

# The Kirkby-la-Thorpe Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	120527
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380050
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 January–1 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Judith Straw

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	133
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Emon Khan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Katie Bartle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Church Lane Kirkby-la-Thorpe Sleaford NG34 9NU
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<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	31 January–1 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380050



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Straw

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 11 lessons taught by seven teachers. The inspector made short visits to phonics (linking sounds and letters) and guided reading sessions, and lessons taught by teaching assistants. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, data regarding pupils' progress, safeguarding information and other documentation. The inspector analysed 67 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and also those from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a very low percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average. The school meets the current floor standard. A new headteacher took up post in September 2011.

The school has gained National Healthy Schools status, Artsmark Silver, Gold Primary Science Quality Mark, Green Flag Eco School and Food for Life (bronze) awards. The Early Years Foundation Stage is accredited as a High Scope setting.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school in which all groups of pupils achieve well. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has been above average for the last five years. The school has recognised that, while attainment in English is above average, pupils' progress is slower than it is in mathematics, especially in writing, and has taken prompt action to address this so that the progress of all pupils is accelerating.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school with an increasing proportion which is outstanding. The school provides strong support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs so that they make good progress. Lessons are interesting because teachers plan creatively to make work relevant and appealing to pupils. The curriculum ensures that pupils develop core skills effectively and provides good opportunities for enrichment and enjoyment.
- Doing all that it can to care for and support pupils is at the heart of the school's work. As a result, pupils say that they feel entirely safe. Their behaviour is excellent and their attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Parents and carers are unanimous that their children are safe and thrive in this nurturing and stimulating environment.
- The new headteacher's drive and determination, coupled with the very positive support of the assistant headteacher and their vision to provide the best education possible for all pupils, are key factors in the school's good improvement. All the staff and members of the governing body share this vision and ambition so that teaching is good across the school, pupils' achievement has been enhanced, attendance is above average and the emphasis on improving outcomes for pupils is unrelenting.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In writing, raise attainment further and accelerate pupils' progress by

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embedding strategies already identified by the school to ensure that:

- pupils have weekly opportunities for extended writing
- pupils have regular opportunities to write from direct experiences
- high expectations are set for spelling, grammar and handwriting
- lessons are consistently well-managed so that the pace of learning is rapid
- best practice is shared so that more teaching becomes outstanding.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly in line with those expected for their age, although groups are small, and this can vary from year to year. Children make good progress, whatever their starting points, so that they reach the goals set and often exceed them, especially in reading, phonics and calculation. For example, in a fast-moving phonics session, all Reception children were concentrating hard and making good progress in identifying key words and matching them to others already learned. Children who might need extra help are identified early and given additional support so that they can make the same good progress as their peers.

Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 has been a little above average for the last three years. There was a sharp rise in 2011 so that standards were significantly above average and pupils achieved well. In reading, every pupil reached the minimum expected level for their age. Many pupils read aloud with fluency and expression, clearly enjoying themselves. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals all achieve more highly than similar pupils nationally.

In Key Stage 2, pupils have very positive attitudes and concentrate well in class. They are eager to learn and to succeed, tackling problems and investigations in all subjects with enthusiasm. Attainment is above average in both English and mathematics but by a much greater margin in mathematics. For example, in 2011, half of the Year 6 pupils reached the higher Level 5 in mathematics. Attainment in reading is well above average but average in writing. Teachers have introduced a range of strategies which are working well to boost performance in writing. This was evident from a scrutiny of pupils' books in English and research topic work. These illustrated well the extent to which pupils are beginning take pride and pleasure in the presentation of their work and in using their imaginations to engage the reader.

The many parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous that their children make good progress and achieve well. Inspection evidence supports this view.

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## Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is consistently good with some that is outstanding. In all lessons, clear learning objectives are set so that pupils understand what they are going to do and how they will know if they have succeeded. Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious and they quickly establish positive working relationships with their pupils. Teaching assistants are clear about their role and make valuable contributions to lessons and to supporting different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Nearly all lessons intersperse brief sessions of teacher talk with plenty of opportunities for pupils to work independently or in groups. Only very occasionally does the pace of learning slow. Teachers are, rightly, developing a range of strategies to boost performance in writing so that pupils have more regular opportunities to produce extended writing, including recording their direct experiences. There is some variation in teachers' expectations for spelling, grammar and handwriting.

In lessons observed, teachers' expert subject knowledge and shrewd planning resulted in rapid learning which thoroughly engaged the pupils so that they were motivated to succeed in a spirit of friendly competition. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 4, pupils were solving problems relating to the number of aliens' legs that could be counted and looking for systems and patterns to make solutions easier. In English lessons in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, stimulating resources inspired pupils who were writing attention-grabbing openings, using their imaginations, thinking deeply and writing clearly and accurately. Achievement is rising in English because of this good planning and practice.

