

# The Kirkby-la-Thorpe Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Kirkby-la-Thorpe, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 9NU

Inspection dates	13–14 September 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	Not previously inspected

# Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

#### This is a good school

- The headteacher ensures that the school is good and that it continues to improve. She and her staff work together effectively for the benefit of all pupils. Parents rightly hold the school in high regard.
- Governors are committed to the school and visit leaders regularly to check that improvements are continuing.
- Teaching is good in all key stages. It is best in mathematics. Teachers plan work that meets the needs of most pupils. As a result, most pupils currently at the school are making good progress.
- Pupils behave well in class. They listen carefully to both teachers and teaching assistants, follow instructions quickly and work hard. Around the school, pupils are both polite and sensible. There is almost no bullying or unkindness because pupils are respectful to others.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class, where they quickly settle in and become confident learners.
- Pupils are kept safe. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and report any concerns to senior leaders. Pupils are well taught how to manage a range of risks to their safety.

- While progress is good for pupils currently in the school, it is not as strong in writing as it is in reading and mathematics. Teachers do not consistently show pupils how to write effectively enough, give them effective guidance on how to improve their writing, or ensure that pupils use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Too often, the most able pupils mark time doing work, including homework, that does not challenge them sufficiently. This means that they do not make as much progress as they should.
- Due to a recent change in how the school measures the progress made by pupils, governors are not currently as effective when challenging leaders as they have been in the past.
- Middle leaders have not had sufficient opportunities to observe the quality of teaching and to report to governors on their findings.
- Not all policies are reviewed as often as they are required to be in order to meet recent national guidelines.
- The school development plan lacks precise dates when actions are to be checked.



# Full report

# What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make leadership and management more effective by ensuring that:
  - the new systems for measuring pupils' progress are embedded throughout the school, so that governors are provided with the information they need to hold leaders precisely to account in relation to the outcomes of different groups of pupils
  - middle leaders play a full part in monitoring all aspects of the subjects for which they have responsibility, and report regularly to governors on the progress of actions taken
  - timescales for monitoring actions in the school development plan are clearly included, in order that no improvements are delayed or missed
  - the policy for supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is reviewed annually, and that the policy for safeguarding is updated quickly to reflect new national requirements.
- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress in writing by ensuring that:
  - when teachers model the writing process for pupils they do so effectively, checking that pupils apply their skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling correctly
  - staff give pupils sufficient time to re-draft their work so its quality is as high as possible
  - the most able pupils are moved on to appropriately challenging work more quickly, and are given homework that makes them think deeply.



# **Inspection judgements**

#### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

- The headteacher is well respected by parents, pupils, governors and staff, and sets high expectations. She is determined that the school will continue to improve until its provision, and especially its outcomes for pupils, is the best possible. She ensures that staff work closely together and that they communicate continually so that they can share ideas on how to improve further. Staff know pupils and their families well. This means that they can quickly deal with any issues or matters of concern that arise.
- Both the headteacher and the assistant headteacher know the many strengths of the school and they have a very clear idea of what needs to be done to accelerate the progress of pupils in areas where it is not as rapid as it should be. The school's self-evaluation plan is accurate and sets out a number of key areas for further improvement.
- Processes to manage the performance of teachers are fit for purpose and are rigorous. Targets are appropriately challenging, and the headteacher ensures that staff receive good-quality continuing professional development to improve their skills. Those who are new to the teaching profession, or who are less confident, told the inspector that they felt well supported, and that they are given access to a range of good support to build their knowledge and effectiveness.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium and service premium funding are appropriately spent to improve the attainment of disadvantaged and service pupils. These pupils receive effective support to ensure that their progress accelerates and that differences diminish between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally.
- The school's curriculum is broad and appropriately balanced to ensure that pupils receive a well-rounded education. The headteacher is determined that, while teachers rightly give priority to lessons in English and mathematics, the frequency of these lessons is not at the expense of teaching in other subjects. Leaders ensure that teachers also plan interesting work for pupils. This is supplemented by many exciting and regular trips, or visitors to lessons, who make learning come alive.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities greatly. These include music, choir, cooking, craft and an Eco Club, as well as football, netball, cross-country and rugby. These activities nurture pupils' interests and skills well.
- Leaders see that the primary physical education and sports funding is used effectively. Pupils told the inspector how keen they were to stay fit and healthy, happily insisting on demonstrating to him at breaktime just how many star jumps and press-ups they could do. Because of the effective use of the extra funding, participation rates in sporting activities have increased. Pupils take part in a wide range of sporting competitions, including cross-country, swimming and tri-golf. They also participate in a number of sporting festivals, including water polo, boccia, taekwondo and archery.
- Fundamental British values are taught well to pupils, with the promotion of respect for others a particular strength. 'Tolerance' is one of the school's core values, and leaders and teachers reflect this value continually in both assemblies and in lessons. As a result, pupils listen and value the opinions of others, whether or not they necessarily agree with them wholly themselves. In addition, pupils follow the school rules and



