school.
- Attendance remains high over time.
- The school is a friendly, welcoming place. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and take on additional responsibilities seriously.
- Pupils are safe, confident and especially well cared for. Enthusiasm for learning runs high.
- Standards for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are improving and are similar to or above national expectations. All groups of pupils make good progress from their various starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability benefit from effective support which enables them to achieve well.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children enjoy a wide range of activities and make good progress because their needs are understood. They are well prepared for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is too low.
- Occasionally, teachers do not intervene fast enough to move pupils forward in their learning. This slows the rate of progress, especially for the most-able pupils.
- Some pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their English and mathematical skills in real-life contexts through other subjects to further deepen their understanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to outstanding across the school and so continue to further improve pupils' rates of progress and standards, especially in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that all lessons move on quickly so that all pupils, especially the most able, achieve as well as they can
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their English and mathematical skills in other subjects and in real-life contexts to further deepen their understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher and head of school provide strong leadership. Their high aspirations are well supported by dedicated staff and governors. The positive, nurturing ethos of the school enables staff and pupils to feel highly valued. This has supported improvement in pupils' behaviour, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes.
- The establishment of the Bridges Federation has strengthened the school's leadership skills, including those of governors. Leaders make full use of the expertise across the federation to ensure that improvements are secure and sustainable. Self-evaluation is robust and accurate, ensuring leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. These are reviewed regularly with a focus on improving teaching and learning, and pupils' outcomes.
- Senior and middle leaders collect and use a good range of information to check on and track the improving progress made by individuals and groups. This improving progress is also seen in pupils' English and mathematics books. However, some pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their English and mathematical skills in real-life contexts across the curriculum to further deepen their understanding.
- The executive headteacher and head of school accurately identify what makes teaching effective and what needs to be improved. They identified that occasionally the learning for the most-able pupils does not always move on fast enough. Their expertise provides a firm base for future improvement in teaching and learning.
- Effective systems are in place to assess the performance of teachers. These ensure that teachers and leaders are held to account for the progress pupils make in their class and within their roles of responsibility. Teachers' targets are linked to the teachers' standards. Professional development is well planned so that staff feel highly valued and supported. They are proud to work in the school and staff morale is very high.
- The school endeavours to ensure the equality of opportunities for all pupils across its exciting curriculum. Extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors enrich pupils' experiences. Exceptional relationships are promoted and discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside British values are taught well, preparing them for life in modern Britain. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils enthusiastically learned about changes in Parliament over time through a 'Destination Democracy' day.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used well to develop teachers' skills and to enable pupils to partake in a wider range of sporting and physical activities and clubs. This is increasing pupils' participation in events across the federation and with other local schools.
- Highly effective use is made of the pupil premium funding to support the few disadvantaged pupils on roll. Senior leaders and the parent support adviser ensure that targeted activities enable disadvantaged pupils to make similar or better progress than their classmates.
- The special educational needs leader and the parent support adviser ensure that pupils do well from their various starting points. Additional support, including support from external agencies, addresses the pupils' personal, social, behavioural and academic needs effectively.
- Early years leadership and provision is good. The children settle into school quickly and make good progress from their starting points.
- Most parents are positive about the work of the school. As one parent stated, 'my child benefits from the nurturing ethos of a small school and from the activities of the federation'.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school by checking the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and providing staff training.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance across the federation is effective because governors know each individual school well. The governors have a range of expertise which they use effectively to support and challenge the school's leaders.
 - Governors ask pertinent questions and gain an accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes of pupils. They have the skills to understand the school's performance data. Governors have a clear view of teachers' performance management and monitor any underperformance. They ensure that teachers' pay awards are linked to pupils' progress and teachers' overall performance.

