

Hawthorn Tree School

Toot Lane, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 0PT

Inspection dates

9–10 November 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders share a clear vision of how to improve the school. They have high expectations and pupils' outcomes have improved. Staff have a positive sense of purpose and ambition for pupils.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Senior leaders monitor staff performance and take action to remedy any emerging weaknesses. This means that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are rigorous in holding leaders to account.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are kind and accepting of others.
- Pastoral support in the school is of high quality. Pupils are well cared for and they understand how to keep themselves safe. Leaders promote pupils' personal welfare and development well. Attendance is improving and is now in line with national averages.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and are developing a rounded knowledge of the world.
- Pupils make very good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. Progress in reading is weaker. Leaders are taking action to improve outcomes in reading, beginning from the early years and throughout each stage of pupils' learning.
- Leaders have ensured that there are clear systems to assess pupils' progress. Where teachers use this information effectively, pupils make excellent progress. However, not all teachers are as effective as they might be in using this information to match work to pupils' abilities.
- Children make a very good start to school in the early years setting. The early years is well led and managed and leaders have high expectations of what children can achieve, so children make very good progress from their starting points.
- The early years outdoors area is not used as effectively as the indoors areas and pupils do not learn as well as they could from activities in this area.
- Leaders are highly supportive of staff, who are keen to meet leaders' expectations. However, not all middle leaders are clear about their responsibilities and some rely too much on senior leadership to be fully effective in their roles.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by:
 - ensuring that there is greater clarity about middle leaders' roles and responsibilities
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels hold staff to close account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently use assessment information to match work to pupils' abilities
 - ensuring that pupils' understanding is deepened and embedded
 - improving outcomes further in reading and for the most able.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in early years by ensuring that the outdoor area is used as effectively as areas inside the school building.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders work well together to share their aspirations for the school. They set high expectations in their drive to improve outcomes for all pupils. Senior leaders are highly supportive of staff to realise this ambition. Relationships between staff are positive and support the progress of all pupils.
- Through effective support and challenge, senior leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved. There is rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and senior leaders act quickly where there are weaknesses. These exist, for example, in how well teachers meet the needs of individual pupils.
- Senior leaders have ensured that staff participate in appropriate training and professional development which has contributed to the improvement in teaching across the school. Teachers value these opportunities to develop their effectiveness.
- Leaders have set performance-management targets which expect teachers to focus on pupils' progress. Teachers are now held closely to account for the achievements of pupils in their classes. This has contributed to improved outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. The curriculum builds on pupils' learning and ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Senior leaders have ensured that specialist teachers are employed for subjects such as music, dance and physical education (PE). This has extended pupils' experiences.
- Leaders ensure that all staff consistently promote fundamental British values. Pupils demonstrate them in their learning and in school life. For example, pupils show understanding and tolerance of people who are different to themselves. Other aspects of school life also reflect these values, such as the democratic election of school councillors.
- Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, pupils in Year 2 have the role of playground monitors, taking responsibility for equipment and ensuring that play spaces are safe. Year 1 pupils have taken part in a rights and responsibilities project and pupils in key stage 2 have written letters to the Prime Minister, conveying their concerns about global warming.
- The school offers a variety of extra-curricular activities and pupils are proud to participate in them. During the course of the inspection, the Year 6 football team returned to school having won a cup final and were keen to share their success with inspectors.
- Leaders have acted decisively on the recommendations of the pupil premium review following the last inspection. They have ensured that the pupil premium funding is now used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils receive effective support because their needs are identified.
- Senior leaders have identified the use of teaching assistants as a priority. They have provided additional training for teaching assistants and teachers to ensure that the use of teaching assistants is as effective as possible. This work is ongoing but there are

already indications that it is improving. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

- The leadership of provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is very good. The progress of pupils who are new to English is tracked closely. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very effective support and pupils make very good progress.
- The leadership of pastoral support is excellent. Learning mentors are highly effective in supporting pupils' well-being which means they are able to focus on their learning and make good progress.
- The primary PE and sports funding is used effectively to broaden pupils' experiences of sports. Leaders have employed a qualified sports teacher who works at the school for one day a week. In addition to working with pupils, this teacher also coaches and supports staff at the school to strengthen their own teaching of sports and games.
- Senior leaders have developed effective links with other schools. For example, they have worked with Bourne Academy who have provided excellent support in developing leadership and the quality of teaching. School leaders recognise the value of this work in improving outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders are clear about the roles and responsibilities of others. However, this is not always clearly communicated to others and there is a lack of precision in senior leaders' expectations. This means that middle leaders are over-reliant on senior leaders.

