

The St Faith's Church of England Infant School, Lincoln

West Parade, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN1 1QS

Inspection dates

26–27 January 2017

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils thrive on the nurturing and supportive relationships which they develop with staff. This is a happy, safe and welcoming school.
- Leaders are driven by a strong moral purpose. They are deeply committed to the school's mission to provide a high-quality education for its pupils.
- Leaders are highly committed to the development of teaching in this school, and in its partner schools. Staff are motivated and keen to play their part in improving the school.
- Teaching across all classes is good. Teachers work well with teaching assistants to plan appropriate work and to ensure that any pupils who have not understood the learning receive immediate help to catch up.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. Standards of pupils' handwriting are not consistent across the school.
- The new curriculum in mathematics is not yet well embedded. There is more to do to ensure that the teaching of mathematics consistently promotes good progress.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Staff help pupils to become thoughtful, caring individuals. The pastoral care for pupils who face particular difficulties is a strength of the school.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very well provided for. From the youngest children to the eldest, pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and understand the school's values.
- Pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes to learning. They cooperate well, help each other and take a keen interest in their work.
- The attendance of a few pupils is not improving quickly enough. This includes pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders do not fully evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve the attendance and achievement of pupils who are eligible for additional funding. Monitoring does not routinely focus on how well these pupils are doing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring that pupils' work in mathematics provides appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities
 - ensuring that expectations for pupils' handwriting are equally high in all classes and in all subjects.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - working with parents to improve the attendance of those pupils who are frequently absent from school.
- Improve leadership, by:
 - evaluating the impact of actions taken to improve outcomes for pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding
 - ensuring that monitoring activities more routinely focus on the progress made by groups of pupils in the school
 - embedding the new scheme in mathematics and ensuring that teaching in this subject builds effectively on pupils' abilities and skills.
- Improve the early years, by:
 - ensuring that assessment of children's skills and abilities on entry to the school is fully accurate.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are guided by a deep moral purpose, which pervades all aspects of the school's work. They have a clear sense of vocation and have assured that the values of the school are well understood by staff, pupils and parents. Pupils come first in this busy, growing school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together effectively to provide strong, effective leadership. Ably supported by senior and middle leaders, they have driven improvements in teaching, pupils' welfare and outcomes. This is recognised and appreciated by staff and parents alike.
- Leaders are highly committed to developing teaching at the school. They know the teachers' and teaching assistants' individual strengths and areas for development and ensure that the professional development opportunities for staff closely match their needs. They provide regular, ongoing feedback to staff, which allows them to reflect on and fine-tune their practice.
- Leaders are well respected for the contribution that they have made to the Kyra Teaching School Alliance that they are part of. As strategic partners in the alliance, they have helped to set the group's direction and monitor its effectiveness. They have made a significant contribution to training teachers, both in this school and elsewhere.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Staff know these pupils well and ensure that teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to provide high-quality learning experiences for these pupils.
- The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced, and is appropriate to pupils' needs. Leaders recognised that they needed to improve outcomes in mathematics and have recently introduced a new scheme for this subject. The new way of teaching is not yet fully embedded and leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that learning is always at the right level for pupils.
- An exciting range of trips, activities and visitors enhance the formal curriculum and ensure that the pupils receive a well-rounded education. From the breakfast club, to 'Fitness Friday', to Indian dancing, leaders ensure that pupils' needs and interests are catered for. During the inspection, pupils were excited about their recent visit to a sea-life centre and were keen to write about their experiences.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is a strength of the school. Effective links with the local church ensure that pupils have an excellent grounding in their faith. From an early age, pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and learn how to cooperate with each other. Their charity work is testament to their sound understanding of the school's values and their keenness to improve the lives of others.
- Pupils facing social barriers to their learning benefit from a range of support measures to boost their self-esteem. For example, they take part in a specially designed programme to raise their aspirations and improve their achievement. The early signs

are that this programme is successfully improving pupils' confidence and social skills.

- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used to support the learning and development of eligible pupils. They provide a detailed breakdown of the use of the funding for governors and parents. However, they have not analysed which specific actions have been effective in improving attendance and achievement, and which have not. This means they are not able to adapt the use of the funds to ensure maximum impact.
- Additional primary school sports funding is used to fund the employment of a health mentor coach one day per week. In addition, a daily play leader leads sports sessions in school. The funding enables the school to be part of a sports partnership that organises staff training, inter-school sports festivals and provides families with information on activities outside of school. These activities are leading to improved enjoyment of sport and fitness levels; however, it is too soon to fully evaluate the impact of this work.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. One described it as: 'a wonderful school where my child receives all the care, support, education and opportunity to thrive that any parent could wish for. The head teacher is very visible around the school. The staff are all so approachable and friendly'. The overwhelming majority of parents would recommend this school to others.
- The local authority is keen to promote a system whereby schools support each other to improve. The local school improvement officer from the local authority has only recently taken on responsibility for this school and does not have a strong understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. However, leaders from within the teaching school alliance help to provide an objective view of the school's performance.

