

The St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Boston

Woad Farm Road, Boston, PE21 0EF

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Standards are improving and the vast majority of pupils in all year groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress.
- Younger pupils learn to read well. Results in the test on the knowledge of Year 1 pupils in letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) was above average.
- Teaching is mostly good and some is outstanding. Pupils are interested in their work, enjoy learning and respond well to teachers' questions.
- The school has a positive ethos and pupils feel safe. They get on well with each other so bullying is rare and behaviour is good. Attendance has improved and is now average.
- The school's leaders have a clear focus on raising standards and ensuring that pupils are able to do their best. Teachers' performance is managed well. Leaders make regular checks to make sure that teaching is improving.
- The governing body is effective in challenging and supporting the school. Governors know the strengths of the school and what still needs to be done.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always plan their teaching precisely to challenge all groups of pupils.
- Not enough lessons stimulate and excite pupils' interests.
- Pupils do not always respond to teachers' marking in subsequent pieces of work.
- Pupils' understanding of other cultures is not promoted well enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Four of these lessons were observed together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics were analysed from Years 2, 5 and 6. An inspector listened to Year 2 pupils reading.
- Meetings and discussions were held with school staff, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and an education adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), parents' responses to the school's own recent survey and 16 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils' books; monitoring records; the school's own data on pupils' progress; minutes of governing body meetings; and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

David Herd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Heery

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The St Nicholas Church of England Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during the school year is above average.
- Over half the school's population is White British. A larger-than-average proportion of pupils come from Eastern Europe. Many new arrivals have little or no experience of English when they join the school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. This provides extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and ensure that all teaching is at least good and much is outstanding, by:
 - sharing the good and outstanding practice already present in the school
 - improving the consistency of lesson planning so that all groups of pupils are always effectively challenged
 - making sure that pupils respond more often to teachers' marking in their work
 - ensuring that more lessons stimulate and excite pupils' interests, making learning memorable.
- Improve pupils' achievement, by:
 - ensuring that more pupils reach and exceed national expectations by the end of Year 6
 - making sure that more pupils make better than expected progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Use the range of cultures already present in the school to develop pupils' cultural understanding and prepare them for life in a modern society.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is improving. Taking into account their different starting points, the proportion of pupils making expected progress compares favourably with national figures. Pupils make good progress in every year group.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those expected for their age, particularly in their language development. They make good progress in all aspects of their learning to achieve broadly expected levels by the end of the Reception year.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach broadly average levels by the end of Year 2. Pupils' develop their early reading skills so that, by the end of Year 1, higher than average proportions are achieving the level expected nationally.
- In Key Stage 2, the standards pupils attain have been low in the past. These are improving rapidly to nearer national averages. In recent years, pupils have made extremely good progress in English and good progress in mathematics. Pupils' attainment and their progress, at the end of Year 6, meet the government's current floor standards.
- The school has done well to improve pupils' achievement in reading and writing. Sometimes, pupils do not reach the higher levels and do not make better than expected progress. This is most often the case in mathematics.
- Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy fiction books and finding out about facts. Younger pupils use their phonics skills well to work out what difficult words say.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because their needs are identified early and they are provided with a carefully chosen range of targeted support. Their progress is checked closely and further support provided if necessary.
- The progress of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium is good. Support is targeted well and additional teaching and support programmes ensure that these pupils, according to their average point scores, do as well as other pupils in the school and similar pupils nationally.
- Most pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress by the end of Year 6. Many of these pupils can only speak a few words of English when they join the school and find writing difficult. Catch-up programmes run by the school help these pupils to do as well as their White British classmates.
- The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups is good. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Soon after pupils join the school, they develop good relationships with the teachers and teaching and learning assistants. This creates an environment where pupils can achieve. Pupils speak well of their teachers and other adults who, in turn, are very loyal to the school and want to do their best for the pupils.