Governance of the school

- The governors are highly committed to the school and share leaders' aspirations for improvement. The chair, vice-chair and other governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school and its priorities. They have a clear vision for what the school must do to further improve.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and offer an appropriate balance of support and challenge to leaders. They are rigorous in their monitoring of the work of leaders. For example, they ask challenging questions in governors' meetings and visit the school regularly to check on the accuracy and impact of the work of senior leaders. This enables governors to hold leaders, at all levels, to account.
- Governors check and challenge how additional funding, such as the pupil premium, funding for special educational needs and/or disabilities and the primary PE and sports funding, is used.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff and governors have received up-to-date training in safeguarding. For example, all staff have completed the 'Prevent' duty training to protect pupils from the risks of extremism, and understand how this applies to the context of their school. Governors and senior leaders have completed training on the 'safer recruitment' of staff.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a culture of safeguarding and all staff consider

safeguarding to be their responsibility. Leaders hold regular meetings to discuss individual pupils and ensure that swift action is taken when concerns arise. Safeguarding officers are tenacious in following up referrals.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of pupils' abilities and, where this knowledge is used to plan to meet the needs of individuals, pupils make very good progress. Sometimes teachers, in planning, do not consider pupils' starting points, which means that the most able are not sufficiently challenged and the least able are not fully supported. Leaders are taking action to address these concerns.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them in each lesson. Pupils are able to use this information to focus on specific aspects of their work while they are doing it and also reflect on their success when they have finished. Teachers also use this shared understanding to assess pupils' work and set targets for their future learning. All pupils understand this system and routinely refer back to these expectations to check their learning and improve their work.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers provide written feedback which pupils use to improve their work. However, this guidance, and therefore the pupils' response to it, is not fully consistent across all areas, so the progress that pupils make is not always as rapid as it could be.
- Teachers' use of assessment information in mathematics is effective. They use their knowledge of what pupils can do to set work at an appropriate level and pupils' books show that activities are finely tuned. This means that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers plan activities and use interesting resources which stimulate pupils' interests. For example, one teacher was using video clips and photographs of fairies to stimulate pupils' imagination in a Year 1 writing activity. Most pupils make good progress over time as a response to the work that is set for them.
- Some pupils lose focus where they find the work too easy or complete tasks quickly. As a result, some learning time is lost for some pupils.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which aids their explanations. They use their knowledge to develop pupils' understanding of subject-specialist language. There is some very good use of questioning to extend thinking and build on prior learning. Inspectors also saw examples where teachers used questioning to introduce new learning. However, in some lessons, the use of whole-class questioning meant that some pupils began to lose focus.
- Pupils read regularly, both in school and at home. Pupils have individual reading records which indicate a regularity of reading and close interaction between children and adults. Inspectors observed pupils who were excitedly changing their library books and two younger pupils were keen to explain what happened in a story they had read and which was on display in the library.
- Pupils are encouraged to practise their skills across all subject areas. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils were using their creative and drama skills to assume the roles of characters from other faiths and religions. Their books also show that they

have opportunities to practise extended writing in these lessons.

- Learners who speak English as an additional language are integrated into lessons with other pupils. Teachers support them well and they make good progress in language acquisition.
- Teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and have a good knowledge of the needs and abilities of those pupils they support. Where practice is at its best, teaching assistants support pupils' independence and help them to learn. However, in some lessons, teaching assistants are not proactive enough and their support is less effective.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive. Pupils are supported in taking risks and teachers encourage perseverance. One Year 3 pupil told an inspector that her favourite lesson was mathematics because she found it hard but enjoyed the challenge of trying until she could do it. She went on to say that her teacher helped her and did not mind when she got things wrong.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. All pupils who inspectors spoke with were polite, confident and eager to share their positive views of the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to respect each other's views. They are able to debate ideas and listen to and respond to others' views accordingly, sometimes changing their opinions as a result. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils discussed a lesson where they had debated whether the Apollo 13 mission had been a success or a failure. Pupils carefully considered alternative views, such as the resourcefulness of the astronauts who survived the mission, before coming to a decision on this question.
- Pupils relish the wide variety of roles of responsibility on offer, such as playground leaders, sports ambassadors and prefects. Pupils are accepting of one another; they are kind and inclusive. For example, inspectors saw a group of older pupils helping younger pupils at lunchtime. Pupils share their positive experiences of being on the school council and are proud of the work that they have done in organising charity events such as a book sale.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and understand the potential risks of social media, while recognising that they are too young to make use of it. Incidents of bullying are rare.
- The pastoral team is well led and pupils value the work of the learning mentors. They say that they are well supported and trust that staff will help them to resolve and overcome difficulties. One pupil explained that 'the worry box' had been renamed 'the listening box' because, 'We know that if we put something in there an adult will listen to us.' Pupils who are new to the country speak highly of the support they have received to settle into life at the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils and conduct outside of lessons is good. They are punctual in the mornings and arrive ready and prepared to learn. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and are consistently well turned out.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive. Where there is off-task behaviour and low-level disruption, this is as a result of insufficient challenge which allows pupils to become distracted. Pupils' books are well kept and their work is well presented, demonstrating the pride that they take in their learning.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with national averages. Fixed-term exclusions have reduced. Since the last inspection, no pupils have been permanently excluded.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 are similar to those of pupils nationally. The progress made by pupils from their starting points in mathematics and in writing is particularly strong. Progress in reading is weaker.
- Teachers have responded to pupils' outcomes in reading in 2016 by adapting their methods of teaching reading skills. Leaders have identified specific reading skills which pupils find difficult and teachers are now focusing specifically on these areas. For example, one Year 3 class were using their understanding of what they had read in the story 'The Iron Man' to imagine what would happen next, thus developing their prediction skills. Guided reading sessions support pupils to develop their inference and deduction skills. These sessions clearly match levels of work to pupils' abilities.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 make similar progress to other pupils nationally in all subjects. As with all pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing is strong.
- Progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, particularly in reading. These pupils are well supported to develop their reading skills in a variety of group settings, including working in small groups and having adult support in lessons.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, combined, are below those of pupils nationally. No pupils achieved the high standard in reading, writing and mathematics, combined, at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' attainment at key stage 1 is good. The number of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is similar or slightly above pupils nationally. The number of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics is above those nationally.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 1 are good in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes in the phonics check are good and have continued to improve. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard by the end of Year 1 and by the

