

The St Faith's Church of England Infant School, Lincoln

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120562
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380062
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead inspector	Terry McDermott

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Agnes Barstow
Headteacher	Deborah Barks
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2007
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Age group	3-7
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Introduction

Inspection team

Terence McDermott

Additional inspector

Daniel Kilborn

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons taught by nine teachers for a total of approximately 11 hours. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, listened to pupils reading, looked at the school's methods for tracking pupils' progress, and at a range of school documents, including its policies, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records, samples of pupils' work, and reports from the school's professional partners. Responses from 132 parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized two-form-entry infant school. Most pupils are White British. A below average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many of these pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average. The school has Healthy Schools status. The headteacher was appointed in May 2011.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is good rather than outstanding because teaching has some inconsistencies. However, it is improving more rapidly than other schools because of the clear focus on learning. The personal development parts of its curriculum, which are founded on its six highly visible core values, lead directly to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Achievement is good. From broadly average starting points, pupils make good progress to reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. The school's accurate and reliable assessment and tracking procedures indicate accelerating progress and rising attainment.
- Teaching is good. All lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between adults and pupils, and by pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. Good systems identify pupils who may need additional support to boost their learning. Marking is carried out regularly and tells pupils what they need to do to improve. Sometimes, teachers spend too long giving the same explanation, or setting the same work, for all pupils in their class.
- Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the building. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They take very good care of each other and of their school. They say that bullying is very rare. Pupils are trusted to work independently and respond well when given responsibility.
- Leadership and management are good at all levels because the new headteacher has built a strong team who share the same ambitions and aspirations for the pupils in their care. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in moving the school forward. School self-evaluation is accurate. Parents and carers express their complete confidence in the work of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Make the most effective use of time for learning and improve the consistency of the quality of teaching so that more lessons are good or better by:
 - spending less time giving detailed instructions to the whole class
 - giving pupils more time to learn and practise new skills
 - ensuring that work set accurately meets the learning needs of all pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The very large majority of children join the school with skills and capabilities which are broadly average in relation to their age. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage make effective use of resources both indoors and outside, and get children off to a good start in all areas of learning. Children make good progress and quickly learn to cooperate and work and play together.

Pupils' make good progress in all years of the school. Their attainment in reading is about two terms ahead of the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 because basic reading skills are taught frequently, regularly and skilfully. Pupils make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle new words. They read regularly and enthusiastically. This is enhancing their confidence in reading aloud. Reading and books are promoted well. Attainment in writing is consistently two terms ahead of the national average at the end of Year 2, whilst attainment in mathematics is about one term ahead. Thoughtful and well-founded rearrangements to the curriculum and the deployment of staff are quickly moving attainment in mathematics towards the same level as in English. All pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make better progress than is found nationally, irrespective of their starting points. Some pupils make outstanding progress, particularly in Year 1.

Learning in lessons is good. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning because of their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are keen to 'have a go' and find things out for themselves. They listen closely to teachers' instructions and to their peers. They sustain their concentration well over extended periods of time, especially when work is of a practical nature. Work in pupils' books is usually well presented, and shows clear evidence of good progress over time. Teachers' high expectations usually move pupils on at a rapid rate. Pupils are eager to improve their performance. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs progress at the same rate as their peers because of the well-planned and skilful support they receive from teaching assistants.

Quality of teaching

Classrooms are attractive and very well equipped with ample resources to facilitate

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learning. They are colourful and exciting places which inspire pupils' curiosity about the world around them. The excellent quality of relationships between adults and pupils is a common feature of all lessons. The best lessons are well planned; teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn about, and then set them off to try things out for themselves. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when teachers' plans do not provide a great enough range to the level of explanations or provision of tasks in order to challenge pupils' different abilities. The more able sometimes finish quickly and then wait patiently for their next instruction. This means their progress is not as good as it might be. The large majority of lessons move forward at pace from one short sharp task to another. For example, in an outstanding Year 1 physical education lesson, pupils explored different ways of moving over, under, around or through different pieces of gymnastic apparatus. They warmed up for the activity vigorously, they undertook every challenge with excellent common sense and discipline, and they could explain to their classmates what they were attempting to achieve. Every pupil was engaged seriously in enjoyable, adventurous and completely safe new activities. Interest in the wide range different tasks and activities was high, and learning for all pupils was rapid.

