

The National Church of England Junior School, Grantham

Castlegate, Grantham, NG31 6SR

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and successes in musical, sporting and artistic activities are an important factor in their personal development.
- Teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding.
- Parental confidence in the school is high, and they rightly believe their children make good progress.
- The partnership with Harrowby Infant Academy is helping to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders, supported by the governors, are very skilful in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses and taking swift action to improve pupils' education when needed.
- The school supports pupils who need extra help in their learning very well.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They feel safe and their enthusiasm is reflected in consistently good attendance figures.
- The school is a very caring and cohesive community that welcomes pupils from all ethnicity, faith, social or cultural backgrounds.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils achieve as well in mathematics as they do in writing and reading.
- Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is not as consistently good as teaching in Years 5 and 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. A number of small-group activities were also observed.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, looked at their work in books and listened to them read.
- The team had meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with four members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of the school’s recently conducted parental questionnaire. There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to help form further opinions.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including its development plans, information on pupils’ progress and attainment, and evaluation of its own performance. They looked at pupils’ books and a report produced by the local authority.
- The team also looked at information on staff performance and records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Alan Giles, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Colin Lower	Additional Inspector
Susan Heptinstall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The National Church of England Academy is much larger than the average junior school, with steadily increasing numbers.
- Pupils are taught in four classes in each year group from Year 3 to Year 5, and in three classes in Year 6.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much smaller than average, but a recent increase in numbers has meant that more pupils need additional language support.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is below average but significantly increased in Year 3. This funding is to support pupils in local authority care, known to be eligible for free school meals or from service families.
- Recently more pupils are joining partway through their primary school education. A number of these pupils have complex learning and social needs.
- The National Church of England Junior School converted to become an academy school in July 2012. When its predecessor school, National Church of England Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- A section 48 inspection of religious education took place at the same time as the section 5 inspection in 2012 and judged the school to be an outstanding church school.
- The academy is partnered with Harrowby Church of England Infant School as part of a National Academies Trust, under one governing body and one headteacher.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or outstanding by:
 - making better use of information in Years 3 and 4 about what pupils know and can do, so that work consistently improves their interest and concentration in lessons
 - improving marking so that pupils understand the next stages in their learning
 - keeping a close check on pupils' understanding during lessons, so the difficulty of work can be adjusted to make sure they sustain good progress.
- Improve achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - giving pupils more challenging work when they investigate and solve problems
 - encouraging pupils to take more pride in their work by setting out their writing and mathematical work more accurately and neatly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school's own parental questionnaires show that parents rightly feel their children achieve well. The school's information shows that pupils who left in 2013 had made good progress during their time in the school.
- The school works with its local authority partners to rigorously evaluate and check the attainment of all pupils on entry to the school. As a result, teachers are well aware of pupils' differing needs and abilities.
- Any new pupils who have fallen behind in their work are quickly identified and given high-quality support. Teachers successfully use good practice in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and practical investigations to quickly improve their attainment in reading and mathematics.
- Accelerating the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has been a school priority. A relatively high proportion of less-able pupils did not make expected progress in 2013. Teachers are now successfully boosting their confidence and skill levels, so they are making good progress this year and quickly catching up with other pupils.
- Pupils are inspired to read regularly at school and many are making outstanding progress. Guided reading sessions successfully involve pupils in reading from a wide range of texts to broaden their skills and understanding.
- Pupils achieve well in writing and their motivation to write is increased when they use historical and geographical themes and topics in their English lessons. Weaknesses in their presentation skills prevent pupils from matching the outstanding progress made in reading.
- Test results for 2013 show that most pupils performed well, and matched or exceeded expected progress levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics has improved and is now enabling most pupils to make good progress in the subject. However, some of the youngest pupils, who enter the school with lower than expected mathematical skills, still have a limited understanding of number and have difficulty in presenting their answers during practical work.
- High-quality assessments and support enable the growing numbers of minority ethnic pupils and those who join the school late to make similar good progress to their classmates.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide extra help and guidance from well-trained support staff. As a result, eligible pupils make the same good progress as their classmates in English and mathematics, and many do better than similar pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils made good progress in 2013, and some made outstanding progress. School data show that the proportion of the present Year 6 pupils exceeding expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics is on course to rise again in 2014.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good. Pupils' progress accelerates as they move up the school

because of some outstanding teaching in lessons and in many small-group activities.

