

# The St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Boston

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120593
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358798
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Hinds

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

---

<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>	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Cozens
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Ashe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Woad Farm Road Boston PE21 0EF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01205 363210
<b>Fax number</b>	01205 369911
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@st-nicholas.lincs.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	358798

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed eight teachers while visiting 14 lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly with the interim headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including monitoring and assessment information, plans for improvement and important policies, as well as pupils' work. The inspection team also looked at 73 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- It considered learning and progress in writing, with a particular focus on boys and on pupils with English as an additional language.
- It explored how well teachers are using assessment information to set challenging targets, to plan lessons and to encourage independent learning.
- It examined how well subject leaders contribute to school improvement.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than other primary schools. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although there is a significant minority of pupils who are of Eastern European origin. The percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language, and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, are higher than average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. More pupils either join or leave the school at other than the usual times. There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection, including a recently appointed interim headteacher, and a seconded deputy headteacher. The school has gained the Arts Mark Silver award, Healthy Schools status and Active Sports mark.

**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**

**3**

## Main findings

St. Nicholas Primary School is a satisfactory and improving school. Having emerged from a period of staffing instability, when pupils achieved below average standards in all subjects, the school's provision has improved. Pupils now make satisfactory and often good progress to reach average standards. However, there are some variations, especially the higher attainment of girls than boys in all subjects. There have been other notable improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is now good. As one parent said, 'My son has really developed since starting school and the class teacher always has time for the parents.' Pupils' attendance has improved and is now similar to the national average. This is due to the good care, guidance and support that the school provides for all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and potentially vulnerable pupils, who make better progress than other groups.

The school has a secure view of its strengths and weaknesses. This sound self-evaluation and improved rates of progress demonstrate satisfactory capacity to improve. The school has been well supported by the local authority. Their advice has been key to the school's journey of improvement and provided additional capacity through the recent appointment of an experienced interim headteacher, a capable acting deputy headteacher and focused professional development for other leaders and teachers. Leaders at other levels are less experienced and, although highly motivated to seek further improvement, their roles are underdeveloped. The drive for improvement has been led by senior leaders, who set challenging targets for improvement using data effectively to hold all teachers to account through regular checks on pupils' progress. Despite good coaching by experienced teachers, the impact of this has been limited as it has not improved the performance of all teachers sufficiently. This is because implementation of improvement strategies is not monitored as rigorously as it should be. The governing body supports the school well and is involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's caring approach.

The quality of teaching is variable, with too much being no better than satisfactory. This is because strategies, such as sharing with pupils what and how they are going to learn in lessons, are not embedded in all classes. Likewise, pupils' learning is not always well planned, with too much work encouraging pupils to practise their basic skills rather than extending them. Pupils have insufficient opportunity to work independently, take responsibility for their learning and become involved in decision making. The curriculum is suitably matched to pupils' needs but does not always enable them to build closely on previous learning or encourage the application of basic skills in meaningful contexts.

Several aspects of pupils' personal development, including their moral and social development, are good. Pupils' cultural understanding is less well developed because the

**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

curriculum does not provide enough opportunities to develop understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures within national and international contexts. Pupils have a good understand how to live a healthy lifestyle. They are proud of their school and the vast majority behave well both in and out of lessons. However, some pupils express concerns about the sometimes challenging behaviour of a minority at lunchtime, especially when they are playing football.

Up to 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.

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

- Improve attainment to above average in all subjects and in all key stages by:
- improving the quality of teaching so that by 2012 80% is consistently good or better
  - using on-going assessments to adjust teaching so that pupils of all abilities are challenged
  - providing relevant and first hand opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate and extend their learning and skills through a more engaging curriculum.
- Ensure that monitoring is more effective by:
- judging the impact that teaching has directly on the progress pupils make in lessons
  - ensuring that improvement strategies are consistently applied through more regular checks by subject leaders using a range of monitoring methods.
- Develop the pupils' voice and responsibilities by:
- holding meaningful and regular meetings where pupils have the opportunity to express their views and influence decision making in their learning
  - providing pupils with opportunities to take on leadership roles within the school and make a greater contribution to the local, national and global community.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils listen and behave well, often showing good levels of enthusiasm for their work. When they are actively involved, and when work is suitably matched to their abilities, pupils display high levels of engagement and enjoyment. However, the work they are set is often not as challenging as it should be, which means that progress is only satisfactory. The consistently good progress that children make in the Reception class is not maintained throughout the rest of the school. From low starting points children now enter Year 1 with average attainment. Progress is much stronger in some years than others because teachers match the work more carefully to pupils' prior attainment. The school has now identified significant gaps in all pupils' literacy skills, particularly those of pupils with English as an additional language and boys. These are now being addressed through a highly structured programme tailored to meet individual needs. This analytical approach has also enabled the school to identify and target more effectively provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who now make good progress. This improvement was noted by a parent who said, 'Teachers have worked hard with my son to teach him in a way that suits his needs, he has improved so much!' Even so, the school recognises there are too few pupils achieving the higher levels in all subjects.

