

# Digby Church of England School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120519
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339716
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bob Roberts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andrew Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Graham Boyall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Church Street Digby Lincoln
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited fourteen lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Four teachers were seen. Inspectors spent the majority of time looking at learning, they observed the school's work, and looked at the minutes of meetings, records of monitoring and evaluation, school policy and planning documents and 41 replies to the parent questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- current levels of attainment, rates of progress and the reliability of tracking and monitoring systems
- the quality of care, guidance and support
- leadership and management arrangements and the likelihood of these arrangements leading to sustained improvement.

## Information about the school

Digby is smaller than average although following a decline in numbers the school roll has stabilised and is growing. Almost all of the pupils have White British backgrounds. The school serves a rural area of average socio-economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average but the number in each year group varies significantly. Following several changes of headship in recent years, the school has entered a federation agreement with another nearby school. It shares a headteacher with that school whilst maintaining its own governing body.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This school has improved significantly since its last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. It provides a supportive environment for its pupils, whose achievements are improving. Arrangements for the sharing of a headteacher with a neighbouring school are proving effective, and the school recognises the need to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of these arrangements in due course. The new headteacher is providing calm, clear-sighted leadership, instilling staff with confidence and ambition.

The quality of provision is good across all aspects. Inspectors agreed with the school that the quality of teaching is good. Based on a close knowledge of the pupils, the teaching provides a good range of activities and reinforces the underpinning values of the school. The school's curriculum offers a good grounding in the basic skills and, through imaginatively developed themes, provides opportunities for creativity, imagination and the development of knowledge of the local community. Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is good. Good quality care and support ensures that pupils flourish. Monitoring and tracking systems lead to the timely identification of pupils who need extra support, which is then effectively provided.

As a result of this good provision, pupils make good progress from joining the Reception class to the end of Year 6. Levels of attainment by the time pupils leave school are now above the levels expected nationally. Besides their academic progress, pupils develop well in many other ways. In this caring, positive environment they grow in confidence and self-esteem. They are clearly happy and secure at school. They have good attitudes to learning and behave well. Most have a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Their excellent contribution to the school and to the local community takes a wide variety of forms and they feel strongly that their views are taken into account at school. Levels of attendance are satisfactory. The school recognises that it does not have enough strategies in place for improving attendance.

In its own evaluation, the school was over-optimistic in some minor respects but accurate overall, showing a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further development. The headteacher is bringing the experience of leading an excellent school to Digby and shared leadership and management arrangements have already brought benefits for pupils and staff. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory although some policy documents and day-to-day procedures require further improvement to bring them in line with best practice. The greater stability that has resulted from the shared headship arrangements, the development opportunities that are being seized by staff, and the good oversight of the governing body mean that the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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

- Develop additional strategies to improve attendance by:
  - raising parental expectations through information and guidance
  - working with external agencies to develop good practice in encouraging attendance.
- Through federation arrangements, develop agreed criteria and processes for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of federation leadership and management arrangements.

## ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>2</b>
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Children start Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly as expected for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest of the school. Last year pupils left Year 6 with attainment that is above average. Almost half of the pupils went on to selective schools. The trend has been an improving one overall, although with such small numbers of pupils there are variations from year to year. Standards in reading and mathematics are good and standards in writing are average. The progress being made by pupils in the current Years 5 and 6 is good. This is true of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. Pupils develop the skills, confidence and attitudes that will serve them well and their overall achievement is good. This is a result of being cared for in a school where the staff know the pupils very well and where pupils feel that they are contributing to a warm, supportive and purposeful community.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. In the lessons seen by inspectors, the extent of their attention and concentration, and their collaboration together, was good. They spoke of their enjoyment of a wide range of opportunities to take part in other activities. Pupils behave well, acting with composure and conducting themselves safely. The cohesiveness of the school community contributes to their good social and moral development. Spiritual development at this church school is also good, supported by the strong values system that underpins its ethos. Pupils respect the values and beliefs of other people and enjoy learning about other customs and cultures. Many are members of a flourishing gardening club and take advantage of other opportunities for extra physical activity. The school council is very active and is well-regarded by pupils who feel that the school listens to what they have to say. All pupils are involved in contributing to local community events, such as the recently revived Digby Feast. There also are many ways in which pupils take on responsibility and contribute to the school. Attendance at school is average. Pupils' understanding of the world of work, and their development of relevant skills, is good. They benefit from a number of events which develop their enterprise capabilities and their understanding of profit and loss. They are well prepared for the subsequent stages of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan lessons carefully and good use is made of teaching assistants. Lessons are well organised using a variety of approaches and little time is lost as pupils move swiftly from one activity to another. Excellent relations exist in all classrooms. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and their moral and social development is supported by the way teachers use and refer to the school's values ethos. Teachers make it clear what pupils are going to be learning and pupils are clear about the steps along the way. In the less effective lessons, tasks are too complex and insufficient attention is paid to developing speaking and listening skills.

The curriculum meets all the statutory requirements and the needs of pupils well. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are carefully assessed and their development is managed systematically to ensure that all make the expected progress. Pupils with low literacy and numeracy skills are well supported by class teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils who are gifted and talented benefit from a variety of different activities outside the curriculum; however, occasionally more able pupils are not sufficiently highly challenged by activities in lessons. Other subjects are integrated into imaginative, stimulating themes to encourage pupils to develop thinking skills and creative approaches. A diversity of extra-curricular activities, including various sports, drama and craft, further enrich the curriculum. These activities are very well attended. The school provides a wide range of trips and visits to places of interest in the region to extend

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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pupils' understanding of their locality.

