

Digby Church of England School

Church Street, Digby, Lincoln, LN4 3LZ

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders are rapidly improving the school. Strong teamwork among all staff and governors ensures that leadership and management at all levels are good. This underpins the good teaching, as well as pupils' good behaviour and achievement.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are systematic and rigorous. Weaknesses evident last year have been dealt with, quickly.
- The rich range of subjects and opportunities the school provides makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' success in additional clubs and activities, such as gardening, is exceptional.
- Partnerships with other schools are highly effective. Pupils thrive socially in the shared activities and opportunities they are given. Staff benefit from the shared training and expertise.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and behave well. High quality care and support ensure that they feel safe and happy. Pupils are polite and friendly towards one another, working and playing well together.
- Work to improve attendance has been successful. For almost all pupils, attendance is above average, reflecting their enjoyment of school.
- The consistently good teaching enables all pupils, whatever their ability, to learn and achieve well.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and make good progress. They develop an infectious curiosity for learning, sparked by imaginative teaching.
- Through the school, pupils make good progress from their starting points. This includes the most able pupils as well as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Most parents hold the school in high esteem.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, when work is not challenging enough in phonics (the sounds letters make) lessons, English grammar and writing, progress slows.
- Pupils' handwriting lacks fluency because its development is not given enough attention.
- Not all teachers' marking makes clear how pupils could improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of learning across all ages, both indoors and out. Twelve lessons were viewed. All were joint observations, with the executive headteacher. The executive headteacher also took part in joint work scrutiny of pupils' books in Reception, Year 2 and Year 6.
- The inspector heard pupils read in all year groups.
- The inspector looked at work displayed around the school and in the classrooms, and talked to pupils about their work and play.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher who is in charge of the school for half of the week, when the executive headteacher is at the federated school; other members of staff, representatives of the governing body and a local headteacher appointed by the local authority as associate educational adviser to the school.
- The inspector spoke to several parents, including in a formal interview. She took account of the school's own consultations with parents. She also considered the 43 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and parental correspondence received.
- The eight responses to the staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- The inspector considered a number of documents, including data on pupils' progress, documentation relating to safeguarding, reports on teaching and the most recent reports from local authority advisers.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average primary school. There is a full-time Reception class, which forms the Early Years Foundation Stage, and there are three mixed-age classes.
- Almost all of the pupils are White British.
- About one in four pupils is disabled or has special educational needs. This is higher than the national average.
- Just over a quarter of the pupils are disadvantaged, for whom the school receives additional funding known as the pupil premium. This is about the same proportion as other schools nationally.
- After school care is run by the governing body and was part of this inspection.
- Pre-school provision is located within the school building. It is separately provided for and was not part of this inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has consolidated its federation with a nearby similar school, Dunston St. Peter's Church of England Primary School. The federation became permanent in September 2013. Both schools share an executive headteacher and the same governing body and website.
- The school also works in partnership with The Greenfields Collaborative Partnership, a group of four local similar schools.
- The majority of the teaching staff have joined the school within the last year.
- The school has several awards for the quality of its curriculum. These include the Silver Youth Sport Trust Mark, the Royal Horticultural Society Five Star Gardening School award, Silver Gilt medals at the Chelsea Flower Show two years running, the 'Food For Life' Bronze award and a Bronze School Games Mark award.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to compare their attainment and progress with the government's floor standard (the minimum expectation for attainment and progress in English and mathematics for Year 6).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that work in phonics, English grammar and writing offers a sufficient and consistent level of challenge for all pupils.
 - improving the quality and consistency of pupils' handwriting across the school
 - ensuring that marking leads to measurable improvements in pupils' work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher are relentless in their drive to improve the school's effectiveness. Rigorous systems are in place for checking and improving the quality of teaching, pupils' performance, attendance and behaviour. This ensures that weaknesses are identified and acted upon swiftly. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the priorities for improvement are well-chosen.
- The school makes sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and develop well. There is no discrimination, whatever pupils' background or ability. Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Its impact is measured carefully and shows that the money spent directly improves the progress of eligible pupils, for example through additional one-to-one or small-group support.
- The arrangements for checking staff performance have been made more rigorous following a dip in pupils' performance last year. These arrangements are now linked effectively to the provision of good training opportunities, decisions about teachers' pay, and pupils' progress.
- The school has strong relationships with parents. All parents and carers spoken to during the inspection were very positive and pleased with all the school is doing for their children. Parents and carers of children in challenging circumstances, who spoke to the inspector, could not praise the school highly enough.
- Highly effective, constructive partnerships with other schools and with the federated school enrich pupils' experiences and staff expertise. Better resources, ideas, events, visits, workshops and training are among the many benefits arising from the joint working arrangements the school has established.
- A high priority is placed on safety. All safeguarding arrangements are effectively implemented. Staff are thoroughly vetted.
- The school has used its primary school sports funding successfully, enabling pupils to participate in team games with other schools and learn new sports such as basketball.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well through a vibrant and exciting range of subjects and activities. Pupils have won many awards, including prizes at Chelsea Flower Show and from the Royal Horticultural Society. Opportunities such as Junior Police Cadet Support Officers, Junior Road Safety Officers and Junior Home Safety Officers help to develop pupils' social skills. Pupils in all year groups can explain what the three core values of the school, 'Friendship, Respect and Honesty', mean to them. The police cadet work in particular helps all pupils learn about the rule of law, democracy, and the right to individual liberty and respect. Good relations between pupils from different groups are fostered well at all times. The range of experiences offered, equips all pupils well for their future life in modern Britain.
- The local authority supports the school well in its work with the collaborative partnership. Currently this is focusing on developing new assessment techniques, following the national changes to assessments.
- Staff work as a focused team. Managers at all levels, including in the early years, contribute well to ensuring that teaching is good and that school values permeate all that it offers. The impact of their work is evident in the accelerated progress pupils have made in many aspects of their writing, following a dip last year. All staff are aware of remaining work to be done, both in this respect and to improve teachers' marking.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is strong and effective. Governors have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and oversee the systems for managing staff performance well, making sure that salary progression is linked to teachers' performance and that underperformance is tackled vigorously.
 - Governors check the school's performance thoroughly. They know how well the school is doing and how it performs relative to other schools.
 - Governors check the impact of the use of the funding for those for whom the school receives the pupil

