

# The St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Boston

Woad Farm Road, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 0EF

## Inspection dates

21–22 November 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The quality of teaching has declined significantly since the last inspection. Until recently, leaders and governors have not taken effective action to improve it.
- Outcomes for pupils are inadequate in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. The most able and middle ability pupils underachieve because teachers do not challenge them enough.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not check on pupils' learning closely enough.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Teachers do not develop pupils' reading skills well.
- In mathematics, pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Teachers do not plan learning using information about what pupils can already do.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, has not focused well enough on their needs. They do not make as much progress as they should.
- Behaviour requires improvement because there is too much low-level disruption in lessons.
- The early years provision is inadequate. Leaders responsible for early years have not ensured that adults move children's learning on quickly enough. Children are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years is inconsistent. Children do not have enough opportunities to practise or blend sounds.
- Subject leaders are not involved enough in improving the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new senior leadership team is taking appropriate action to improve the quality of teaching, the curriculum and pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive appropriate support and are making good progress.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the role of subject leaders is developed so they are able to have a positive impact on outcomes in their subject
  - governors use information about pupils' progress to hold leaders to account
  - leadership of the early years brings about rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and learning
  - systems for monitoring the progress of disadvantaged, including the most able disadvantaged, pupils result in improved outcomes for these pupils
  - the website is fully compliant with statutory requirements.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school, so that outcomes improve, by ensuring that:
  - staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including disadvantaged, middle-ability and most-able pupils, and provide them with tasks that challenge them and build on previous learning
  - teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan tasks that match pupils' abilities
  - teachers and teaching assistants use effective questioning to support pupils and develop their understanding
  - pupils have increased opportunities to develop reasoning and problem solving in mathematics
  - teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces to practise grammar, handwriting, punctuation and spelling skills in English and across the curriculum
  - a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics develops children's early reading skills
  - teachers develop pupils' reading skills, including comprehension and inference.
- Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour by ensuring that all staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the early years by ensuring that:
  - activities are planned to meet the needs of children and develop learning and skills
  - adults use effective questioning to develop children's understanding
  - phonics teaching systematically develops children's skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders have not ensured that expectations of pupils' attainment and behaviour are high enough. Until recently, leaders have not held teachers to account for the progress pupils make. Standards by the end of key stage 2 have fallen sharply. Since September 2017, a new senior leadership team has started to bring about the necessary changes to improve standards.
- Senior leaders are beginning to develop an assessment system to track the progress and attainment of pupils across the school. This system has been implemented for a short time. The resulting information is not used sharply enough to improve the quality of teaching and therefore the progress pupils make.
- The use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has not met these pupils' needs well enough. As a result, disadvantaged pupils have not made sufficient progress. The new leaders have developed strategies to identify and remedy gaps in pupils' learning more effectively. However, these strategies have not yet had time to make a significant impact on the progress of these pupils.
- The new leadership team has begun a programme of training and development for teachers and teaching assistants. Leaders are now holding teachers to account for the rate of pupils' progress. This programme has not been in place for long enough to raise standards in the classroom.
- The interim and consultant headteachers have brought about some improvements to the quality of teaching. For example, some teachers are now using questioning effectively as a result of the support they have received. This is not consistent in all classes.
- Middle leaders, with support from senior leaders, have begun to implement appropriate action plans to bring about improvement in their subjects. However, these leaders are new to their roles, and the actions they have taken have not yet made a difference to the progress pupils make.
- Since their appointment, the school's consultant headteacher and interim headteacher have brought about many improvements. They have revised the school's behaviour policy and hold teachers to account for how well they apply the policy. As a result, behaviour is improving. There have been no exclusions this year.
- Leaders have put in place more secure systems to deal with bullying. Pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed that incidents of bullying, which used to be frequent, are now reducing.
- Leaders responsible for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have thoroughly reviewed the needs of these pupils. Consequently, effective individual plans have been put in place to make sure that support is meeting pupils' needs. Leaders have been swift in making applications for additional funding to support pupils whose needs were not being met previously.
- Leaders are developing the curriculum to provide pupils with stimulating experiences to deepen their knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. For example,

pupils in Year 6 visited a local museum to examine artefacts from the Second World War. This new approach has only recently started and has not yet had an effect on pupils' progress across the whole school.