- Teachers are regularly held to account for the progress their pupils are making through meetings with leaders in school. The performance of every pupil is tracked and any pupil with additional needs is supported effectively, ensuring that all pupils make good progress. Teaching and learning assistants work well alongside teachers to provide good levels of support.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and what their behaviour should be like. Teaching is not yet outstanding because teachers do not always plan well enough to challenge all groups of pupils to do their best.
- The teaching of reading is good. The good teaching of phonics and early reading skills ensures that pupils are able to read well from an early age. The teaching of these skills is through short, sharp, highly focused sessions that bring about good results.
- The teaching of writing, in the best lessons, is well planned and extremely well modelled. Teaching gives pupils the tools to become good writers and helps them understand how they can make their writing interesting.
- The teaching of mathematics is usually good. In an outstanding lesson, all groups of pupils could use their multiplication skills well to solve real-life problems. In other lessons, the most-able pupils are not always challenged to do their very best in mathematics.
- Teachers know their subjects well, check the progress pupils are making in their lessons and use their questions well to assess how well pupils are doing.
- Teachers generally set pupils challenging targets. They mark pupils' work, noting what they have done well and what needs to be improved. This means that pupils know what they need to do next in their learning. Nevertheless, pupils do not always respond to teachers' marking by being accurate in their next pieces of work.
- Classrooms are positive learning environments. Teachers make sure that there are many things in the room and on the walls that pupils can use to help them do their best in their learning. However, many lessons are not stimulating and do not excite pupils' interests enough, so teaching is not outstanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils show good attitudes to learning in their lessons. They usually participate well and work collaboratively and independently without fuss, maintaining their effort and concentration. Lessons are rarely disrupted due to bad behaviour.
- Pupils, parents and staff are positive regarding pupils' behaviour and recognise the improvements made in recent years. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and on the playground is good.
- Children in the Reception class have good relationships with the adults that work with them. Staff provide clear guidelines on what is acceptable behaviour and this leads to a purposeful learning environment where children make good progress.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation including the importance of being safe on the internet and with mobile phones.

They are aware of bullying but say that it is rare. They know who to go to if there are any concerns and say that the few incidents are dealt with effectively by the school staff.

- Pupils are proud of their school, say that they are treated fairly and are allowed to have their say. They say that they are supported well in their learning by their teachers and teaching and learning assistants.
- The breakfast club gives many pupils a very good start to the school day. A good breakfast is followed by a wide range of activities, some of which are physical. Pupils appreciate the care shown to them by the staff. This means they are ready to learn.
- Pupils' attendance has continued to improve since the school was last inspected and is now average. Pupils are rarely late for school and exclusions from school are low. School systems for promoting better attendance and monitoring punctuality are effective.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher shares a strong vision for the school and its future. This is shared by staff, parents and governors. Plans for improvement are correctly focused on the right areas and are bringing about improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders use a range of approaches, including rigorous evaluation of pupil data and observing teachers at work, to check on the effectiveness of teaching. This leads to the school having a good knowledge of what it does well and what needs to be improved, and this is recorded concisely in its self-evaluation.
- Pupils' learning, in a range of subjects, is reasonably well planned. Lessons could be made more stimulating, taking into account pupils' interests, so that learning is more memorable. The school provides a range of clubs and activities including artistic, sporting and musical experiences. These add to pupils' enjoyment of school and develop their confidence.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well through interesting lessons, classrooms and assemblies. Pupils work well together on collaborative projects. Although there are references to a global dimension, for example through a rainforest topic, pupils do not learn enough about the other cultures that are already present in the school.
- The school tackles discrimination well and promotes good relationships and equal opportunities for all pupils. As a result, all pupils get on well with each other and make good progress in their learning.
- Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers are robust. There are links between teachers' performance and pay progression. Senior leaders know well where the best teaching is located.
- The school has a good track record in making improvements to the quality of teaching. Improvements have been made in improving pupils' writing, in teachers making secure assessments and in the arrangements for target setting. This means that the school has a good capacity to secure further improvements.
- Parents are very satisfied with the way the school keeps their children safe and ensures that they make good progress. They say that teachers listen to them and that if there are any problems, they soon get sorted out.

- The school works well with a range of partners and services. Teachers and teaching and learning assistants have benefited from advice from a range of outside agencies. This has led to good levels of care and guidance for the pupils, ensuring that they make good progress.
- The school has received good support from the local authority education adviser. Work has included undertaking a review of data, joint lesson observations and support for the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is good. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They make regular visits to the school to check on improvements. They hold the school to account for the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and their behaviour and safety by asking questions of school leaders. They use performance management arrangements effectively to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching.
 - They make sure that resources are used well to get value for money. They know how the pupil premium is allocated and how it is used in school but are not completely sure of the precise impact it has had.
 - When making strategic decisions they ask, 'How will this benefit the pupils in school?' Statutory duties are met and the school has robust systems to ensure that all safeguarding requirements are in place.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120593
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	405946

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 of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Noble
Headteacher	Sally Birks
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2011
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