

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Thorpe-on-the-Hill, Lincolnshire, LN6 9BN

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Following significant changes in leadership and staffing, the school is now improving rapidly. Teaching is now good and improving quickly.
- Children thrive in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They acquire skills quickly as a result of what the school offers.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been above average or better for the past three years in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The contribution made by additional adults to learning is particularly strong and helps to ensure that pupils' progress is accelerating.
- Pupils behave with a great deal of care and respect for each other. Pupils, staff and parents all say that the school is a safe and welcoming place.
- Teachers' marking and feedback make a significant contribution to pupils' improving achievement. Pupils check the marking regularly and this helps them to correct their work and take the next steps in learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in reading has not been as good as their progress in writing.
- Occasionally, a few pupils get distracted and their progress slows.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to read non-fiction texts to help them improve their reading skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons or part-lessons. Four observations were made alongside the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of other short visits to classrooms.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at work from the Reception class and Years 2 and 4, much of this with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including the school improvement plan and records on behaviour, safety and attendance. They also looked at tracking information showing the progress of pupils, anonymised records of teachers' performance, and records of checks on the school conducted by members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff and spoke to parents. They also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 99 responses to the online Parent View survey. Written comments from 17 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ian Fergus

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught in two mixed-age classes.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. A very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club that are managed by the governing body.
- The school shares the site with Thorpe-on-the-Hill Playgroup.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed. There have been significant changes in staff and a teacher with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs has been appointed. A new Chair of the Governing Body has also been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in reading across Key Stage 2 so that pupils achieve as well as they do in writing by:
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching
 - encouraging pupils to read more non-fiction texts to help them to develop their reading skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When they join the school, children have levels of skill typical for their age. They are given a flying start and quickly learn new skills so that, by the time they enter Year 1, their levels of skill are well above those typically found. The school provides a stimulating and vibrant learning environment within which children are given excellent support from a team of highly skilled adults.
- In 2013, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 was above national averages. Year 1 pupils attained well above the national average in the phonics (linking letters and the sounds they make) screening check. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 was also above average in reading, writing and mathematics, as was their attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well and the gap between them and their peers is closing. These pupils benefit from expert support from additional adults. Work is adjusted to meet their varying needs and, as a result, they make good progress from their different starting points.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 in 2012 and 2013 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. However, across the school, these pupils also achieve well and their progress is similar to that of their peers.
- Pupils who are more able are identified early on. Teachers provide harder work so that they can make faster progress. As a result, they achieve well. In 2013, they attained above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Current tracking information provided by the school shows that progress is accelerating in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. However, over time, progress in reading has not been as fast as in writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is improving rapidly. Much of it is good and some is outstanding.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Teachers and other adults organise activities that help children learn quickly, investigate and find things out, and enjoy using different equipment and materials. For example, adults helped children to use different buttons to control robots. Children quickly learnt how to use the correct language to move the robots in different directions and tackled complicated journeys across a map.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are given examples of what good learning looks like and these help them to review what they have done and measure their own achievement. Teachers and other adults provide further support by questions which help them to deepen their understanding.
- Teachers encourage pupils to enjoy reading and help them to make good use of the library, as well as iPads, to read more widely. The teaching of phonics is lively and engaging and pupils are taught how to use these skills to improve their reading. However, pupils do not read enough non-fiction texts to extend these skills.
- Pupils reach high standards in their writing as teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan exciting activities which engage pupils' interest.
- Other adults make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. Work is planned carefully so that they can make good use of their time supporting pupils in small groups. Activities are planned well to meet the needs of these pupils.
- Teachers help pupils develop their calculation skills in various ways. Mental skills are developed through games which encourage alertness and concentration. Carefully chosen resources ensure that pupils of all abilities know what to do. Pupils in Year 2, for example, used small clocks to help them tell the time accurately. Teachers and other adults worked with small groups and their

questions encouraged pupils to reflect on their learning.

- Just occasionally, some pupils lose concentration if they are not fully engaged in their learning and they become distracted. As a result, their learning slows.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Pupils are able to frequently check what teachers have said and then correct their work and take on additional and harder work. This is consistent across the school, so children in the Reception class, for example, can improve their early writing skills. This makes a big difference to their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They play well together and play leaders ensure that pupils make full use of a wide range of sports equipment safely. Although sometimes the playground is very busy, as one pupil said, 'We only ever get hurt by accident.'
- Pupils move quickly from break time to lessons and no time is wasted. Routines in all classrooms are respected and pupils show an eagerness to learn.
- Pupils show a good understanding of bullying and are taught how to be careful when they use electronic equipment and how to avoid cyber bullying. They show a great deal of care and respect for each other. There have been no exclusions for over three years, and records show no incidents of bullying during the same period.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are taught how to keep safe and this was evident as children in the Reception class walked safely to the local outdoor centre at Whisby. Regular learning takes place outdoors to help reinforce the children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Children identify possible risks and some wear high-visibility jackets so they can be easily seen.
- Pupils appreciate the breakfast and after-school clubs. These provide secure and interesting activities for pupils to start and end the day. These encourage pupils to use equipment safely and to take on different responsibilities.
- Pupils say they enjoy school. One said 'I really enjoy coming to this school because everyone is kind and caring.' This common view is reflected in their above-average attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Following the previous inspection, a change in leadership roles led to an unsettled period during which the achievement of pupils dipped. Decisive action taken by the current headteacher, ably supported by the governors and the local authority, has helped the school to get back on track. As a result, there has been a rapid improvement in the quality of the leadership of the school and teaching has improved significantly.
- The headteacher has introduced regular checks on learning. This is helping to make teaching more consistent. Data on how well the pupils are doing are used to evaluate how successful teachers are so that they are suitably rewarded.
- Teachers with additional responsibilities work well together and their regular checks on learning are helping to improve both teaching and pupils' achievement. Staff morale has remained high during difficult times. This has helped the community to be cohesive and pull together.
- The pupil premium fund and the sports fund are used well to ensure that all pupils benefit from the many opportunities provided by the school, including involvement in different sports and competitions. Some of the sports funding has been used to buy specialist teaching and equipment to extend the range of sports available for all pupils. As a result, pupils' enjoyment of sport has improved. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Frequent opportunities for pupils to make visits, together with links to schools in contrasting areas of the country, ensure that pupils' learning is extended. The topics and themes have a range of core values which help to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development effectively.

- The school is popular with parents, the vast majority of whom say that it is warm and friendly. Much has been done to improve relations and communication with parents and this is much appreciated by them. As one parent said, 'Many improvements have taken place since Mrs Weaver took headship of the school, taking the school from strength to strength.'
- The local authority provides an appropriate amount of support. It increased its support for the school during the period of change in leadership. Now that the school is improving, this support has been reduced.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have spent a great deal of time supporting the new headteacher and deputy headteacher. This focus has helped to stabilise the school and build better partnerships with parents. For example, governors speak to parents at regular intervals, on the playground and at parent evenings. They have taken their responsibilities to do with staffing very seriously and are clear how teachers are rewarded for good performance. They now have designated roles and responsibilities and are actively involved in supporting the school on checking how well it is doing. They therefore have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They know how well teaching has improved and how this has driven up pupils' attainment. They are well informed about how funding is targeted to support this improvement, for example for pupils eligible for the pupil premium and also the sports fund. Their other focus has been around statutory requirements and they ensure that these are all met, including those related to safeguarding.

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	120540
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	431214

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	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Clark
Headteacher	Naomi Weaver
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2009
Telephone number	01522 681923
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