Good arrangements are in place to support and care for pupils and to help them develop and learn. Pupils are carefully assessed and their progress monitored. The recently introduced tracking system clearly identifies pupils at risk of under-achievement. If concerns develop, effective support is put in place with parents fully informed at all stages. Where necessary, the school has good links with specialist agencies such as the council's educational psychologist and autism outreach programmes. Well-established links and effective communication ensure smooth transition to secondary education, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has not put in place additional approaches to raise attendance levels.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection the school has experienced further changes of headteacher. The governors have sought to bring stability to the school by entering a federation agreement with a neighbouring school and, under this agreement, the shared headteacher arrangements commenced in April 2009. The progress of the arrangement is carefully monitored by a joint committee of governors. At the time of the inspection arrangements were going well, and consultation with parents and carers in the early stages indicated a positive reaction. Governors are aware of the need to establish an agreed means by which the efficiency and effectiveness of the federation can, in due course, be judged. So far the benefits are significant, both for staff and for pupils. The headteacher is providing calm, clear, effective leadership. He is fostering a greater confidence and ambition in the staff and providing steps along the way for them. Staff at Digby are benefiting from the resulting opportunities to share in the leadership and management of the school. Positive links exist between the two schools and teachers and managers are increasingly sharing ideas and good practice. The partnership and wider network arrangements are benefiting pupils, particularly their social development. The ethos at the school in which equality, the welfare of children, and good learning, are at the forefront of people's minds is firmly established. The school's values are a day-to-day, meaningful part of school life. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory, although some policy and procedures requires further attention to match the best practice. Governors have had a decisive influence on the strategic direction of the school and monitoring arrangements give them a clear view of the work of the school.

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Community cohesion is promoted effectively, particularly at a local level, with the school being increasingly at the heart of the life of the village and the local community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with mixed early experiences and skills which in recent years have been largely in line with local averages and national expectations. This year's cohort, a small group of eight children taught alongside the Year 1 pupils, entered the school from a slightly higher starting point, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Most are set to exceed the expectations for their age by the end of the year. Children of all abilities achieve well.

The children enjoy school, arriving eager and ready to learn and play. They are well behaved, quickly appreciating the need to follow the class routines and rules which teachers make very clear from the outset. As a result, they settle well as a well motivated, responsive, confident and trusting group of children who work well together whether in the classroom or in the outdoor area.

The early years unit provides a welcoming, well resourced and stimulating environment for the children, both in the classroom and in the outdoor area, enabling the teachers to plan a wide range of imaginative, learning activities. These include a good focus on the development of early skills in reading, writing, number as well as effective coverage of the other areas of early learning. A good balance is struck between teacher-directed learning and times when children are expected to make their own choices of activities to pursue. The teaching is good overall, especially in promoting children's personal



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development, but is not quite so effective when the Reception children and Year 1 are taught together at the start of lessons. These occasions are always highly stimulating and entertaining, but there is a tendency for the learning objectives and the teaching to be imprecise about exactly what the Reception children are expected to learn across the full span of their abilities.

The early years unit is well led and managed by a recently appointed teacher, ably supported by a teaching assistant. They have established an effective partnership with parents, though there is scope for further extension of this in the ten minute period in class prior to registration. Assessment records are thorough, enabling teachers to measure and monitor children's progress and achievements accurately. Likewise, school safeguarding policies are properly implemented, ensuring that children are safe and secure. Links with the local partner school are used well to share ideas and promote good practice.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are very positive in their support for the school. The number of responses represented a high proportion of the parents and carers with children at the school. There were few concerns expressed. A small minority felt that the school did not help them sufficiently to support their child's learning. The school intends to address this issue. It was clear from the comments on the questionnaire that parents and carers have a high regard for the leadership and management of the school and are very happy with the experience the school offers their children.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Digby Church of England School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 65 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	59	15	37	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	54	19	46	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	34	25	61	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	37	23	56	1	2	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	25	61	15	37	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	54	14	34	4	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	46	21	51	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	41	18	44	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	41	23	56	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	54	15	37	3	7	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	49	20	49	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	59	17	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	61	14	34	0	0	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



20 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Digby Church of England School, Lincoln, LN4 3LZ

As you know, your school was inspected recently and this is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all I would like to thank you for the way so many of you greeted and spoke to us during our visit. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you had to say.

Digby is a good school. It has improved since the last time it was inspected. This is a place where every pupil is valued and supported. The staff work well together to do their best for you. The teaching is good and the school provides you with many good experiences and opportunities. You learn to work and play together happily.

As a result of this, you all do well at school. The progress you make in lessons is good and the standards you reach by the time you leave school are above those that are usually expected. You obviously enjoy coming to school and you behave well. All of you make an excellent contribution to the school and the local community. You told us you feel safe and are learning to live healthily.

There are things that we are asking the school to do to improve the school further.

The school needs to find ways to raise attendance levels.

Ways need to be agreed to see if the new arrangements by which you share a headteacher with another school are working well.

With best wishes

Bob Roberts

Lead inspector

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