- Teaching assistants and 'learning mentors' are very well deployed and contribute significantly to pupils' good achievement. They ensure that the support they provide for any pupil in need of extra help builds carefully on their current understanding to accelerate learning and progress.
- Pupils enjoy their learning in a range of topics that cover more than one subject. This was evident in a Year 6 English lesson when they improved their persuasive writing skills when deciding if nature should take its course or whether building sea defences reduces cliff erosion.
- Teachers carefully monitor and track the progress of their pupils and ensure that most lessons are relevant, challenging and exciting for all ability groups. Some teaching requires improvement when practical activities in mathematics are made too easy or too hard for some pupils, especially in the lower year groups. As a result they occasionally lose enthusiasm and concentration.
- Pupils' work is marked on a regular basis and the feedback given is often constructive. In some cases teachers do not use marking to help pupils by giving them tips on the next stages in learning, or challenging them to improve spelling mistakes or the presentation of their work.
- All lessons have clear explanations by teachers so that pupils understand what is expected of them. Where teaching is less than good, teachers sometimes drift from the intended purpose of the lesson and do not question pupils skilfully to check their understanding in order to increase their learning.
- The school recognises that use of homework is important in extending learning opportunities for pupils. It has recently communicated with parents to improve their involvement and understanding of homework procedures.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. No disruptive behaviour was observed at any time during the inspection. School records show that this is typical and there have been very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour in recent times.
- All pupils follow the school's 'STARShine' code and observe the true spirit of this by being **S**afe, showing good **T**eam spirit, **A**chieving well, acting **R**espectfully and always looking **S**mart.
- The school is a caring and welcoming community. Pupils of all ages work very well together and are keen to communicate their ideas and collaborate in their explorations. This has proved successful in developing their practical and investigative skills, and has helped to improve mathematical learning throughout the school.
- Attendance rates are good and pupils arrive at school and lessons on time. Parents agree that their children are safe and well looked after at school.
- Pupils' positive attitudes are clearly evident in the number of personal responsibilities they are given, for example as counsellors and trained leaders, and by the very high numbers that participate in after-school activities.
- On occasions pupils lose concentration in lessons because they do not understand what they

have to do at the next stage in their learning and are left too long to puzzle it out.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a secure understanding of the different forms that bullying can take. They say that instances of bullying are extremely rare and that the school deals with any instances effectively. They have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding cyber bullying.

The leadership and management are good

- There is a strong ethos in the school where everyone shows a strong commitment to evaluating how well things are going. As a result, leaders have an accurate overview of teaching strengths. They use additional staff very effectively, especially in small-group work and one-to-one learning, to further accelerate the progress of any pupils who need extra help, or further challenges, in their learning.
- Good monitoring of teaching is enabling senior leaders to identify the training needed to sharpen teachers' skills and ensure that their knowledge is up-to-date. Teachers' effectiveness in the classroom is clearly linked to pay and promotion.
- Recent initiatives to improve the tracking of the progress all pupils make have led to the collection of more accurate information. This, and additional training for teachers, has enabled the school to improve the way mathematics is taught by stretching many pupils to achieve more challenging targets.
- The school's good achievements are underpinned by a curriculum that is enriched by many additional activities. These include regular educational visits in this country and abroad, a range of musical tuition, and other artistic activities such as drama clubs and the well-respected school orchestra and choirs.
- Pupils are involved in fundraising activities and visits that help support pupils and adults less fortunate than them. This range of opportunities for all pupils successfully promotes equality of opportunity.
- The school is spending its sport funding on additional resources to build on its strengths. Pupils have a very positive interest in healthy lifestyles and coaching sessions help them perform well in internal and external sporting activities.
- The school works closely and collaboratively with the local authority. This is not only helping to maintain the good features of pupils' education, but is also helping the school to move closer to a position where its overall effectiveness is outstanding.
- The school has made a quick start to share common approaches to teaching, learning and assessment with its partner school, Harrowby Infant Academy. This is helping the make sure pupils transfer smoothly between the schools, and that teaching more closely meets their needs.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides a good level of challenge which helps the school to evaluate its strengths and tackle weaknesses to improve pupils' achievement.
 - Recent training and an external review of the governing body, in association with local authority partners, has further reinforced these processes and governors are aware of what is needed to become outstanding.

- Their work is helped by the detailed information it receives from the school, including information about pupils' attainment and progress, linked to national expectations.
- Governors play an important role in setting rigorous and relevant targets for teachers.
- The governing body makes sure that all safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements.
- Governors oversee the arrangements for the spending of the pupil premium. They are well aware of the recent improvement and its impact on eligible pupils' achievement.
- Governors acted quickly to use the new sports funding grant to further improve sport across the school. They understand the long-term positive impact it has on pupils' attitudes to participating in sport and developing healthy lifestyles.
- The governors have quickly established plans that hold leaders to account when using common approaches across the newly established federation of infant and junior schools.

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	138282
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	440426

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	402
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darren Thorpe
Headteacher	John Gibbs
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01476 563895
Fax number	01476 563801
Email address	enquiries@national.lincs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: 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.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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.

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 information 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'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

