

Benjamin Adlard Primary School

Sandsfield Lane, Gainsborough DN21 1DB

Inspection dates 7–8 June 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong and determined leadership has led to rapid improvements to all aspects of the school's work. It is now a good school, and improving further.
- The school has undergone a radical change in culture, ethos and ambition. Leaders and teachers now have much higher expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Leaders at all levels have a precise, accurate view of the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. They act swiftly to address any underperformance.
- Leaders have put effective support in place for teachers to learn from best practice in the school and elsewhere. This has motivated teachers to work together to improve their practice. Teaching across the school is now consistently good.
- Outcomes for pupils are improving rapidly. The proportion of pupils working at age-related expectations has risen significantly, particularly in key stage 2.
- Governors have an astute understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their checks on the school's work have supported its fast pace of improvement.
- Pupils' renewed sense of pride in their school is evident in their positive attitudes to learning and the high-quality work they produce.
- Early years provision is good. Strong leadership and consistently good teaching ensure that pupils get off to a good start and are well prepared for the next stage of their schooling.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some classes, pupils' attainment remains low and is not rising quickly enough.
- The teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is not consistently effective.
- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school remains above average.
- The school's programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to learn about healthy choices.
- Pupils' work in some subjects lacks sufficient challenge, especially for the most able pupils.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is consistently effective
 - all topic work is sufficiently challenging, especially for the most able pupils.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy lifestyles through an effective programme of personal, social, health and economic education
 - continuing to use a range of strategies to improve the attendance of those pupils who are frequently absent from school.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - further accelerating the progress being made by pupils in Years 3 and 4, to ensure that they have the skills and understanding necessary to meet the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher and head of school provide an exceptional model of leadership for all staff. Together they have brought about a radical change in the culture of the school. Their combined vision, drive and determination have been key to the rapid improvement the school has made.
- The executive headteacher is a national leader of education, and an inspiring and visionary leader. She has put her considerable expertise of leading effective schools to good use, developing ambitious plans and forging effective links and relationships between staff in the three schools she leads. These tight-knit, trusting partnerships have been instrumental in the school's success.
- The appointment of the head of school in May 2015 was a turning point for the school. Since then, leadership, teaching, behaviour and achievement have all rapidly improved. Working with the staff, he has reshaped the school's vision to 'create a haven in which pupils flourish'. This has brought together the whole school in a sense of shared responsibility to ensure high-quality teaching alongside excellent pastoral care. As one teacher put it, 'He made us believe we could do it'.
- Parents now have a greater sense of involvement in the work of the school and pride in their children's work. This was evident during a recent art exhibition for example, when one parent commented, 'It is so lovely to be invited in to see how much the teachers put in to making learning fun, and how much they care about each and every child'. The development of home learning projects has been highly effective in engaging parents more fully in their child's learning. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were very positive about all aspects of the school's work.
- Opportunities to work with colleagues from other schools and with each other have motivated all staff to improve their practice. The triad system has enabled teachers to observe each other, provide feedback and reflect on their practice. Teachers have learned to be open to help, and now willingly seek support on topics that they are less confident to teach. These tight systems mean that support is very closely focused on teachers' needs and they have led to improved teaching across the school.
- On its journey to improvement, the school has received excellent support from the Kyra Teaching School Alliance. While this support has been very intense and 'hands on' when necessary, leaders from the alliance have worked with senior and middle leaders to develop their skills and the school's capacity to improve from within. The impact of this work is most clearly seen in the development of middle leaders at the school. The competence and confidence of these leaders, especially in mathematics and English, have grown considerably since the last inspection.
- Subject leaders are directly responsible for checking on and improving teaching and learning in their subjects. The impact of their work is seen in the greater consistency of practice across the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability benefit from much improved leadership of this area. Leaders work closely with teachers to develop their skills in teaching these pupils, and monitor very carefully the impact of the work that teaching assistants do with these pupils. Leaders rigorously track the progress these pupils make and put in place effective interventions to raise their achievement.
- Leaders have ensured that the use of additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, has led to better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school. They carefully monitor the impact of interventions they put in place and amend these when it becomes clear which ones are not working.
- The curriculum is now a real strength of the school. The topic approach sparks pupils' interest and ignites their curiosity, and they respond by producing high-quality work, including at home. During the inspection, one inspector was thrilled to join Year 1 pupils on their dinosaur hunt, for example. In some subjects, such as religious education, work is not always as challenging as it could be.
- Teachers have become increasingly skilled in teaching physical education as a result of the good use of the sports premium. This has enabled pupils to compete in sports competitions for the first time in many years, contributing to their renewed sense of pride and achievement.
- The school's values are known and well understood by pupils, who explained very articulately what it means to be a 'rights-respecting school'. Careful teaching and modelling of these values ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Leadership is not outstanding because, while teaching has improved enormously, it is not yet consistently effective. Some of the less able pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not have the skills in literacy and mathematics to be able to make rapid progress. The significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding mean that they do not yet make good progress. There are some weaknesses in the provision for personal, social, health and economic education.