enjoy taking part in the many democratic opportunities to give their opinions. Pupils the inspector met were keen to tell him how they felt that their voice mattered. Pupils take an active part in agreeing their own 'classroom charters', which set out how they should all behave.

- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is also good. Pupils have regular opportunities to stop and reflect on moral issues, such as taking part in worship in line with the school's Christian ethos, or to appreciate the beauty of nature when, for example, going outside with their teachers to see newly-born lambs in the field next to the playground. In addition, the curriculum teaches pupils effectively about the different cultures and religions in Britain and around the world, including different forms of Christianity. As a result, pupils become thoughtful, reflective and knowledgeable young people who are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents the inspector met during his visit were extremely positive about all aspects of the school. This is reflected in the recent survey undertaken by the school, and confirmed by those who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. As one parent explained, 'The progress my child has made academically over the last year has been superb. The school offers a safe environment to learn in and all the teachers have an open door policy.' Another added, 'I cannot praise the school enough for helping my daughter to settle in. Weaknesses in her abilities were quickly identified and have been addressed by all her teachers.'
- When curriculum levels were abolished nationally, leaders looked to find an alternative system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. The system they chose has not proved as precise as expected. Leaders have now chosen a better system that is fit for purpose, and have begun to use this to measure and record the outcomes of different groups of pupils accurately, and are passing this information on to the governing body.
- Though subject leaders have monitored the quality of teaching in some classes, senior leaders agree that this has been limited. This is because the senior leaders have mainly undertaken lesson observations themselves. As a result, subject leaders do not have a precise enough knowledge of where teaching is best, and where it is less effective, and thus cannot then plan action effectively enough to address it. Furthermore, they are not required to report to governors such findings as they have. This means that their skills and independence in leading their subject are not as high as they should be, and that the governing body is not able to challenge subject leaders adequately.
- Though the school development plan sets out sensible and well-considered steps to improve where needed, it is not highly effective because the timescales for monitoring actions are not sufficiently detailed. This risks future actions not happening at the time that leaders intended them, or actions being overlooked.
- While the policy for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is comprehensive, it is not reviewed annually, as required.

# Governance of the school

Governors are committed to the school and its pupils, and understand their responsibilities well. They meet frequently with leaders to discuss the provision for pupils and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They understand their strategic role, and their responsibilities, well. They check the performance of teachers effectively and do not agree pay rises for teachers unless they are justified by meeting



teachers' targets for improvements in classroom performance.

- The governing body checks that the school building is safe for pupils and that risk assessments are correctly completed. They also ensure that the school budget is appropriately used, and that no excessive surplus, or overspending, is occurring.
- Until last year, when national curriculum levels were abolished, governors had a very good understanding of the outcomes of different groups of pupils. Documentary evidence of the meetings of the governing body confirm that, over time, governors have challenged senior leaders very effectively if the performance of any group is lower than it should be. However, as the school's replacement system for tracking pupils' progress has proved to be unreliable, governors are aware that their ability to do this has been restricted recently. They are now confident that the new system will quickly allow them to do this properly again.

# Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher ensures that all staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, including ways of raising awareness of radicalisation and extremism. Staff understand they have a duty to be vigilant and know well the different forms of abuse. Staff were confident in describing the procedures to report concerns, and fully understand their duty to do this. As a result, there is a clear culture of safety at the school.
- The headteacher, who is the school's designated leader for safeguarding, manages effectively any referrals of concern she receives. Leaders are quick to respond and to make appropriate, brisk contact with external agencies wherever this is needed. Leaders are also diligent in following up concerns if they do not feel the response of agencies, including social care, is appropriate or timely. Wherever possible, leaders seek out and take account of the feelings and views of pupils. Leaders also ensure that they keep parents closely informed of any concerns they have, unless doing so would increase the risk of harm to that pupil.
- New requirements in the latest version of the Department for Education's 'Keeping children safe in education' document mean that the school's current safeguarding policy needs to be amended as soon as possible.

# Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Teachers plan effectively to ensure that the needs of most groups of pupils are met.
- Teachers make learning fun. As a result, pupils want to learn. They pay attention and work hard in class. Pupils the inspector met told him that they enjoy their lessons.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Teachers take note of the opinions and thoughts of pupils. Pupils recognise this and, as a result, a mutual respect exists between them.
- Teachers teach phonics consistently well. Pupils become capable and confident readers from a young age, able to read with expression and understanding. Teachers successfully encourage in pupils a genuine enjoyment of reading. Where pupils do not recognise a word, they use good strategies to try to read it. Teachers take care to ensure that they give extra practice to those pupils who do not read regularly at home.



- The teaching of mathematics is particularly effective. As a result, the progress of current pupils is strong. Teachers regularly assess pupils and use this information to plan lessons that teach pupils skills where they are less confident, or need more fluency. Teachers give prompt sheets to pupils that set out clearly the things pupils will learn over the year. This helps pupils to make connections with the different areas of mathematics, and gives them early confidence in the things that teachers will shortly be teaching them.
- Where pupils have lower starting points, teachers are giving them appropriate support. They tackle misconceptions that pupils have well, explaining things in a different way if pupils do not immediately understand.
- Teachers insist that pupils set out their work neatly. From the Reception class onwards they have high expectations that children will write neatly and carefully, and this is sustained throughout all year groups. As a result, pupils' work is neat and completed with pride using an attractive, consistently joined style of writing.
- Set targets help pupils to see what they need to improve next. Pupils say these are useful to them and help them to learn.
- Over time, the teaching of writing has not been as effective as in other subjects. Because of this, pupils' progress in writing has been weaker than it has been in, for example, mathematics. This is because teachers have not given pupils sufficient guidance on how to write effectively in different styles and for different purposes. When teachers choose to model the process it is not consistently effective. Though pupils can independently demonstrate skills in grammar, spelling and punctuation to a high standard, teachers have not made sure that these skills are fully deployed when pupils complete, for example, stories, descriptions or instructions. In addition, staff have not created sufficient opportunities for pupils to understand how they can improve further the writing they have already done. Progress in writing is now improving, but is not yet brisk because teachers do not yet consistently ensure that their teaching includes these features.
- Leaders recognise that teachers do not consistently challenge the most able pupils. This was confirmed by pupils' work seen during the inspection. Too often, the most able pupils are given a task that they can do easily before they are allowed to move on to work that is more difficult. Many of the most able pupils the inspector met confirmed to him that they found the work they are given both in class, and for homework, too easy. As a result, not enough of the most able pupils are reaching the high standards of which they are capable.

#### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

#### Personal development and welfare

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The headteacher and her staff ensure that the school is a very welcoming and happy one, where pupils are well cared for. Pupils feel confident in their learning, which they discuss appropriately with their peers or with adults. They are not afraid to make errors and regard feedback as a valuable opportunity to know what they need to improve next.