- The governing body ensures that additional funding for physical education and sports and for disadvantaged pupils has a good impact on pupils' progress and physical well-being.
- Governors check that all statutory responsibilities are met.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong focus on keeping pupils safe. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and systematic, meeting national guidance and recommendations, including the 'Prevent' duty. Staff understand their responsibilities because they receive the appropriate training. Leaders and staff work effectively with parents and outside agencies to create a safe culture in the school, which is highly regarded by the parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved throughout the school and is now good.
- Teachers know pupils very well as individuals. This helps to build highly positive relationships. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and always try their best. This contributes well to pupils' improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge means that new ideas are explained clearly to pupils so that they learn new skills confidently. They also use effective questioning to develop pupils' thinking.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In English and mathematics they plan a series of challenges based on progressive learning so that all ability groups work hard. Occasionally, the most-able pupils are not moved on fast enough to the next challenging task, which slows down their rate of progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give good levels of support to disadvantaged pupils and pupils with disability and those who have special educational needs. Pupils' barriers to learning are well managed by the special educational needs leader and the parent support adviser so that these pupils make the best possible progress from their various starting points.
- Teachers follow the school's feedback and marking policy effectively, enabling pupils to know how to improve their learning. Pupils also assess their own work to identify any difficulties in their learning.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is effective in the early years, Year 1 and Year 2. Pupils segment and blend words to support their reading and spelling. Pupils who read to the inspector were enthusiastic readers. The school library is a bright and welcoming environment which supports pupils' enjoyment of reading.
- Teachers give clear explanations to support pupils' mathematical learning. Pupils choose the appropriate challenges and are very proud to move on to the more difficult ones. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils enthusiastically and collaboratively strived to find the correct partners to enable them to complete difficult calculations about angles, showing perseverance and a range of mathematical knowledge. Occasionally, some pupils have few opportunities to apply their skills in real-life contexts to develop their mathematical thinking further.
- English activities have a greater focus than previously on grammar, spelling and punctuation to improve pupils' writing. Pupils enjoyed a punctuation show with its humour, quizzes and songs. One pupil stated, 'I learnt a lot while having fun'. During the inspection Year 5 and Year 6 pupils showed a good understanding of homophones. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils could discuss stanzas and exciting vocabulary when comparing poems by the same author. There are a few opportunities for pupils to develop quality writing skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy their enriched curriculum. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils enthusiastically sorted animals into classified groups. They could discuss confidently why a seal was not a fish and why a turtle was a reptile. The inspector saw French and Tri-Golf taught at a high quality, ensuring pupils made good progress in their learning.
- Homework is planned well for pupils to practise the skills that they have been learning. Year 2 pupils talked enthusiastically about their mathematical passports. The weekly Year 5 and Year 6 home learning leaflet gives clear information about the recommended reading, literacy and numeracy tasks.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is outstanding**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils' emotional health and well-being is of prime consideration. Each pupil is highly valued, given equal consideration and treated as an individual. Adults and pupils trust and respect each other.
- Year 6 pupils state that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The transition to secondary schools for vulnerable pupils is well planned.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Year 6 pupils discussed the importance of staying safe on the internet. The younger pupils talked knowledgeably about fire and road safety.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive across the school. They work hard in class and always try their best. Pupils are proud of their achievements and those of others during celebration assemblies.
- Pupils are extremely tolerant and respectful of each other. They understand responsibility and the consequences of poor decisions. They say that bullying and low-level disruption are extremely rare.
- The before- and after-school club gives high-quality care to all pupils who attend.
- The parent support adviser works with pupils and their families effectively to support pupils' learning and attendance. High-quality pastoral care is given by staff or relevant outside agencies.
- All parents are confident that children in the school are kept safe within a caring, nurturing environment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils actively contribute to the positive and inclusive school ethos. They are polite and courteous to their friends and adults. They are proud of their school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying from a wide range of anti-bullying activities. They are confident that adults tackle rare incidents fairly and effectively.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons. This is because pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and adults have high expectations of them. They work very well together and share their ideas confidently.
- Pupils' conduct around the school, in the playground, the hall and in classrooms is exemplary. The school's learning behaviour strategies are followed by everyone so that pupils' behaviour and progress have improved over time.
- Older pupils take on their responsibilities seriously. They support younger children at lunchtime and ensure they walk to church safely. Reception children and their Year 6 buddies enjoyed making friendship bracelets together. Parents talk positively about the older pupils caring for the younger children. Pupils are proud to be members of the school council. The fruit tuckshop monitors complete their costing spreadsheet proudly and effectively. These responsibilities help to prepare the pupils to become good citizens of the future.
- All groups of pupils like to come to school and attendance is high over time. There are very few persistent absentees.

