

# Digby Church of England School

Church Street, Digby, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN4 3LZ

## Inspection dates

11–12 September 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Under the new leadership team, teaching is quickly improving, but it is not yet good across the school.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teaching is not consistently well matched to the needs of pupils. On occasions in key stage 2, it does not systematically build on what pupils know.
- Pupils in key stage 2 do not consistently receive sufficiently clear advice on how to make their work better.
- Teachers do not always notice when pupils misunderstand things. As a result, pupils continue to make the same errors in their work.
- The most able pupils are provided with work which does not consistently challenge them sufficiently. Too few pupils achieve the higher standard in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new senior leaders have swiftly identified aspects of the school that need to improve. Staff are united and the quality of teaching is improving quickly.
- Leaders have put good tracking systems in place to identify any pupils who do not make sufficient progress.
- The school provides successful pastoral support which enables pupils to become healthy and happy individuals.
- Parents and carers value the approachability of the staff. The school has strong links to the community and offers pupils a wide range of educational experiences.
- Children in the early years get off to a strong start to life in school. They make good progress from their starting points and are ready for the Year 1 curriculum.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and thereby pupils' outcomes, so that they are consistently good, by ensuring that:
  - all staff have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - the most able pupils are consistently provided with work that is sufficiently challenging
  - all teachers set work that builds on what pupils already know
  - pupils in all key stages receive good guidance about how to improve their work
  - teachers' subject knowledge is sufficiently well developed so that they identify and address pupils' misconceptions.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Recent changes in leadership have brought about rapid improvements. For example, the deputy headteacher has acted effectively to secure strong outcomes at key stage 1 and the early years. She has begun to address the historic underperformance in key stage 2 through accurate identification of pupils who are underperforming and from monitoring the quality of teaching. Leaders have acted to provide appropriate support to pupils to enable them to make better progress. Provisional data for 2018 shows that this support has led to a rise in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 for all pupils.
- The interim executive headteacher has wasted no time in identifying areas that need to improve further. Senior leaders have now ensured that there is clear accountability for the progress of all pupils. Performance management is used more effectively to hold staff to account.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff, and are firm in their belief that no pupil can be allowed to underachieve. Leaders have a supportive team of caring staff who are hungry to improve their effectiveness and united in their determination to do so.
- Leaders have used expertise from within the federation to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, the teaching in early years has become highly effective, resulting in good outcomes, and the quality of the teaching of reading has strongly improved across the school. Federation leaders' work has also led to an improving quality of writing throughout the school, and a rise in achievement for this subject.
- Leaders have identified clearly the remaining areas where the quality of teaching needs to improve, such as teaching pupils mathematical vocabulary. They have put in place effective professional development for staff. Staff are receiving support, both through the school's federation and from external sources. This training is helping teachers to become more confident in their delivery and to learn from each other, so that teaching is delivered in consistent ways across the school.
- Leaders and staff promote good attendance rigorously. They provide challenge and support for families so that parents understand the importance of good attendance. Attendance and punctuality have rapidly improved and this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and outcomes.
- The school has strong links with the local community. Leaders and staff plan visits that help pupils to understand how the local economy works, for example to local farms. Leaders also ensure that teachers extend pupils' knowledge of other cultures, for instance through themed days where pupils study aspects of Hinduism and meet visitors from a variety of faiths and cultures.
- Leaders and staff have ensured that pupils have a clear understanding of what is fair. The school's ethos ensures that they understand that all people are equal. For example, pupils can explain why slavery is wrong. Pupils are proud to explain that they vote for their school councillors, and events such as the mock election help pupils to understand how democracy works. Pupils develop a strong moral awareness through

caring for the wider community, for instance through supporting the local food bank.

- The use of pupil premium funding has been effective in raising the achievement of eligible pupils. For example, additional opportunities to read have led to greater fluency, while the after-school club provides additional support with homework. Leaders help teachers to make adjustments if any disadvantaged pupils are not making secure progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported. The highly effective coordinator for these pupils works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive the help that they need and that these pupils are given good provision.
- The school strongly promotes physical activity for all its pupils. Participation in sport has risen over time and pupils enjoy a very wide range of sporting experiences. Leaders have ensured that all pupils are included. Pupils describe these physical pursuits with enthusiasm and parents rightly feel that this is a strength of the school.
- Leaders have planned the curriculum so that a series of carefully chosen texts is at the heart of curriculum planning. Pupils enjoy learning about ancient Greece and life in the Antarctic. Leaders are working closely with other schools in the federation to refine this approach and organise visits to places to stimulate scientific thinking. A number of staff give freely of their time to run extra-curricular clubs, such as gardening and the Chatterbooks Club.
- A very large majority of the parents who responded to Parent View felt that their children were safe and well cared for. Parents spoken with expressed support for the deputy headteacher and felt that leaders were improving the school. A large majority were supportive of the leadership of the school and would recommend the school to other parents.