premium. They understand the positive impact that the primary school sport funding is having on pupils' enjoyment of sport. They visit the school regularly to check its work.

- Governors ensure that pupils understand the school's core values. They check that safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good, including in the early years. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes in class are highly conducive to learning.
- Pupils of all ages are courteous and considerate around school and in the playground. The school's values are promoted exceptionally well, so that pupils are friendly to each other, respect each other and know they must tell the truth.
- In class, pupils of all ages become absorbed in activities and maintain concentration for long periods of time. Their eagerness to learn is only marred by the occasional lack of care with handwriting.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents are confident that their children are safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because they receive high-quality care and support when they are there.
- In response to the school's focus, attendance has risen to above average this year. Pupils much enjoy the chance to win the weekly attendance trophy. They thoroughly enjoy school and thrive on the wide range of experiences offered. The after-school care provides a safe and stimulating finish for those pupils who stay after the school day ends.
- School officers, including school councillors, talk proudly of their role in helping and supporting their peers. Pupils say there is very little bullying in school. The school ensures that pupils are fully aware of the different kinds of bullying that pupils of their age might experience, including cyber-bullying.
- A few parents expressed concern about the way the school deals with bullying and manages behaviour. Records show that the school has dealt effectively with poor behaviour that occurred last year and which led to a high number of exclusions. There have been no exclusions in the past few months.

The quality of teaching is good

- Classrooms are conducive to good learning. They are tidy and orderly, with attractive displays of pupils' work and useful prompts to help pupils during lessons.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge, in the early years and through the school, enables them to plan lessons and activities which motivate and excite pupils, ensuring that pupils make good progress, whatever their ability. Pupils respond enthusiastically. Teachers are skilled at asking questions that encourage pupils to think through problems and extend their learning.
- New staff have quickly brought effective ideas that are contributing well to the drive for improvement. For example, work in Year 3 and 4 in writing is helping pupils to make good use of the natural links between subjects and is inspiring the pupils to write more extensively than previously.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is strong, due to early and effective identification of their difficulties and well-devised and carefully followed education plans. Work for the most able is also carefully structured to ensure these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics, by the time they leave in Year 6, reflects the good quality of teaching

they receive in this subject. Any weakness in progress or attainment is quickly addressed. In class, pupils say they 'always have something more challenging to do and it is always interesting', and this spurs them to make rapid progress. Teachers' expectations are high. Year 3 and 4 pupils relished tackling problems, making comments such as, 'What is one seventh of 63 sweets?' and, when looking at a jungle picture, 'Which is the least common animal?'