In lessons, teachers and other adults move around the different groups in the class. They guide and inspire pupils to think for themselves with questions which often begin with 'Can you explain why?' Pupils consistently rise to the challenges they are set, particularly when the work is practically based. Teachers make regular use of opportunities, often through talking partners, for pupils to discuss and to clarify their understanding, and to increasingly involve them in self-assessment. This builds trust, thoughtfulness and respect for the feelings of others.

Teaching assistants are usually deployed effectively and play a good role in supporting different groups of pupils. This ensures that most pupils make the same good progress over time, particularly disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who do not speak English as an additional language. Lessons provide many good opportunities for pupils to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills throughout the curriculum. Writing and reading skills are systematically taught and practised in many subjects. Parents and carers are very positive about the quality of teaching in the school, and about how the school encourages them to be involved in their children's learning. The comments, 'There are many activities in school where parents/carers are invited to join in' and 'I couldn't have asked for a better start to my son's school life', reflect the views of many. Pupils also say that they enjoy their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils arrive punctually, ready and eager to learn. Their attendance is broadly average, being often affected by the usual childhood illnesses. Behaviour is good throughout school. Pupils explain, confidently, how they know they are safe in school. They can outline the potential dangers they may face outside the school, including road traffic, the misuse of the internet or smoking. Parents and carers have extremely positive views about pupils' safety and, without exception, feel their

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children are well looked after.

The school maintains detailed records of any behavioural incidents. These are rare. There is very little indication of bullying of any kind. Pupils and their parents and carers are very confident that it would be swiftly and appropriately managed. Pupils also overwhelmingly agree that behaviour is good around school and in their lessons. They say there is very little name calling or falling out. This is because pupils have a good understanding of the school's core values. For example, one child in a reception class reported that 'a hippopotamus is not being very compassionate to a snake when it eats it'. This sophisticated level of understanding is gained through the outstanding personal development aspects of the school's curriculum, the six core values of 'Respect, Trust, Justice, Community, Friendship and Compassion'. These lead directly to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Links with parents and carers are strong, and this provides very solid grounding for the excellent relationships between pupils and staff built throughout the school.

Leadership and management

The calm and clear-sighted leadership of the headteacher drives the good work in this school. She is very well supported by, and works closely with, the deputy headteacher. Recent improvements to teaching, particularly in mathematics, stem directly from their focus on accelerating learning. Subject leaders, though relatively inexperienced, are enthusiastic, thoughtful and well informed. They form part of a strong leadership group well able to sustain developments.

The governing body has high aspirations for the school. Its members are active, knowledgeable and hard working in supporting the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, and hold the school's leadership to account with rigour. They ensure that the school has good procedures to promote safeguarding and ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

The curriculum is good overall, though some aspects are outstanding. Almost all work is planned around topics, which begin with a visit or visitor. All topics reiterate the school's six core values. They provide many opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills in a range of circumstances. Links between different subjects are strong and explicit. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a language-rich learning environment, with well-planned activities for children to select for themselves. There are good opportunities for all groups of pupils to take responsibilities and extend their spiritual, moral, social and awareness skills through, for example, the school council and fundraising for The Lamin School in the Gambia. Excellent partnerships with its community, with other schools locally and internationally, community groups and a wide range of external professionals, support all pupils' learning and experiences well. These partnerships ensure that every individual pupil, including those whose medical and other needs make them potentially vulnerable, is able to access and benefit from all that the school has to offer.

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).

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.



24 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The St Faith's Church of England Infant School, Lincoln, Lincoln, LN1 1QS

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and views with us, and for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed visiting you in your lessons and joining you at lunchtimes. We were particularly impressed with the way you pay such good attention in lessons.

You go to a good school and these are some of the best things about it.

- You read and write well about many different things.
- You make good progress throughout the school and reach higher than usual standards by the end of Year 2 because teaching is good.
- The six Core Values help you to become very sensible and considerate young people who get on very well together.

To help you learn even more, we have asked the adults who run the school to make more lessons even better by:

- making sure that each of you is always set work which is neither too hard nor too easy and keeps you busy
- giving you more time to work things out for yourselves
- spending less time explaining things at the start of lessons.

You can help your school to get even better by always trying your best and continuing to enjoy and attend school. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott
Lead inspector

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