## **Governance of the school**

- At the beginning of the previous academic year, the governing body acted decisively to release the deputy headteacher from some of her teaching commitments and responsibilities to allow her time to improve teaching and outcomes at Digby. Governors also deployed federation leaders for English, mathematics and the early years to help teachers become more confident in their role. These actions have led to rising standards in early years and in reading throughout the school.
- Governors have now appointed a skilled interim executive headteacher to rapidly secure good teaching and achievement. They are insistent that this must happen without delay and are now holding leaders to account rigorously. The new chair of governors has also worked effectively with the local authority and Diocesan Board of Education to ensure stability in the school in a time of change.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff understand the importance of safeguarding and there are clear routes for referral where staff have concerns. Staff training is thorough

and up to date and there are rigorous checks that take place as part of the school's recruitment process.

- Pupils feel safe in school and there are effective systems in place to ensure that the site is secure at the beginning and end of the day. Leaders effectively and systematically investigate any concerns and are persistent in seeking support where necessary. They escalate concerns when they do not feel that effective action has been taken.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Good teaching is not consistently embedded throughout all year groups. Too often, pupils are asked to repeat work unnecessarily before being given more challenging tasks. As a result, pupils, particularly the most able, do not make enough progress.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations for all pupils. They do not always set work that is at the right level for pupils. Because of this, too few pupils make strong progress over time, particularly in key stage 2.
- Teachers do not consistently give pupils sufficiently effective guidance as to how to improve their work further. Pupils told the inspector that they do not have a clear idea of how to make their work better.
- Subject knowledge is not always secure. Some staff do not use mathematical vocabulary with precision and, as a result, pupils sometimes misunderstand what they are being taught.
- Teachers are not consistently using the information that they have from the school's assessment data. Not all teachers notice quickly enough when a pupil is not making good progress and help them to catch up.
- Teachers moderate some of their assessments with teachers from other schools. This practice is being spread through the school and, as a result, teachers' assessment is becoming more precise.
- Teachers deliver a curriculum that provides pupils with good opportunities to learn about different periods of history and about the world around them. Pupils describe the enjoyment that they gain from the engaging way in which teachers deliver lessons. For example, pupils enjoy learning about the environment for animals in the Antarctic.
- Teachers successfully link learning together in cross-curricular topic themes so that the pupils can see how different subjects and aspects are related to others. They ensure that pupils have opportunities to explore a topic in detail, for example the Victorians. Teachers celebrate when pupils produce impressive work, for example in art, by displaying examples on walls and classrooms. This makes pupils feel proud and inspires others to work hard.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in nurturing in pupils a deep enjoyment of books. Staff check systematically that pupils are reading regularly. Most pupils read fluently and with expression. They can work out the meaning of unfamiliar words when prompted and talk with interest about the texts.
- The school's physical education (PE) curriculum promotes a wide array of sporting opportunities. Pupils throughout the school are actively involved in sport. Staff

systematically check the fitness of pupils and plan extra support when needed. Teachers ensure that their lessons are adapted when necessary so that everyone can take part. Good teaching of PE means that pupils are keen to improve their performance and represent their school with pride in competitions and events.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff care for pupils well and promote their independence. Pupils relish the opportunity to help each other and hold positions of responsibility. They cooperate happily and enjoy each other's company.
- Recent improvements to playtimes are appreciated by the pupils. For example, they like the playtime leaders' games.
- Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and can explain why eating a balanced diet is important. They understand how this relates to the snacks that they have at lunchtime, obtained from the healthy tuck shop.
- The school council organises charitable events such as raising money for Sport Relief. These are supported by the school community.
- Pupils say that they rarely disagree with one another, and that bullying is very infrequent. When this does happen, pupils are confident that staff resolve the situation and then monitor it to ensure that it does not happen again. Pupils can explain how to keep safe online and with mobile devices.
- Pupils the inspector met said that they enjoy the breakfast and after-school clubs. Staff ensure that pupils know how to play cooperatively. Pupils understand the importance of washing their hands before they eat.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are confident and articulate individuals. They respond well to challenges and are keen to please. They are proud of their school and care for its environment and resources. As a result, the school is calm, and pupils move about sensibly during the day.
- There is effective support for pupils with challenging behaviour. The school has worked hard to develop links with external agencies and to work closely with parents so that these pupils become engaged with their learning.
- Pupils have consistently good attitudes to learning. They want to do well and recognise that what they learn at school is important for later life. For example, pupils can explain that homework is important because it helps them to remember what they have learned in class and prepares them for secondary education.
- Leaders have identified that levels of attendance in the past have not been high enough. They have acted swiftly to ensure that all parents understand the impact of