- The additional funds provided through the physical education (PE) and sports premium are used well. Leaders ensure that there are a wide range of activities that promote physical development for all, including sports that pupils may not already know, such as fencing and goal ball. Sports coaches are working with teachers to develop their skills in teaching sport and PE.
- Collective worship is used effectively to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Teachers, through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum and the promotion of the school's values, reinforce themes from collective worship.
- Current leaders have created a positive, welcoming and inclusive culture. There are more opportunities for pupils to learn about each other's cultures and languages, and to celebrate diversity and equality. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have improved relationships with parents. The new parents' forum has enabled parents to express their views to leaders, and for leaders to feed back how they have responded to parental concerns. The 'you said, we did' information board informs parents about recent developments. Parents whose children speak English as an additional language feel much more supported by and involved in the school than previously.
- The local authority and a local teaching school alliance have given the school essential support. This has included the appointments of the interim and consultant headteachers. Together the headteachers have provided much-needed capacity and continuity to bring about the improvements necessary.

## **Governance of the school**

- Until recently, governors have not been stringent enough in their challenge of leaders. They have not reacted quickly to falling standards and have been too accepting of the explanations for this fall.
- Governors are now more reflective about the circumstances that have led to falling standards. They are determined to ensure that the school has a secure future with strong leadership to bring about improvements.
- The effectiveness of the governing body has improved through the appointment of a national leader of governance who provides support and guidance.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) have successfully revised safeguarding procedures.
- These are now thorough and robust. The recently appointed learning mentor provides families and pupils with tailored support. The learning mentor and DSLs are tenacious in following up concerns.

- Staff, including lunchtime and administrative staff, are aware of the procedures for reporting concerns. They receive regular training and have a comprehensive understanding of the signs and different types of abuse. This includes knowledge of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Inadequate

- Since the last inspection, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough. Teachers have not used assessment information to set work that challenges pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those of middle ability and the most able pupils. As a result, pupils have not made good progress.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for pupils, including the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils. Teachers do not routinely check what pupils already know, and use this information to build on their learning. Consequently, pupils do not work at a higher level than they did previously.
- Teaching assistants do not use effective questioning to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers do not provide teaching assistants with clear direction to develop pupils' learning further.
- Time is not used well in lessons. Often teachers are not aware when pupils have finished their work, and pupils' learning is not moved on. This slows pupils' progress.
- Pupils in key stage 2 make slow progress in mathematics because teachers do not regularly build on pupils' understanding and skills. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise and develop the skills they have learned. Teachers give pupils limited opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems or to develop mathematical reasoning.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations when developing pupils' reading skills. Tasks in guided reading are not challenging enough. For example, teachers set pupils tasks to find information from texts, but do not develop their skills in comprehension and inference. Consequently, progress is slow.
- Younger pupils do not receive enough opportunities to practise the sounds they have learned or to blend them to make words.
- Pupils do not practise handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills frequently enough in longer pieces of writing. In some instances, teachers have not insisted on high enough standards of presentation.
- In the past, strategies to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have not concentrated on meeting pupils' needs. However, since September 2017 there has been a sharper focus on ensuring that these pupils' needs are carefully planned for. These pupils are now making better progress.
- In some classes, tasks are planned well to develop pupils' skills and provide challenge and teachers use questioning well to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Learning is most effective and pupils' understanding is broadened when teachers use their secure subject knowledge to explain concepts to pupils clearly. For example, in Year 2, pupils were encouraged to explore how many different ways they could make

