

# Inspection of The Viking School

140 Church Road North, Skegness, Lincolnshire PE25 2QJ

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Inspection dates: 18 to 20 January 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud of their school. They appreciate the friendly atmosphere. Staff, parents and carers value the 'family-like feel' of the school. The school is inclusive and nurturing. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure. Staff and pupils have positive relationships. Pupils say that staff help them with any worries they have. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils of all ages learn to respect each other and appreciate differences. Older pupils look after younger pupils at breaktimes. They help them to settle into school, get to know routines and make friends.

Staff are ambitious for pupils. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They go to considerable lengths to meet pupils' academic, social and personal needs. When pupils need more help, they receive appropriate support.

Children in the nursery settle into school well. Early years staff help them to manage their behaviour. Children learn to be respectful and develop good language and communication skills. Pupils across the school have positive and enthusiastic attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and attend well.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school has experienced difficult times over the last two years. The pandemic and bereavements have challenged the work of leaders and staff. However, leaders are resolute in their vision for the future of the school. They work with staff to persevere with necessary improvements. They consider the priorities for improvement so that all pupils can achieve their best.

Leaders have revised the curriculum. Staff plan topics of learning to link subjects together. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum enables pupils to build knowledge and skills so that they can achieve well during their time at the school. Leaders of subjects such as mathematics and geography have a good understanding of what they want pupils to learn and when.

Staff consider pupils' prior knowledge and individual needs when planning and delivering lessons. They have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They check what pupils know and understand. When pupils are capable of more, teachers provide appropriate work. When pupils need extra help, teachers provide immediate, intensive support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the early years, are well supported. These pupils work towards precise targets which help them to achieve well.

Pupils are keen to learn. Teachers make sure that pupils have opportunities to apply their knowledge. This helps them to remember what they have learned. For example, children in the early years enjoy singing number rhymes. This activity helps to reinforce their counting skills and understanding of numbers. Older pupils use their mathematical skills in geography and science to represent data in graph form.

Staff promote a love for reading. They read to pupils every day. Pupils listen avidly and with genuine appreciation. Children in the early years listen to rhymes, sing songs and act out stories. Pupils enjoy reading. They read every day. Many do so with fluency and confidence. Some pupils who are at the early stages of reading receive books that do not match the sounds they know. These pupils do not always receive the support they need to catch up. There are occasions when the teaching of phonics is not as effective as it should be.

The school promotes pupils' personal development through the curriculum. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education includes relationships and sex education. It provides pupils with the knowledge they need to live healthy lives and develop positive relationships. Pupils learn about equality and diversity. They have opportunities to take on positions of responsibility, such as house captain. Through these roles they learn leadership skills. Pupils organise fund raising events for charity. They take part in community events such as singing carols for elderly residents in a local care home. Pupils debate and discuss. They take part in enterprise activities which support their economic education. These experiences help pupils to prepare for their next steps and for life in modern Britain.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the independent school standards. The early years welfare requirements are met. There is a suitable medical room for pupils who may need short-term care. Drinking water is available. Hot water does not pose a risk of scalding. School policies and procedures reflect the latest statutory guidance. The interim proprietor works closely with school leaders to check the school's work. He carries out essential maintenance work to ensure the health and safety of pupils. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff enjoy working at the school. Most have worked at the school for many years. Staff are eager to ensure that they do their best for pupils. They receive good support from leaders to manage their workload and well-being. Parents are very supportive of the school. Most appreciate the dedication and hard work of staff and the caring ethos. A typical comment was, 'The school creates a very friendly and inclusive environment. I know my daughter feels safe and loves to attend her school'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff received appropriate safeguarding training. They are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. Staff know pupils very well. They are alert to any signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders involve external agencies when needed.

Pupils learn how to keep safe through the PSHE curriculum. Class discussions and school assemblies often highlight potential risks for pupils and ways that they can keep themselves safe. Pupils learn about risks to their safety. These include online safety, stranger danger and water safety.

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

### (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Occasionally, some pupils who struggle to read are given books that are too difficult because they contain unfamiliar sounds. These pupils do not always receive the support they need to catch up. This can hinder how quickly they become fluent in their reading. Leaders should ensure that the books pupils read are matched well to the sounds they know.
- There is a new structured approach in place to teach phonics. However, on occasions, the teaching of phonics is not as effective as it should be. Sometimes, staff do not pronounce accurately the sounds letters make. This makes it difficult for pupils to use the sounds to help them to read unfamiliar words. Leaders should ensure that all staff know how to teach the phonics effectively.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120739
<b>DfE registration number</b>	925/6033
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204902
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	58
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	33
<b>Proprietor</b>	Kevin Barker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laura Middlebrook
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£4,800
<b>Telephone number</b>	01754 765749
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.vikingschool.co.uk">www.vikingschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:headteacher@vikingschool.co.uk">headteacher@vikingschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 to 13 June 2019

## Information about this school

- The previous proprietor sadly died in January 2021. The current interim proprietor is the executor of the previous proprietor's estate.
- The school does not use the service of any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the manager for the early years provision, subject leaders and the leader for pupils with SEND. The lead inspector spoke with the interim proprietor by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans for these subjects, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at planning for other subjects such as history, religious education and PSHE. They also looked at samples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors discussed with leaders and staff the school's approach to safeguarding pupils and checked the single central record. Inspectors reviewed records related to safeguarding. Checks were made on staff training and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation and policies, including those relating to school improvement, curriculum, attendance and behaviour. The lead inspector toured the school premises.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff surveys.

## Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector      Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Davies      Her Majesty's Inspector

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