Governance of the school

- Governors share leaders' commitment and dedication to this school. Many of them have given long years of service to promoting its improvement.
- Governors know the school well and use this knowledge to ensure that they allocate funds to the most appropriate priorities for improvement.
- Good use is made of members' different skills and expertise. For example, governors with skills in understanding data sit on the standards committee and use their expertise to challenge leaders and hold them to account for the progress that pupils make.
- Governors ensure that they carry out their statutory duties with due rigour. Governors who have undergone training in safer recruitment and who have knowledge of safeguarding check on the school's safeguarding arrangements and ensure they are fit for purpose.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff know the pupils well and are well trained in a range of safeguarding issues. While they recognise that not all of the concerns listed in the school's policy may be relevant

to their setting, they maintain a watchful, alert attitude that, as one teacher said, 'It could happen anywhere.'

- Staff ensure that pupils learn how to stay safe in an age-appropriate way, through the programme for personal, social, health and economic education and through additional activities such as anti-bullying workshops.
- Leaders make a positive contribution to multi-agency working, ensuring that they are well prepared for meetings and keeping the pupils' best interests at heart. They are tenacious in following up concerns with the local authority.
- Records of safeguarding incidents are detailed and meticulous.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils enjoy warm, supportive relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants. They behave well, display enthusiasm for learning and are keen to please.
- Pupils' learning benefits from good-quality resources and well-organised classroom displays. Classrooms are bright, stimulating and welcoming, and the information on display supports pupils' learning, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers work well with the teaching assistants to plan work together and discuss the progress that pupils are making. Teaching assistants contribute greatly to pupils' learning, particularly the learning of those who need to catch up and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their participation in the 'Mobilise' programme, led by the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership and the Kyra Teaching School Alliance, has enabled teaching assistants to reflect on and develop their practice further.
- Reading is taught well across the school. Pupils who read to inspectors did so with confidence and perseverance. As one proudly said, 'I blended it out and knew what it meant!'
- The teaching of mathematics is undergoing a change as the school moves to a new scheme. This new way of teaching is not yet well embedded. Inspectors noted occasions when the most able pupils did not move on to their 'golden challenge' quickly enough, and when the lower-attaining pupils undertook challenging work before they had mastered the basics. Despite these teething problems, pupils are very enthusiastic about the new way of working in mathematics. Staff, too, are positive. There are some very early indications that it is accelerating pupils' progress.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English. In their 'topic' work, pupils do not use their writing skills to best effect, which limits the progress they are able to make.
- Parents agree that the teaching at the school is good. Those who described teachers as 'wonderful and very supportive' echoed the views of many.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders place high priority on this area of their work.
- Pupils are thoughtful and caring. Inspectors noted many examples of pupils helping each other and their teachers. They engage readily in discussion and are unfailingly polite.
- Staff provide many opportunities to help pupils and their parents stay safe and healthy and to promote their mental health. The nurture group, 'fun friends' project and young carers programme are some examples of the work done to support those who face particular difficulties. Leaders carefully evaluate the impact of their work in this area and celebrate success with pupils and their families.
- The core values of respect, trust, justice, community, friendship and compassion underpin all aspects of the school's work and provide a very solid foundation for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are rightly proud of the rewards they earn when they put these values into practice.
- Teachers make the most of opportunities to contribute to pupils' personal development, for example by linking their academic learning to the school's values. In a Reception class, pupils took turns to share out equipment, saying 'We're learning about compassion.'
- Pupils work effectively with leaders to improve the school. For example, pupils from the learning council suggested ways to improve the reading areas in school. They are rightly proud of the impact they have had in designing imaginative reading corners and improving others' enjoyment of reading.
- Parents speak highly of the arrangements to help their children settle. This has included, for example, supporting parents who have had health issues, by making special arrangements for dropping off and collecting children, and providing tailored support for families who have lived abroad.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using computers. Their parents agree; one described the atmosphere at St Faith's as 'warm, friendly and safe'.
- Pupils play well together in their break and lunchtimes. They are very well supervised by the adults, who organise a range of games and activities for them to join in.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In class, pupils are keen and enthusiastic. They enjoy talking about their learning and cooperate well with each other. Over their time at St Faith's, they develop into confident, resilient learners who are ready for the next stage of their education.