an amount of money using different coins.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Too often, when the pitch of work is too easy, pupils complete the minimum amount of work expected of them. They are easily distracted and are not motivated to complete tasks well.
- Opportunities for pupils to extend their learning are limited. Pupils lack independence when working and do not have a good understanding of how to be successful learners. As a result, pupils do not challenge themselves to achieve more.
- Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures and have a good understanding of equality and diversity. They celebrate each other's languages and traditions. During collective worship, pupils translate prayers and poems to ensure that all pupils understand.
- Pupils feel safe. A recent whole-school focus on anti-bullying has ensured that all pupils understand who they can talk to if they have a concern. They feel that incidents of bullying are now taken seriously and are reducing.
- Pupils know how to live healthy lifestyles. They understand the importance of a balanced diet and that regular exercise is important to stay healthy.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are inconsistent in their application of the behaviour policy. Some adults do not tackle disruptive behaviour quickly enough. Pupils who disengage are not encouraged to get back to their work straight away. This distracts other pupils.
- Leaders have improved systems to oversee pupils' attendance. Staff monitor carefully the attendance of those pupils who are most frequently absent from school. The interim headteacher holds regular meetings with families to secure better attendance.
- At breaktimes, pupils play well together. They are polite and respectful to visitors, greeting and holding doors for them.
- Leaders have recently revised the behaviour policy, setting clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. Because of this, there have been no exclusions this year. Teachers are now required to manage pupils' behaviour in the classroom. This has resulted in fewer pupils being removed from the class during lessons.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Pupils' outcomes are inadequate because pupils are not making sufficient progress across the school. Too many pupils leave key stage 2 not prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment and progress in reading and mathematics have fallen significantly. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading and mathematics at key stage 2 was well below the national average in 2016 and 2017.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has been significantly below the national average for the last three years, especially for pupils of middle ability, the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' current workbooks show that these groups of pupils are not being suitably challenged and are not making sufficient progress.
- Pupils leaving key stage 2 have not made enough progress in reading. Attainment has been significantly below the national average for the last three years.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has fallen over the past two years to below the national average. The teaching of phonics and pupils' progression in phonics are inconsistent from the early years to Year 1.
- Attainment in writing at the end of key stage 2 is in line with the national average. However, the most able, middle-ability and disadvantaged pupils are not challenged well and are not making the progress of which they are capable. Pupils' workbooks show that there are few opportunities for them to develop and practise punctuation, spelling and grammar skills.
- Pupils' workbooks in Year 6 show that they are now making better progress, but this is not yet enough to make up for their previously slow progress. Consequently, large proportions of pupils are working below age-related expectations.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do less well than other pupils. In the past, leaders have not made effective use of pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 is in line with the national average for reading and mathematics; it is above in writing. However, pupils' workbooks show that teachers are inconsistent in providing appropriate challenge for pupils in English and mathematics. Too many pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.

## Early years provision

## Inadequate

- Adults do not plan activities that meet the needs of children, including disadvantaged children. Activities do not have a clear focus and are not demanding enough to develop children's learning.
- Adults' assessments of what children can do are not carried out effectively or frequently. Assessment information is not used to plan children's next steps in learning. Children make slow progress.

- Adults do not intervene well to develop children's play. Questioning is not used effectively to encourage children to think about their learning and develop their understanding.
- The development of children's early reading is limited. Children are not given frequent opportunities to practise what they have learned or to blend sounds together to make words.
- Children who are more able are not challenged to develop their understanding well enough.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years was above the national average in 2017. However, recent disruption to staffing has resulted in inconsistent teaching and current children not making as much progress as they should.
- Children who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well. Adults work effectively with external agencies to support these children's needs fully. Staff encourage children to become involved with the learning and are careful to ensure that their welfare needs are met.
- Children behave well. However, adults do not always show children how to play with and use equipment with purpose. Children use the resources available to them but do not always use equipment carefully.
- Adults successfully engage with parents daily and share information about children's welfare.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' welfare and safeguarding needs.



## School details

Unique reference number	120593
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10037615

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Judd
Headteacher	Kate Rouse
Telephone number	01205 363210
Website	<a href="http://www.bostonstnicholas.com/">www.bostonstnicholas.com/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:Dawn.Molson@st-nicholas.lincs.sch.uk">Dawn.Molson@st-nicholas.lincs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2013

## Information about this school

- St Nicholas Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The senior leadership team has changed significantly since the last inspection. The school has received formal support from the local authority, including the appointment of the consultant headteacher, interim headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher.
- Pupils are taught in eight classes. Children in Reception Year are taught full time in one class.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about: admission arrangements; recent assessment results; the behaviour policy; the school complaints procedure; pupil premium; PE and sport premium; equality

objectives; governance information and charging and remission policies.

- The school does not meet current government floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 performance results in 2015 and 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a number of lessons in all classes, some of which were observed jointly with the interim and consultant headteachers. Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils read. Inspectors talked with pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work in a wide variety of subjects, to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Meetings were held with the interim and consultant headteachers, subject and middle leaders and members of the governing body. The inspector also spoke with the local authority's link adviser for the school and the local authority strategy manager.
- Inspectors spoke with parents informally and considered the text responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement; the school's most recent information on the attainment and progress of pupils; information relating to the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils; the school's most recent data on the attendance of pupils; and minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

## Inspection team

Helen Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Tordoff

Her Majesty's Inspector

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