end of Year 2 is above that of pupils nationally.

- School leaders closely track the progress of pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, at regular intervals. Tracking of current pupils indicates that they are making good progress. School leaders predict that this year's outcomes at the end of key stage 2 will be strong.

Early years provision

Good

- The atmosphere in the early years is lively and positive. Children are active and enjoy the rich variety of experiences on offer. Children are confident and cooperate well with each other and with adults. The classroom environments are rich and displays foster learning.
- Children make good progress from their starting points. Assessments indicate that children's levels of development on entry are below those typical for their age. The proportion of children, including disadvantaged children, who reach a good level of development by the time they leave the early years setting is above that seen nationally.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to develop pupils' communication and language skills alongside their learning in reading and mathematics. For example, one activity used the story 'The Hungry Caterpillar' and children were asked questions which encouraged them to predict the next events and to practise their counting skills.
- Children were keen to speak to inspectors, initiating conversations with confidence and using an impressive range of vocabulary. For example, one child approached an inspector to show a toy car. He turned over the car and identified the number '10' printed on the base; he suggested that this meant the car could carry 10 people and proceeded to count to illustrate this.
- Adults model positive behaviours which children replicate. For example, at the end of a morning session, one girl was the first child to be ready to go to lunch but held the door open for all the other children and adults, happily sacrificing her place in the queue.
- Behaviour management is effective. Children respond well to praise and instruction from adults. They move purposefully between activities when directed and they are quick to settle to their work.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Teachers use assessments to plan the next steps in learning. Writing in children's books showed that progress is strong and children are developing their skills in letter formation well. Children engage enthusiastically in phonics sessions and are keen to practise independently the skills that they have learned. However, occasionally some children lose focus when they are not sufficiently challenged or moved on quickly enough.
- Parents are kept well informed about the progress their children are making and staff ensure that parents who do not have access to electronic communication systems receive regular letters. The early years leader maintains good links with feeder nursery schools to ensure that children's needs are met as soon as they start at the school. The early years leader also communicates effectively with Year 1 teachers, which supports

children's transition into key stage 1.

- Children are well cared for and are safe. Statutory duties are met and appropriate risk assessments are in place. Safeguarding is effective in the early years setting.
- The outdoor area provides a rich environment with extensive opportunities for learning. However, it is not used to its full potential. Teachers do not consistently make learning objectives clear enough in these areas. Although activities have been set up, children do not always make use of these as intended. For example, an activity using modelling clay had been designed to encourage children to count, but instead children were observed, on different occasions, using this area to model cakes and cookies and were unable to explain what the intended activity was.

School details

Unique reference number	120424
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10021938

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	379
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Mr John Poucher
Headteacher	Mr Martin J Lister
Telephone number	01205 363 031
Website	www.hawthorntree.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@hawthorn-tree.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 May 2015

Information about this school

- Hawthorn Tree School is a larger-than-average primary school and has grown since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are White British is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has increased and now is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 27 lessons, some jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed an assembly and a range of intervention and small-group activities.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, both in lessons and jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils across different age groups, both formally and informally, and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, a group of staff, including non-teaching staff, and with governors. They also spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents who were dropping off their children at the start of the school day. They also considered 84 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 11 text-message responses sent to the Ofsted free-text service.
- Inspectors considered 16 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and staff surveys provided by the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the headteacher's report to the governing body, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's information on current pupils' progress and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour, teaching and safeguarding.

Inspection team

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Linda Lyn-Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen McMullan	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Hawkes	Ofsted Inspector

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