- The CfBT Schools Trust has made an effective contribution to the school's improvement. This is chiefly through its presence on the rapid improvement board and through the support provided by the Kyra Teaching School Alliance. Leaders from the trust carry out regular visits to the school and check on its work.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The rapid improvement board has been instrumental in securing the fast pace of improvements in the school. It has established a strong leadership team, and supports them in making sure that the ambition and vision for the school drive everything that happens.
 - Governors keep a close check on the school's progress by regularly monitoring and evaluating the school's development plan. They do not hold back from challenging leaders when they feel that progress has not been fast enough.
 - Through structured visits and meetings with leaders, governors have an accurate and astute understanding of the school. They hold subject leaders to account very well for their role in improving teaching on the ground.
 - The rapid improvement board has drawn up well-thought-out plans for the transfer of governance now that the school no longer requires special measures.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders take a proactive approach to keeping children safe by ensuring that families receive help as soon as issues arise, preventing them from escalating. They provide space and time for families to discuss their concerns and seek help, for example in the parenting classes that are run at the school. They keep a close eye on pupils' attendance and where needed they work closely with families to improve their child's attendance. Staff are well trained in spotting the signs that pupils may be at risk of abuse and the use of 'safe care plans' ensure that they know exactly how to support pupils who are vulnerable. Leaders work well with external agencies by raising any child protection issues swiftly and checking that appropriate actions are taken. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that she is able to carry out her role effectively by seeking out regular support. This vigilant approach to safeguarding ensures that the school is truly a safe haven for pupils and their families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers are now confident masters of their subjects and use this to enthuse the pupils they teach. They plan interesting and inspiring work that captures pupils' interest and sparks their imagination. Pupils thrive as a result.
- Learning is very well planned to meet pupils' needs. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to support pupils. This was seen, for example, in the Year 6 class, where the teacher and teaching assistant swapped seamlessly between groups to amend tasks and provide additional support and challenge as necessary.
- Teachers are effective in helping pupils to develop the resilience they need to be successful learners. They encourage pupils to persevere with difficult tasks and use resources to help them work out the answer.
- Teachers champion the importance of reading through well-used and imaginatively designed reading corners and a good range of reading resources, and by making the most of opportunities to read in class. They expect pupils to read at home and to update their reading records regularly. As a result, pupils across the school are developing a real passion for reading that is contributing to the good progress they make in all subjects.
- Pupils know how well they are doing because teachers consistently use verbal and written feedback well to pinpoint precisely what they need to do to improve. They ensure that pupils have time at the start of each day to make any corrections or try additional challenges.
- Across classes and subjects there are common expectations of neatness and how work should be set out. Pupils' handwriting has improved considerably since the previous inspection because leaders have prioritised this issue.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive well-coordinated and effective support. Teachers and teaching assistants carefully monitor which interventions are effective and amend these as necessary. This close focus on their progress ensures that they receive the precise help they need.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills has greatly improved across the school. The teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is not consistently effective, however. In some subjects, teachers do not ensure that pupils use these skills to improve their writing.
- The exciting curriculum provides good opportunities to develop pupils' writing and mathematical skills, and teachers ensure that pupils develop these skills in history, geography, science and other subjects. In religious education, pupils have the opportunity to learn about a range of religions as well as Christian teaching. Some of this work does not challenge pupils sufficiently to write at length or develop logical and convincing arguments. It is sometimes too easy for the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils know how to be successful learners because teachers help them to develop the skills and confidence they need to do well. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and enjoy talking about their learning.
- Pupils are friendly, welcoming and polite. Many took the time to welcome inspectors to their school, ask how the inspection was going and whether they could help in any way. This is typical of their assured but respectful manner.
- The school's open culture ensures that pupils know how to seek help and report concerns. Many expressed their gratitude for the support they had received, particularly from pastoral leaders. They know how to stay safe in a range of situations. As one pupil told the lead inspector, 'Teachers have helped me to understand bad influences better, and now I know how to stay safe'.
- Pupils thrive on the opportunities they have to take on positions of responsibility. The 'reading warriors' explained to the lead inspector their role in reading to younger pupils at lunchtime, and how this is furthering their love of reading, too. The school council has visited other schools in the teaching school alliance and advised leaders on how they could improve their schools. Such opportunities enable pupils to know that their opinions are valid and valued.
- The school's bright, welcoming environment makes a good contribution to pupils' positive attitudes.
- The school has many pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. While these pupils receive much individual support, the curriculum contains too few opportunities to learn about how to stay healthy. Consequently, not all pupils know how to make good choices for their social and emotional well-being.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The changes that leaders have brought about have led to a renewed sense of pride in the school. This is reflected in the high-quality work that pupils produce and the care that they take with it, and is perhaps most evident in their 'home learning projects'. Pupils enjoy competing with each other to produce the best work. One pupil proudly showed the inspector the castle she had built, saying, 'It's the best thing I've ever done'.
- The use of the 'golden rules' has been highly effective in improving pupils' behaviour in class and around the school. Pupils now understand the consequences of their actions more clearly, because teachers apply the sanctions and rewards consistently.
- Improved routines and systems have ensured that behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is now good. Pupils told the lead inspector how they appreciated the fact that the head of school had listened to and acted on their suggestions to improve behaviour. Consequently, they enjoy using the new equipment that leaders have bought for them, and use it well. Year 6 pupils enjoy taking responsibility for the equipment and ensure that it is always put away safely.
- Pupils' improved conduct in the dining hall is testament to the work that leaders and staff have done to emphasise the importance of good manners. Posters outlining the expectations for their behaviour in the dining hall serve as useful reminders of good table manners; pupils know exactly how the 'golden rules' apply to their free time, too.