Outcomes for pupils **are good**

- From their various starting points, current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics due to improved teaching and learning.
- In 2015, the standards at the end of Key Stage 2 improved. Reading and writing were the highest for three years and rose above national standards. Mathematics also improved to become similar to national standards. Pupils made expected or better progress. Consequently, pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below national expectations and declined in reading and mathematics in 2015. Inspection evidence from observing learning, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and analysis of school data show that the school is addressing these concerns quickly. The current Year 2 pupils are making better progress than in the past.
- The school has a strong focus on the teaching of phonics in the early years and throughout Year 1 and Year 2. This supported significant improvement in the 2015 Year 1 phonics screening check, enabling results to rise above national expectations. This improvement is sustainable due to the effective teaching and learning strategies that have been put in place.

- In 2015 the few Year 6 disadvantaged pupils did as well as or better than others in the school and others nationally. Current information across the school suggests that disadvantaged pupils make progress similar to, or better than, other pupils in the school.
- Pupils with disability and those who have special educational needs do well from their various starting points because their needs are identified quickly and they are given targeted support.
- Some of the most-able pupils do not make the best possible progress because they are not moved on to the next challenging task fast enough.
- The proportion of children who leave the early years with a good level of development has been above national expectations for the past two years.

Early years provision

is good

- Children usually start the early years with knowledge and skills typical for their age. Good teaching enables the children to make good progress from their various starting points. This prepares them well for learning in Year 1.
- The early years is well led and the provision is good. The learning environment is stimulating and exciting, both inside and out.
- Staff keep a close check on the children's progress. They identify the learning needs of individual children, including children with disability and those who have special educational needs, and those for whom the school receives additional funding. They then take the appropriate steps to ensure that pupils' needs are met effectively. Positive relationships are formed between the children and the adults so that the children are happy in school.
- Effective routines which encourage the highest standards of behaviour are in place. The children work and play well together while sharing resources. Staff are good role models and they ask children appropriate questions to improve their learning. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement so that they become confident learners. A small group of boys enthusiastically made super heroes costumes for their role play. This improved their speaking and listening skills as well as their creative skills. The boys then had the opportunity to develop their physical skills by being super heroes on bikes in the safe outside area.
- Staff develop the children's understanding and knowledge of the world in exciting ways. The African rangers' hut contained African drums and looked out on toy animals of the savannah. Children write their own signs within the hut to develop their writing and role play skills.
- Phonics is taught well in the early years. The children discussed words with 'ow' in them and used their knowledge of phonics to spell words with chalk on black paper, which they found exciting. Similarly, when writing about growing plants children used their phonics skills to support their spelling.
- The inside area contains many mathematics activities and maths is taught at snack time. Waffles and raisins are used to develop the children's positioning skills, and fruit and cheese are used to develop number bonds.
- Partnership with parents is a strength. Parents are highly complementary about their links with the early years. The weekly newsletter keeps parents informed about their child's learning.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the early years provision, which is continually improving. Staff work together as an effective team to improve pupils' learning opportunities.
- Pupils are happy, safe and well settled. Safeguarding practices are highly effective. Appropriate training takes place regularly and all staff are mindful of their responsibility to protect each child from harm.

School details

Unique reference number	120891
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10001884

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robyn Press
Executive headteacher	Alison Hughes
Telephone number	01553 617246
Website	www.stgermansprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@st-germans.norfolk.scg.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 November 2013

Information about this school

- At the previous inspection the school was part of the Wiggenshall Federation. It is now part of the Bridges Federation.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with disability and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Early years provision is full-time for children in the Reception Year.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club on site under the federation's governance.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons in all classes. Five observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the head of school.
- The inspector held meetings with governors, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety, the monitoring of teaching and management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with a group of pupils as well as informal conversations with them during lessons and at breaktimes. The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- The inspector took account of 25 responses to the online parental questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. The questionnaires completed by 20 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Julie Harrison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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