

Inspection of a good school: The Pilgrim School

Carrington Drive, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 0DE

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils experience exceptional care and kindness at The Pilgrim School. Many join the school with a history of disruption to their education and poor attendance due to their medical health needs. Some pupils face a long, challenging journey towards improvement in their health and well-being. Staff are expert in helping pupils to take small but important steps to re-engage with their learning. They work closely and effectively with families and professionals to support this.

The school is committed to high-quality education for all pupils. Expectations are high, and pupils achieve very well from their various starting points. This ensures that they are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. It is rare that they need support with their behaviour. However, when this happens, staff carefully help pupils to regulate their emotions. This ensures they swiftly return to learning. They are caring and supportive of each other.

Parents and carers are exceptionally positive about this school. Parents value the school's unique approach and empathetic staff. One parent, typical of many, said: 'The staff consistently go above and beyond to ensure my child feels safe, welcome, and supported in reaching their full potential. Every staff member shows genuine care and interest in our child's well-being.'

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

The school has developed a highly innovative, and effective approach to the curriculum. The 'hope curriculum' provides a golden thread to all the school does. One impact of this is that pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and are effectively re-engaged in their education. As a result, pupils enjoy school.

The academic curriculum is ambitious. It is coherently planned and sequenced so that pupils learn the key knowledge and skills identified in a logical order. Teaching considers the learning gaps pupils may have from time missed in school due to their medical and mental health needs. As a result, pupils make strong progress from their starting points. This supports their transition back to mainstream education.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. In lessons, they are skilled at recognising when pupils may have gaps in their knowledge through regular recall and retrieval activities. They make swift adaptations to their teaching to close these gaps. As a result, pupils can access the curriculum irrespective of when they join the school.

All pupils who attend have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Any additional needs are considered even before pupils start at the school. The school meets pupils' needs exceptionally well. Staff liaise with pupils' healthcare professionals and with the pupils themselves. There is close, collaborative working with pupils' home schools. Prior to arrival, staff visit pupils in the home. As a result, they quickly build warm, professional, and trusting relationships.

Some pupils are too unwell to attend school. These pupils receive home education that is highly bespoke to their needs. This includes strong and highly effective pastoral support. The school shows a clear determination to give all pupils the very best opportunities, and for those educated at home, this means bringing the wider world to them. For example, virtual visits and live streaming of events to the home. This ensures all pupils develop a sense of belonging to the school community.

Reading is prioritised in this school. Those who need to, learn phonics. Books are celebrated at every opportunity and pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils enjoy reading to Otto, the school therapy dog. A virtual school library ensures that all pupils can access and enjoy books.

Attendance is a high priority for the school. As a result of the 'hope curriculum', there are high levels of engagement and attendance among the pupils, despite their complicated medical conditions.

Personal development is exceptional. Many pupils enjoy taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme. A range of clubs develops their talents and interests. Pupils enjoy trips and visits, for example to the theatre. There is an active school forum and pupils enjoy leadership roles to develop character. The school's work with pupils on social and emotional aspects of learning through the 'hope curriculum' and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, helps pupils to have more effective therapeutic conversations. Pupils of secondary school age receive a full programme of careers guidance.

Leadership and governance are strong. Staff value the care and consideration shown for their well-being and workload. They are happy and extremely proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2013.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	120753
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10268952
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Barbara Temple
Headteacher	Steven Barnes
Website	www.pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Pilgrim School is a hospital school for pupils aged 4 to 16 who have medical health needs. Most pupils have histories of disruption to their education and poor attendance prior to their admission to this school due to their medical health needs.
- The pathway into The Pilgrim School is on a medical admissions placement.
- All pupils have SEND.
- The school serves the whole of Lincolnshire and is located on three sites across the county. The main site is in Lincoln, and the other sites are located in Baumber and Amber Hill.
- The school provides home tuition for primary and secondary pupils who are unable to attend their own school due to medical reasons.
- An executive assistant headteacher works across all three sites.
- Most pupils are dual registered with their mainstream school.
- This school does not use any alternative provision.
- At the time of inspection, there were no children in the early years at this school.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading; English; mathematics; and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, including one lesson online, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work where available.
- To explore the wider curriculum, the inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with curriculum leaders and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and executive assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors also met with a range of other leaders, including curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governing body and had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff, including teaching, pastoral and support staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation on the school website and documentation relating to the governance of the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents and records linking to attendance and behaviour, and school improvement documentation.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and a consideration of their responses to the online surveys, including the free-text facility in Ofsted Parent View

Inspection team

Anne Maingay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sean Kelly

Ofsted Inspector

Phil Abbott

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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