- The school is particularly successful in improving the behaviour of pupils who present challenging behaviour. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that these pupils and their families receive individualised, highly specialised support, which remains in place until pupils are able to cope without it. This ensures, for example, that pupils who are in Year 6 are well supported for the transition to secondary school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in managing pupils' behaviour in class. They are astute in knowing exactly when to intervene to prevent a lack of focus becoming a more serious issue, and this proactive approach ensures that low-level disruption is kept to a minimum.
- Attendance is rising and is now just above the national average. However, levels of persistent absence remain above average. Leaders have used a range of strategies, including issuing fines, to improve the attendance of those pupils who are most frequently absent from school. Despite this, the attendance of a few pupils remains stubbornly low.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Scrutiny of pupils' books and observations of teaching show that in most classes, most pupils are making the expected rates of progress and many have made accelerated progress. A greater proportion of pupils are now meeting age-related expectations across different classes and in a range of subjects.
- In 2015, the proportion who reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 rose considerably to be broadly in line with the national average. The proportions who made expected, and more than expected, progress in both reading and mathematics were above national averages. In writing, this measure remained below the national average, but showed considerable improvement on the previous year.
- In most classes, disadvantaged pupils keep pace with other pupils; in some, they outperform their peers. In 2015, they made more progress than their peers and others nationally in mathematics, and in reading they made the same rate of progress as others nationally. Information provided by the school indicates that these trends are set to continue.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability generally make the same rate of progress as their peers; in 2015, their overall progress was similar to that of their peers in school and to that of other pupils nationally. The very careful monitoring of these pupils ensures that gaps in their learning are quickly picked up. For those who have significant gaps in their learning, progress is sometimes slower. Nonetheless, they make gains, gradually building up the skills and understanding they need to fully access the curriculum.
- Pupils' achievement in phonics has risen consistently over the past few years to be well above average in 2015. The proportion passing the phonics check in Year 1 is likely to remain well above average this year.
- For some pupils, and in some classes, rates of progress are variable. In Years 3 and 4, changes to staffing have led to slower rates of progress, particularly in reading and writing. In these classes, the proportion of pupils who are meeting age-related expectations is not rising quickly enough. However, very careful scrutiny of their work shows that following changes to staffing, pupils in these classes are now making accelerated progress.
- The most able pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In some subjects, such as religious education, they make less progress because their work is not sufficiently challenging.
- The school has a very high proportion of pupils who join the school part-way through the year. These pupils have often missed significant periods of schooling and have patterns of erratic school attendance. While their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is generally lower than that of other pupils, they make accelerated progress from their starting points as a result of carefully targeted intervention and effective classroom support.