- Pupils the inspector met were all keen to tell him that they felt very safe in school. They say that there is very little bullying or name-calling in school. However, if they are worried about anything, pupils say that they can approach any adult to help them.
- Pupils are taught about a wide range of risks they may face as they grow up. For example, they understand how rivers or strangers may be dangerous. The focus on keeping safe begins in the Reception class where, for example, teachers show children how to walk safely outside school by taking them on the pavement to post letters they have written, taking care to avoid traffic. Teachers inform older pupils about other risks, such as drugs and alcohol. Pupils told the inspector that they knew not to give their details online to someone they did not know in person, and never to agree to meet someone they had met while using the internet.
- A very large majority of the parents who responded to Parent View say that the school keeps pupils safe and happy. Those parents the inspector listened to during the inspection confirmed this.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils the inspector met said that they were proud to be a part of the school. They wear their uniform smartly and keep the school building tidy and free from litter.
- Staff model high expectations of behaviour well. As a result, pupils are polite to visitors, holding doors open for them and greeting them politely each time. Pupils are courteous to both their peers and to adults, lining up sensibly and walking with care around the school.
- The inspector saw no disruption to learning whatsoever during the inspection. Pupils arrive ready to learn and cooperate well in lessons. They follow the instructions they are given and they complete their tasks to the best of their ability. On the rare occasions when pupils lose focus for a moment, classmates may quickly remind them to pay attention.
- Breaktimes are happy and friendly social occasions. Some pupils act as playground leaders, organising games and activities for others to enjoy. Other pupils, who take on the role of peer mediators, were able to explain in an articulate manner the impact of the responsibilities they hold in school. These pupils listen to, and help to resolve fairly, the differences of any pupils who have fallen out, so that everyone is friends again.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn. Attendance is above the national average. The headteacher has worked effectively to help the very small number of families whose children do not attend sufficiently regularly. As a result, there is virtually no low attendance or persistent absence.

# **Outcomes for pupils**

- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in all key stages.
- The proportion of pupils who have reached a good level of development has been broadly in line with the national average for three years.
- The proportion of pupils who have passed the phonics screening check in Year 1 has been at least in line with the national average for the past three years. This year it is



above the current national average.

- Published information shows that pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 improved over three years and, overall, was above the national average in 2015. This year, early information suggests that around three quarters met the new expected standard in reading, and almost seven in 10 in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment has been at least broadly average over time. In 2015, pupils left the school with levels of skills approximately one term ahead of similar pupils nationally. Unconfirmed results suggest that the attainment of the most recent Year 6 cohort was much lower. However, this is because these pupils had significantly lower prior attainment when they left key stage 1.
- The latest published results show that progress for pupils is average overall. However, early performance information indicates that writing scores for the Year 6 cohort this year were in the lowest 25% of all schools nationally. This was because the teaching of writing over time for these pupils was not consistently good. Although an improved system of showing pupils how to write well was put in place in spring 2016, its impact was not enough to improve sufficiently the overall progress score for these pupils. Because of this lower result, the inspector undertook a comprehensive scrutiny of work from current pupils. This showed convincingly that progress in writing, though not as strong as in other subjects, is good overall and is improving.
- As a result of effective teaching, pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects, in addition to English and mathematics. Pupils' books from different year groups show that, for instance, in science, pupils learn to conduct different investigations, with increasing independence. They understand the need for a fair test, make sensible predictions, measure accurately and draw appropriate conclusions. In history, pupils learn about the cultures and important events in a wide range of countries and historical periods. For example, pupils in Year 5 learn to compare and contrast life in ancient Egypt with the culture of the Anglo-Saxons. In religious education, pupils learn about, for instance, the Jewish faith as well as the rituals of Christianity.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress from lower starting points. Staff quickly identify their needs. Skilled teaching assistants then support them well, but promote the independence of these pupils by not giving them more help than they need. As a result, these pupils improve quickly. For example, one pupil who several months earlier was unable to construct a full sentence wrote in his story, 'I had the urge to add my name to the wall. I felt like someone was watching me!'
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. The numbers of disadvantaged pupils are too small to report on the specific outcomes of different cohorts without the risk of identifying the pupils concerned. However, those who begin with lower starting points are given effective support to be able to catch up. Disadvantaged pupils who are mostable are given additional and challenging work to enable them to extend and deepen their skills. As a result, the overall differences in attainment between these pupils and others nationally are diminishing.
- Although the most able disadvantaged pupils are well provided for, not enough of the other most able pupils are making the progress that they are capable of, particularly in writing. While these pupils are making at least expected progress, it is not rapid