- Pupils' conduct around the school is excellent. Well-established routines mean that they know what is expected, for example when moving from their classrooms into the hall.
- Pupils understand the systems for managing their behaviour and agree that it helps them 'to be good'.
- Pupils generally write neatly and look after their books. In some instances, expectations of handwriting and presentation are not strictly enforced, and the standard of pupils' work dips.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve the behaviour of the very small minority of pupils whose behaviour has been challenging. They are rightly proud of their track record in ensuring that these pupils stay in school. A few parents are concerned about the impact of these pupils' behaviour on others in school. Scrutiny of the school's records shows that any instances of challenging behaviour have been dealt with appropriately.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. As one said, 'I just love it here.' A small minority do not attend well, however, and are frequently absent from school. There is more to do to ensure that all parents understand the importance of good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Information provided by the school and scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils make at least good progress from their starting points. Leaders keep a close check on the progress that pupils make and now intervene more swiftly when any gaps in learning are identified. This means that pupils now catch up more quickly when they show signs of underachievement.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils that met the expected standard in reading, writing and in mathematics was below the national level. From their starting points at the end of the early years, most pupils made good progress. Some lower-attaining and middle-ability pupils did not secure the same rate of progress as the most able pupils. Leaders have taken steps to ensure that those pupils who secured a good level of development at the end of the early years, and those who fell short of this measure, now receive the support they need to sustain good progress throughout key stage 1. Records of their work show that these pupils are now making similar rates of progress to their peers.
- The proportion that achieved at a greater depth within their subjects at the end of key stage 1 was in line with national levels.
- Leaders have set challenging targets to ensure that a higher proportion of pupils achieve age-related expectations by the end of key stage 1. Records indicate that the school is making reasonable progress towards these targets.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils' progress lagged behind others nationally in core subjects. Current information suggests that the majority of these pupils are now making good progress across the school. Leaders can demonstrate how funding has been used to improve outcomes for pupils. However, at times it is not clear which actions led to the improvement.

- Pupils in Year 1 are making secure progress, with the vast majority making good progress from their starting points and some making accelerated progress. Leaders and teaching staff have a detailed knowledge of those pupils who are not yet meeting age-related expectations and have put rapid intervention in place to them catch up.
- The proportion of children who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen steadily over the past three years but remains below the national level. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved this measure was well below the national level. However, information provided by the school shows that these pupils made good progress in their reading from the end of the early years. The proportion of pupils who achieve the standard at the end of Year 2 is above the national level.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Their needs are accurately identified and addressed.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is good. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development, and ensure that they address any weaknesses swiftly.
- Well-structured and imaginative learning opportunities engage children effectively in their learning and ensure they make good progress from their starting points.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the early years has been below the national level for the past two years. Information provided by leaders indicates the proportion that will achieve this measure this year shows a significant rise on previous years, representing good progress from their starting points.
- Staff in the early years have high expectations of children's learning and behaviour. Children respond well to these expectations. They arrive ready to learn each day and sustain their positive attitudes throughout the day.
- A rich and well-organised learning environment helps to develop children's curiosity and independence. Children are helped to become effective, resilient learners.
- From the earliest age, children learn to communicate and play together well. They, too, know the values of the school and seek to model them. For example, children who were counting out cakes commented, 'We need to make sure everyone shares them.' One child helpfully explained the 'values wall' in a Reception class, 'If we see someone showing compassion, we write their name down.'
- Teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Skilful questioning by both teachers and teaching assistants keeps the children focused on learning and challenges them to explain their ideas.
- Good support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities helps them do well. Support is well matched to children's needs.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced to promote children's learning. Recent improvements to the outdoor area have ensured that there are now more opportunities

to develop children's literacy and numeracy outside.

- The early years is a safe, secure and welcoming environment. Children form nurturing, positive bonds with staff that help them to settle well and develop confidence. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were overwhelmingly positive about their children's experience in the early years.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new tracking system to record children's skills on entry to the school and their development. The assessment of children on entry to the school suggests that a large proportion of children begin the early years with skills and abilities that are well below those typical for their age. This did not match inspectors' observations of children's learning. Few of the local partner schools use the school's system of assessing children's skills. Leaders acknowledge that it would be beneficial to develop links with schools using the same system, in order to ensure that their judgements are fully accurate.
- On occasion, progress slows when children do not put their learning into practice. For example, boys were observed gravitating to construction-type activities and forgot what they had been learning about. Leaders' own observations record similar patterns.

School details

Unique reference number	120562
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10023250

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	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Agnes Barstow
Headteacher	Debbie Barks
Telephone number	01522 888988
Website	www.st-faiths.lincs.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@st-faiths.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 February 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is an average-sized infant school. Since the previous inspection the school has expanded and now has one class in Nursery, three in Reception, three in Year 1 and two in Year 2.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is growing but remains below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is average. A lower-than-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and five governors, including the chair of the governing body, to discuss the school's progress since its previous inspection. The lead inspector spoke by telephone to the lead locality worker and the designated officer from the local authority, the school's improvement partner and its strategic partners from the Kyra Teaching School Alliance.
- Inspectors spoke formally with four groups of pupils and informally with other pupils in class and around school. They observed pupils at play and as they ate their lunch. The lead inspector listened to children reading. Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- A range of documentation was considered, including: the school's self-evaluation document and improvement plans, records of attendance and behaviour, information about attainment and progress, and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with school leaders. Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and learning journeys, and one inspector visited an assembly.
- Inspectors took note of the 61 responses to the free text service and the two responses to the staff survey. In addition, inspectors took account of the 66 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- The lead inspector spoke with a group of staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Deirdre Duignan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Pete Strauss	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fielding	Ofsted Inspector

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