Early years provision

is good

- Effective leadership of the early years has secured improvement to this area of the school. Staff have worked closely with colleagues from the teaching school alliance to improve their practice and ensure that their assessments of children's learning are accurate.

- A consistent and relentless focus is leading to improving outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs or disability.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is good. Teachers employ a broad range of strategies to ensure that children get off to the best start at school. Their high expectations and careful tracking ensure that from low starting points, children make good progress and rapidly develop skills across all areas of the curriculum. A growing proportion are working at the expected levels. In 2015, the proportion who reached a good level of development was in line with the national average, and this trend is set to continue.
- Leaders have ensured that the most able children are now more stretched by the tasks they are given. These children now receive more complex challenges to complete, and are enjoying rising to this challenge.
- Teaching is well planned and well structured to support children's learning; there is little lost time. An inspiring curriculum and interesting activities ensure that children focus well and make good progress.
- The highly stimulating environment contributes to purposeful learning. For example, children's next steps are displayed on the walls, so that they can quickly and easily check what they need to work on.
- Children's behaviour is very good. They listen carefully to each other and to adults and are very eager to participate fully in the learning. They know the school rules and understand the importance of safe play and behaviour.

School details

Unique reference number	138063
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10009996

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Culpin
Executive headteacher	Marie-Claire Bretherton
Head of school	Sam Coy
Telephone number	01427 612562
Website	http://benjaminadlard.lincs.sch.uk
Email address	Enquiries@Benjaminadlard.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language.
- Almost two thirds of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is much higher than the national average.
- Approximately one in three pupils join and leave the school part-way during the school year. This is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is much higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The early years setting comprises a part-time Nursery class and full-time Reception class.
- The school belongs to the CfBT Schools Trust. It is also a member of the Kyra Teaching School Alliance, which is also part of the trust.
- The executive headteacher is a national leader of education and leads two other schools, both of which are judged to be outstanding by Ofsted.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some observations were carried out jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, senior and middle leaders and four members of the rapid improvement board.
- Inspectors spoke formally with pupils from Years 1, 2, 3 and 4, members of the school council and 'reading warriors'. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils in class and at lunchtime and with parents as they brought their children to school.
- A range of documentation was considered, including the school's action plans and self-evaluation, monitoring and evaluation records, performance management information and minutes of rapid improvement board meetings. Inspectors scrutinised the school's pre-recruitment checks on staff and safeguarding records. They took into account the 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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