- Reading is generally taught well, so that pupils develop a love of reading, for pleasure as well as for research. Reading tasks link subjects together well. For example, the opportunity to undertake collaborative research with books helped Year 1 and 2 pupils to read about, then design and make a penguin puppet, as part of their work on Antarctica.
- The teaching of phonics, English grammar and writing have all improved in response to enhanced training for staff and collaborative moderation work with other schools. However, a few teachers and teaching assistants sometimes take too long to respond when pupils show they understand the work and are ready to move on. When this happens, it reduces the level of challenge that activities offer pupils, and this slows their progress.
- Teachers make sure that pupils know the targets that will help them to reach the next level. However, sometimes, teachers' written marking does not offer the guidance that is needed to help pupils improve.
- Pupils' handwriting in their specific handwriting books is well formed. However, in their other written work, there is a general untidiness, because the development of a fluent style has not been given enough consideration as part of everyday teaching.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils build on the good start in the early years and all groups of pupils continue to make good progress in both Key Stages 1 and 2. A faltering of progress in 2014, which affected the work of a very few pupils across the school, has been dealt with, rigorously.
- Pupils enjoy learning, are enthusiastic and keen to work hard. They co-operate very well in pairs and in groups, and work happily at all times.
- There were too few pupils in each year group in 2014 to compare their performance reliably with the national averages for English and mathematics. Taking into consideration individual pupils' starting points on entry to the school, most made the progress expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Some outstanding progress is evident in individual cases, for example, among disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Results dipped in the Year 1 phonics check, in the national tests in Year 2, especially in mathematics, and in Year 6, in writing, English grammar, punctuation and spelling. The school responded rapidly and took effective action. Pupils' progress has returned convincingly to its previous good levels in all classes.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in all year groups make good progress, and some make outstanding progress. Early initial assessments, when pupils first arrive, ensure that staff know which pupils need extra support so that work begins rapidly to help them to succeed. Records are meticulous and are shared effectively with parents, enabling home and school to work together well. This meets the needs of this group of pupils well.
- The most able pupils in all year groups make good progress. All the high achievers at Key Stage 1 continued to achieve highly in Key Stage 2 in 2014. They have a thirst for knowledge and rise to any challenges set. In a design technology task, Year 5 and 6 pupils enthusiastically set about planning how to make a Roman shield, in their work on 'Invaders and Settlers'. The most able pupils discussed durability and protection astutely, in readiness for a planned 'invasion' of a nearby classroom. The most able pupils in Year 3 and 4 used electronic tablets competently, and eagerly thought about ways to find out what 'non-chronological' means, without recourse to the teacher.

- Pupils' phonics skills are improving after the dip last year. In a Year 1 and 2 phonics session, pupils were appropriately challenged when they were asked to spell words using 'ure', and they segmented the words accurately in their heads, to do so. They relished the increasing difficulty as they spelled 'pure', 'future', and 'temperature'. However, sometimes, staff too rigidly follow a set plan even when pupils show they already understand the work. This limits the degree of challenge and consequently the progress that some pupils make.
- New initiatives for reading, including guided reading sessions, are already having a positive impact on older pupils' reading standards. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they are competent readers and reach a level above that expected for their age.
- Pupil premium funding helps the disadvantaged pupils, for whom this is provided, to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The number of pupils eligible for support in Year 6 in 2014 was too small to make any reliable comparison of their attainment in English and mathematics with other pupils in the school or pupils nationally.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Excellent partnerships with parents are established, triggered by an excellent home learning book that parents complete prior to the start of their child's first term. Parents, children and staff are all proud of these lively records of early learning.
- Children's behaviour is good. The early years areas are stimulating and children are looked after very well, enabling them to feel happy and safe in school. Children enjoy working as well as playing together and are keen to learn. When sitting in a circle they happily take turns to answer questions and listen carefully to one another's answers.
- Well-planned, imaginative activities, both inside and outside, kindle children's interest. Staff are well-versed in how to encourage learning. The focus adults give to promoting the school's values underpin the warm relationships that pervade the setting and this helps children to make good progress. They start with skills and abilities that are mostly typical for their age. As a result of the good teaching, when they enter Year 1, a higher proportion than average have skills and knowledge that are above those expected for their age. They are well-prepared for their learning in Key Stage 1.
- Children enjoy learning from the many and varied tasks they are given or choose for themselves. The animal theme they were exploring during the inspection inspired a good range of learning. In the 'vet's surgery', 'receptionists' took telephone bookings while the 'vet' tended to a sick puppy with much careful bandaging.
- Planning for phonics, in ability groups, is thorough. However, sometimes, when the planned work is clearly understood already by the children, staff do not provide more challenging work. When this happens, it holds back progress.

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	120519
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	449611

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	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Mitchell
Headteacher	Graham Boyall (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2010
Telephone number	01526 320630
Fax number	01526 320630
Email address	enquiries@digby.lincs.sch.uk

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