missing school on their child's education. A systematic approach and the development of an effective monitoring system have meant that attendance has improved for all pupils. Attendance is now close to the national average and rates of persistent absence have dropped.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In recent years, pupils' achievement has not been good enough. Provisional information for 2018 shows that the Year 6 cohort made better progress, and attained more highly, than in previous years. However, the school's assessments show that the progress of pupils currently in key stage 2 is inconsistent. Very few pupils who are working below the standard expected for their age when they enter Year 3 make sufficient progress to catch up with their peers by the time they leave for secondary school.
- The most able pupils do not make consistently strong progress. At key stage 2, very few have achieved the higher standard over the past three years, and no pupil has achieved the combined higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes in reading have risen over the past three years in all key stages and for all groups of children. This is consistent throughout the school and is beginning to have an impact on writing.
- Outcomes for pupils by the end of key stage 1 have improved for most groups of pupils. The rise in attainment means that pupils are ready for key stage 2.
- Children in the early years make good progress and the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has climbed steadily. It is now consistently above the national average.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support in place across the school.
- The proportion of pupils who are making good progress is improving over time.
- Pupils' attainment in the phonics screening check is consistently above the national average. All groups of pupils are fluent early readers and are well prepared for their next stage of learning.
- Pupils' progress in other subjects, such as history, is strong. Their understanding of historical concepts is developing well, as is their ability to interpret information about key periods in history, such as the Victorian age. Effective monitoring and high expectations have meant that outcomes in PE are strong. Pupils' levels of participation and fitness have improved markedly over the past three years.

## Early years provision

## Good

- The early years leader is ambitious and has high expectations of all the pupils in the cohort. She revisits learning to ensure that it is embedded and to extend the learning for the most able children. As a result, children get off to a successful start in the early years.
- Staff adapt their plans for learning to meet the learning needs of different groups of

children. They effectively harness children's enthusiasm and imagination to retell stories and create clown faces, for example. Children use actions to help them to remember sounds and use a range of media to help them to draw letters and make shapes. Staff know the children well and use this knowledge to develop children's communication skills and help them to settle quickly into the school.

- Additional funding for disadvantaged children and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is used with precision. Staff sensitively devise plans to provide bespoke support which builds on children's prior learning, such as recording sounds for a child to practise at home. This approach ensures that children make strong progress and retain their learning.
- Strong partnerships with pre-school providers and parents have led to effective communication. This means that support has already been planned for children who have SEN and/or disabilities so that their transition into school is smooth. Parents speak highly of the care and support for their children as they settle into school.
- Children become independent learners and are very well prepared for Year 1. For example, by the end of the Reception Year, children write sentences, spell common words correctly and make plausible attempts to spell other words. They are well motivated and want to achieve as much as possible. Staff reinforce high expectations of them and, as a result, progress across the foundation stage is good.



## School details

Unique reference number	120519
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10053097

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennifer Hutchinson
Interim Executive Headteacher	Helen Okrafo-Smart
Telephone number	01526 320 630
Website	<a href="http://www.spiresfederation.co.uk">www.spiresfederation.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@spiresfederation.co.uk">admin@spiresfederation.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–5 February 2015

## Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, the interim executive headteacher had been in post for one week.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is part of a hard federation of three primary schools with one governing body.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received a Section 48 inspection in February 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes. A proportion of these observations were carried out alongside the interim executive headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspector heard readers from key stages 1 and 2 and met with groups of pupils. She scrutinised samples of the pupils' work and the school's assessment information.
- The inspector spoke to leaders in the school. She also spoke to the federation subject leaders for English and mathematics, and the cluster sports coordinator.
- The inspector spoke to parents bringing children to school and took account of the 16 responses to Parent View.
- The inspector spoke to staff and took account of the responses to the survey of staff views. She visited the breakfast club and after-school club.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including: the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation; policies and records related to safeguarding and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities; the school's information about pupils' achievement and attendance; and records of the governing body. She spoke to the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

## Inspection team

Hazel Henson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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