**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

Although pupils say they feel safe, their awareness of any potential risks is underdeveloped. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is strong, as seen in their courteous and respectful behaviour. Pupils' contribution to the community is satisfactory. Examples of this include supporting the local community through charitable events and helping to distribute produce to the community at harvest time. However, their involvement in taking on roles of responsibility both in school and beyond is limited, as are links with the wider, diverse community.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Relationships are strong and provide a positive learning environment. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to target support and improve pupils' progress. In all lessons, teachers share with pupils what they will be learning. Where teaching and learning are good, teachers make sure that pupils understand how they will know they have been successful and regularly check to see how well pupils are doing, using this information to plan for the next stage of learning. This ensures that pupils are challenged and do not repeat work they can already do. These teachers have high expectations and ensure that the work is interesting and relevant, which motivates and engages pupils more in their learning. A new key improvement is the way teachers now mark pupils' work, where success is celebrated and improvements are

**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

noted. However this and other strategies have not had sufficient time to have had an impact on improving rates of progress and are not consistently applied in all classes.

The curriculum is suitably focused on literacy and mathematics. However, there is insufficient emphasis on making links between subjects to enable pupils to practise key skills in relevant contexts; and providing opportunities for pupils to be more creative, investigative and to problem-solve, both inside and outside the classroom.

Pupils who are experiencing social and emotional difficulties are well cared for through additional well-targeted support by staff, including experienced mentors, and through effective links with external agencies. Consequently, these pupils make good progress in their learning. Transition arrangements pupils joining and leaving the school are good. Effective strategies have been adopted to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. The breakfast club is well attended and provides a range of enjoyable activities. As one pupil said, 'It provides a nice, calm start to the day.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The interim headteacher provides very effective leadership. In the short time since taking up her post, and with good support from the acting deputy, she has developed a clear idea of what needs to be done to raise standards and build on the school's existing strengths. The hardworking staff are well motivated to ensure that recent improvements are maintained and built upon to accelerate pupils' progress further. The drive for improvement is being strengthened by the wider distribution of responsibility for leadership and management. Middle leaders are responding with enthusiasm and becoming more engaged in monitoring provision in their subject areas. However, this monitoring is not precisely focused on establishing the link between the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in lessons. Furthermore, it is not regular enough to ensure that key improvement strategies are implemented consistently by all teachers. The governing body has a good understanding of the challenges the school faces. Governors are supportive and are beginning to challenge senior leaders more. Arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of pupils meet all requirements. The school has a positive relationship with parents and carers. Communication is much improved and most parents feel that they are able to approach the school for support and advice from staff, including the mentors. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory and improving. The school effectively monitors the performance of all pupils. The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory, as pupils' understanding of those who live in communities other than their own in the United Kingdom and globally is limited.

**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

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage is good and improving strongly. It has undergone several changes in staff and organisation, some quite recently. It is now a place where learning is exciting. The environment is vibrant as well as welcoming and supportive. All areas of learning, both inside and outside, are clearly designated, with readily accessible resources to encourage children's independence. This is because the leader has a perceptive understanding of how young children learn. She is creating a strong team where new staff are learning best practice on how to support the children's learning and development. Staff are fully involved in observations and assessments, and this feeds into detailed planning. This ensures that all children of all abilities are well matched to activities and consequently they make good progress. There are many opportunities for children to make choices, to be active and curious, and as a result they are confident and cooperative learners. There is a careful balance between child choice and adult-led learning, with free flow between indoor and outdoor learning. Good relationships with parents and carers exist. This has been strengthened by the recent appointment of a bilingual teaching assistant. However, there is more work to be done to encourage parents and carers to attend events which will extend their children's learning at home.



**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

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Thirty-five per cent of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires, which is an average response. The very large majority of these are positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. They believe that their children enjoy school. A number would welcome more consultation and communication regarding their suggestions and concerns. The inspection found that the school regularly consults with parents and carers and their suggestions are considered fully. Some parents and carers did not agree that their children were making enough progress. Inspectors judge that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but that some pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Boston 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	51	35	48	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	59	27	37	2	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	37	35	48	8	11	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	41	39	53	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	48	34	47	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	40	42	58	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	44	36	49	3	4	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)	33	45	35	48	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	34	43	59	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	36	37	51	8	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	34	38	52	5	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	27	37	40	55	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	47	38	52	0	0	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and 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 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



7 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of The St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Boston, PE21 OEF**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the team when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is satisfactory and getting better. We found that you behave well for most of the time and you work hard in lessons and make satisfactory progress through the school. Your understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle is good. In your questionnaires, you say you enjoy school but some of you are concerned about behaviour at lunchtimes when playing football. Your teachers are going to improve this. The school is a friendly place and relationships between people are good. The headteacher, staff and governors are finding ways to help you do better.

We have asked your school to:

- make sure that activities that you do are exactly matched to what you are capable of achieving by:
  - checking what progress you make in lessons to see how well you are learning
  - making sure that other leaders check on how well your teachers are teaching so that you all make good or better progress in lessons
  - making lessons more interesting through activities which help you to explore and think more, and so that you can develop your skills and understanding.
- provide more opportunities for you to take on more responsibilities both within and beyond the school and to have a greater say in your own learning.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best and to attend school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**