enough.

#### **Early years provision**

- The Reception classroom is a friendly and welcoming place, and staff are kind to children. As a result, children quickly settle in and are keen to learn. The outside area is full of attractive resources, which adults use well to help children learn.
- Teaching is good in the early years. Lessons are exciting, and make children want to join in. The Reception teacher plans learning effectively with teaching assistants to cover all areas of learning. Often one activity helps to build a skill in many areas. For instance, pupils learn not only to practise their early writing, but also to improve their motor skills by learning together to pick up grains of rice with tweezers. This gives them an opportunity to cooperate, to discuss what they are doing with adults, to persist when they find a task challenging, but also to grip pencils and pens more confidently. Staff then assess how much children have learned from the tasks they are given, and adjust their next lessons accordingly.
- Because of good teaching, children are keen to have a go and show what they can do. They also listen to adults, who take care to guide them to find the correct answer for themselves.
- Staff teach children how to behave safely from a young age. For example, the local police community support officer visits them and teaches them what to do if they ever become lost. Staff follow this up by getting children to learn their own address so they can tell a trusted adult if they cannot find their parent or carer.
- Staff also model good behaviour, insisting that children communicate politely and correctly. Parents say that they have noted that their children are then applying this at home.
- The Reception teacher ensures that he works with parents well. Parents are asked about their child's abilities before they begin, and staff use this knowledge to help them quickly assess children's skills. The teacher also takes a photograph of the parent with his or her child early on in the autumn term, and asks them to write a wish for their child by the time they leave for Year 1. Both are displayed in the classroom entrance. Parents who the inspector spoke with said that they find this a touching start to their child's education. Many parents also take advantage of the school's online facility to send photographs and details to staff of the things their children are learning at home. Thus, these things can be celebrated in class, as well as being used to inform teachers' own assessments of the progress children are making.
- Children make good progress from their starting points and, by the time they leave, are well prepared overall to begin in Year 1. Because the numbers of pupils who are disadvantaged, or have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very small, it is not possible to report on their outcomes without risk of identifying those pupils. However, staff ensure that the pupil and service premium funding is spent effectively, as well as working well with outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive additional help where this is needed.



# **School details**

Unique reference number	140445
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10019117

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Parker (Acting Chair)
Headteacher	Katie Gravil
Telephone number	01529302595
Website	www.kltprimary.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@kltprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

# Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is much lower than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average. Most pupils are of a White British background.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school converted to become an academy in December 2013. Its predecessor school was inspected in January 2012 and was judged to be a good school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its



website.

The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.



# Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all key stages of the school and in all classes. All of the observations took place accompanied by the headteacher or assistant headteacher. In total, six lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed. The inspector also scrutinised many examples of pupils' work. In addition, he heard pupils of different ability levels read. He observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and as they moved around the school.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, representatives of the governing body, and pupils. He analysed 29 responses on Parent View, looked at the free-text comments submitted by those parents, spoke with parents at the beginning of the day, and took account of responses to the most recent parental and pupil surveys carried out by the school.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records related to safeguarding, records of pupils' behaviour, the school's information about pupils' outcomes and attendance, and records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspector also checked the school's website and ensured that it meets the requirements on the publication of specified information.
- A breakfast club, also managed by the governing body, was also included in the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Roary Pownall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector



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