

# Inspection of Litcham School

Church Street, Litcham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE32 2NS

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Inspection dates: 14 and 15 December 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Pupils thrive at Litcham School. They feel happy to be themselves. They are welcoming to newcomers. Any unkind or inappropriate language is dealt with so thoroughly by leaders that it rarely happens again. Pupils help lead the school's work in increasing awareness of different ways of life, for example from the successful 'Pride' club.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to work with others of different ages. For example, secondary pupils mentor primary peers in mathematics and English. Pupils help each other resolve conflicts through the 'PALS' scheme. The primary pupils benefit from accessing specialist resources on the secondary site. Pupils enjoy attending a wide range of lunchtime clubs, such as drama and an orchestra.

Pupils experience a well-thought-out curriculum. It is delivered highly consistently from class to class, ensuring that all pupils make progress in knowing and remembering more. Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics and science. They also learn to read quickly.

Where there is rare bullying, it is resolved quickly. Pupils feel safe. Pupils' behaviour is generally sensible. If pupils are distracted in class, teachers get them to quickly concentrate again. Leaders are ambitious for pupils' academic outcomes and behaviour; pupils respond to this well and work hard.

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

Leaders have put in place a cohesive curriculum that runs from Reception all the way through to Year 11. Teachers make sure that they build new learning on what has come before. They check on pupils' understanding both during lessons and at the end of units of work. Key concepts are repeated through the school so that pupils' knowledge is secure. Pupils talk with confidence about the topics that they have studied. Pupils achieve well throughout the school.

Children in the early years are taught to read right from the start. Teachers make sure that each child learns the exact sounds that they need to know at the right time. Pupils who need additional help to catch up with reading get this. Early reading books are well matched to the sounds that pupils know. Older pupils read a wide range of books, chosen from the very well stocked and appealing libraries. The use of high-quality texts is woven through the curriculum.

Some pupils struggle with their writing. Poor handwriting, stamina for writing and unconfident spelling means that the quality of what they write does not reflect their good understanding of what they have learned. Not all teachers, across all key stages and subjects, have the knowledge of how to support pupils to improve their writing.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Plans are clearly matched to their needs and effectively delivered. Support staff receive regular training which helps them meet the needs of the pupils they work with. There is good support for pupils struggling with their mental health, and this has successfully brought some pupils back into full-time education.

Careers education is a strength of the school. Pupils are very clear on what options they have after leaving the school. They are ambitious and consider a wide range of next steps.

Pupils experience a high-quality personal, social and health education programme. This, assemblies, and the wider curriculum help pupils develop strong understanding of life beyond the school. They are confident and articulate about what they have learned. A wide programme of clubs, visitors into school (such as a resident author) and trips support pupils' personal development further.

Secondary heads of department work closely with their linked primary subject leaders, sharing subject expertise and good practice. Several of the secondary teachers teach in the primary phase, which has in turn developed their understanding of learning that comes before key stage 3. Staff across all phases regularly share short, focused professional development sessions, which are valued by staff. Staff feel well supported by leaders. They appreciate that any changes in practice are carefully thought out in terms of workload.

The local governing body supports the governance of trustees well. There have been many recent changes to the membership of the local governing body; they are rapidly upskilling themselves to provide challenge and support to school leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding practice in the school is of a very high standard. Staff are well trained and clear on what signs to look out for that might indicate a pupil is at risk. Pupils know who they can go to in order to get help when they are worried or upset.

Record-keeping is detailed and leaders ensure that it is regularly audited to be sure that nothing is missed. Staff work closely with families, pupils and external agencies to make sure all pupils get the help they need.

All appropriate checks are made on adults in the school.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- A significant proportion of pupils' writing is not of a high enough quality to reflect their understanding of the curriculum. There are a variety of reasons for this.

Some pupils have poor handwriting, some lack stamina for writing, many have weak spelling. Teachers do not all have the knowledge of how to support pupils to improve their writing within their phase or subject. Leaders need to ensure that teachers across all phases, and all subjects, understand how to support pupils to improve their writing.

## 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.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146237
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10243893
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	770
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair</b>	Natasha Hutcheson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Gibbs
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.litcham.school.org.uk">www.litcham.school.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected in November 2015 and graded good.
- The school operates on two sites. The secondary phase is based on Church Street and the primary phase on Weasenham Road, both in Litcham.
- The school is part of the Synergy multi-academy trust.
- There is a separately run and registered nursery on the primary site.
- A very small number of pupils access alternative provision, both registered and unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff. They met with members of the governing body and spoke to the chief executive officer and executive primary lead from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and science. For each of these, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at plans and visited some lessons in other curriculum subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and a wide range of safeguarding files. They spoke to leaders (including the designated safeguarding leaders), staff, pupils and parents.
- Inspectors considered the 95 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. They took into account the 64 responses to the pupil survey and the 54 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alex Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Jim McAtear	Ofsted Inspector
Carol Dallas	Ofsted Inspector

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