Teachers use the diverse and rich curriculum to accelerate pupils' progress in the core skills of reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology and to add creativity and enjoyment to learning. For example, pupils' work in learning about China, which includes all Key Stage 2 classes learning Mandarin Chinese, or about ancient Egypt or life in Victorian times, illustrates the high quality of pupils' research and interest in different cultures and times. Teachers promote pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by helping pupils to be curious, independent learners with good powers of empathy so that they understand and enjoy books, poetry, music, sports and the arts.

Marking and assessment are consistently good across all key stages and ensure that pupils understand how to improve their work. All pupils have targets and understand how they will reach them. Pupils are unanimous that they are well taught as were the vast majority of parents and carers. A tiny minority expressed concern about mixed-age classes. Inspection evidence endorses the view of the majority and the school can show that pupils make good progress in mixed-age classes.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically exemplary. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children behave extremely well and gain maturity and

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confidence and start to take responsibility for themselves and their learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' very positive attitude to learning is one reason why attainment is above average and achievement is good and improving. Attendance has been consistently above average for some time. Pupils are keen to talk to visitors, are very proud of their school and put into practice the key words of their school motto: 'kindness, learning and tolerance'. Pupils are adamant that there is little or no bullying of any kind and that any issues are quickly sorted out by teachers or other adults. The pupils say that racism is not tolerated and that there are no instances of it. The school's systematic and well-considered approach to behaviour management ensures that any misdemeanours are dealt with promptly. High expectations of good behaviour are well embedded so that there is rarely any disruption or slowing of pace in lessons due to pupils' conduct. The school has excellent procedures for managing the very rare instances of bullying which may occur. Parents and carers were unanimous that behaviour is well managed.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and assistant headteacher lead a highly ambitious staff team. Above average standards and good progress have been maintained since the last inspection with improvements evident in many areas. Teaching is consistently good and improving because senior leaders lead by example. Being good is not enough for the current staff team: they share the commitment to becoming outstanding. Teachers are highly professional and ambitious, always ready to develop their practice and willing to share their expertise both within school and beyond. The ethos of this school is about promoting and celebrating achievement across a range of subjects. For example, the school has achieved the gold primary science award in recognition of its excellent work in this area. Self-evaluation is rigorous and honest and robustly supported by a new and sophisticated method of collecting data on pupils' progress. All other aspects of monitoring, including lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' written work, ensure that the good quality of teaching is maintained and gradually improved.

The good curriculum has been overhauled in the recent past to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. As well as making good progress academically, pupils also develop resourcefulness, perseverance and ambition. The outstanding impact of the curriculum on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in pupils' awareness of other people's lives, their appreciation of music and the arts, their interest in science and the natural world and their awareness of the power of language.

The school enjoys excellent relationships with parents and carers, who are kept well informed about their children's progress. The vast majority of the many parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very sure that their concerns were listened to and promptly acted upon. Many expressed their appreciation of the school, variously describing it as 'the perfect rural primary school' and 'an exceptional school'. They were unanimous that they would recommend this school to others.

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Members of the governing body are extremely well informed and knowledgeable about the school's work. They take the trouble to come into school regularly to find out for themselves. They support and challenge the school and are fully involved in self-evaluation and monitoring. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that all steps are taken to keep pupils safe. This view is endorsed unanimously by parents and carers. The governing body supports the school in tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all pupils. Improvements since the last inspection, the maintenance of above average standards and accelerating progress indicate the school's good capacity to further improve.

## 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of The Kirkby-la-Thorpe Church of England Primary School, Sleaford, NG34 9NU**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited you in school. I would especially like to thank those pupils who talked to me and those who read aloud. You were excellent ambassadors for your school.

I agree with you, your teachers and your parents and carers that yours is a good school with some aspects which are outstanding. Here are some of the things that helped me to make that decision.

- You achieve better than pupils in many other schools, especially in mathematics.
- You make good progress because teaching is good.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You say you feel safe and well looked after in school and your parents and carers agree.
- You have excellent attitudes to learning, are curious about the world around you and are interested in trying to make other people's lives better.
- Your school leaders do a good job and that is why the school continues to provide a good education and is improving all the time.

Part of the work of inspectors is to look for ways in which the school can improve further. I have asked your school to make sure you achieve as well in writing as you already do in reading and mathematics and to make sure all lessons match the best.

You can play your part by attending as well as you do, listening and contributing to your learning and enjoying your education.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw  
Lead inspector

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