

The Lincoln St Peter at Gowts Church of England Primary School

Pennell Street, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN5 7TA

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher has led the school through a period of rapid change and significant improvement across every aspect of school life.
- Senior leaders, middle leaders and governors have worked together to create a culture within the school of high expectations, supported through carefully stepped professional development for all staff and governors. This has ensured that teaching, learning and assessment are improving rapidly.
- Achievement in nearly all year groups and across the curriculum has improved significantly. Older pupils have made the most improvements. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, in terms of their attainment, attitudes to learning and in their personal and social skills.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is at least good and, for older pupils especially, it is outstanding. Opportunities for developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics are not yet fully developed by all teachers.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are respectful towards each other and adults.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. Staff put the welfare of pupils as their top priority.
- The excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development lies at the heart of the school, together with its 'values curriculum'.
- The curriculum enhances pupils' learning extremely well and includes school visits and 'wow' days. Teachers use topics to make excellent links between subjects. Extra-curricular clubs offer an exceptionally wide range of opportunities for pupils to enjoy and learn new skills.
- In the early years foundation stage, children make good progress in all areas of learning. However, opportunities for independent learning are not always structured to enable rapid progress.
- Since the last inspection, governors have played a significant role in school improvement. They are extremely well informed and hold senior leaders to account by checking the work of the school very thoroughly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency in teaching to that of the best, so that all teachers provide better opportunities for problem solving and reasoning in mathematics.
- Strengthen independent learning in the early years so that children engage in more challenging activities, particularly in mark making and writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and continuing areas for development based on exceptionally high-quality monitoring and evaluation.
- Initially, the new headteacher led the senior and middle leadership team's monitoring from the front, outlining her expectations of best practice. All senior and middle leaders now lead this monitoring and evaluation across the full curriculum, resulting in high-quality reports and discussions. These are based on their findings from teachers' assessments of pupils' performance, planning and book scrutinies, observations of teaching and their interviews with pupils, as well as a range of other evidence.
- The headteacher is very clear about what constitutes outstanding teaching. Many of the teachers demonstrate these skills across most of the curriculum, so teachers are able to learn from each other. One teacher explained, 'All monitoring reports are sent to every teacher. This means that we can decide which teacher we could work with to improve each aspect of our teaching.'
- Staff morale is high and all staff are ambitious for the school and its pupils. Responses to the staff questionnaire showed that staff feel the school is extremely well led and managed. Parents expressed similar views through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and through discussions with inspectors.
- The pupil premium is used very effectively, with most pupils making rapid progress from their starting points. Pupils' progress is meticulously checked against spending by the deputy head. An additional teacher and teaching assistants are employed to provide teaching in small groups, including for the most able. Other initiatives are also in place, for example counselling to help meet some individual pupils' needs.
- The outstanding curriculum is exciting and engaging. Pupils enjoy the broad and balanced topic work, where they learn through themes that incorporate the full range of subjects including science, history and geography. The school chooses to record nearly all pupils' writing for English and topic work in one book, which is helping pupils to apply new skills learned in one lesson to their next lesson, regardless of the subject. The introduction of specialist teachers for sport and music continues to strengthen the curriculum.
- Extra-curricular clubs and opportunities range from machine sewing to body combat and from choir to design technology. A large proportion of pupils across the age ranges take part in these clubs supporting the development of their skills and knowledge across the curriculum.
- Funding to promote participation in sport has been used to upskill staff by employing a specialist to work alongside teachers. This has resulted in improved pupils' physical education and sports skills, and improved teachers' knowledge. Pupils also now take part in a range of sports competitively.
- The diocese has been highly effective in helping the senior leaders embed the school's values into pupils' personal and social education. School leaders have then extended this even further to ensure pupils' greater depth of understanding of British values and other religions and cultures. The local authority has provided the right and effective

support to both leaders and the governing body. It has reduced this support gradually, as the school has improved.

Governance

- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the strengths and current developments within the school. The interim executive board (IEB) of governors finished in April 2015. The chair of the IEB, who provided a 12-month development programme for the school's governors to ensure that they all had the required skills to undertake their roles, now ably leads this governing body.
- Governors receive excellent, evaluated information from the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. They are also given presentations covering pupils' achievement and the impact of actions taken to make improvements across the school. This helps to focus governors' visits to school, where they can undertake further discussions with staff and check how well the school is progressing against the agreed planned improvements.
- Governors' excellent knowledge about the school helps them to offer appropriate challenge and support to senior leaders. Their oversight ensures that decisions on teachers' pay progression are based on the achievement of pupils, and they manage the school's finances efficiently. Effective checks are made on the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for sport and physical education.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors undertake regular audits of safeguarding to provide further checks on the school's procedures.
- Documentation relating to the welfare and safeguarding of pupils is meticulously maintained. All staff are vigilant in their commitment to the safeguarding of every pupil. They are knowledgeable about the signs associated with pupils at risk of harm. Their tenacity, alongside the work of the senior leaders and the school's parent support adviser, plays an important role in helping to support the families of any pupils who are identified as being vulnerable. Consequently the school is able to act quickly to address even small issues. The school's work, together with that of other agencies, shows that these pupils and their families are supported very well.
- Leaders and governors know the importance of being able to spot signs of abuse, including extremist views and domestic violence. Governors and senior staff are trained in safer recruitment, and all staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The systematic checking of the quality of teaching, alongside continuous professional development, has ensured a rapid improvement in teaching across the school. Teaching is now consistently good, with much, especially (but not exclusively) for older pupils, that is outstanding. As a result, pupils make at least good and sometimes very rapid progress.
- The biggest strength in teaching is the meticulous planning. Most teachers know the specific skills and abilities of their pupils extremely well. They are able to pinpoint where additional learning sessions in a small group would benefit some pupils, so that

they will be better prepared for a new topic or unit of work. Valuable planning and discussion between teachers and teaching assistants ensure that the latter know exactly what to teach in these sessions.

- In mathematics, teachers use short check-ups with pupils prior to starting a new topic. Pupils' books clearly demonstrate the value of these assessments, which are then used in the planning of a series of lessons. Units of learning are then followed by further check-ups to evaluate the progress pupils have made.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that lessons are taught at a pace appropriate to the learning of the pupils, with teachers and teaching assistants usually asking timely questions to check pupils' understanding at various stages of the lesson. Activities are usually extremely well structured to ensure that pupils have strong guidance on how to structure their work to show their learning. For example, in an upper key stage 2 class, pupils had invented a machine. They had used a high-quality text and picture planning structure to ensure that their report on how it worked included technical language and causal connectives to show how one thing led to another.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive additional teaching sessions, in order to help them reach their full potential. In key stage 2, an experienced teacher teaches these and adapts the work carefully for each group to ensure that it follows the topic's themes. This system has been extremely effective in accelerating the progress of these pupils, so the school is now improving the provision for younger pupils as well, where learning was less well structured and progress less consistent.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give good support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They structure work well so that pupils can complete many tasks independently after an initial input. Pupils who are new to English are also supported well, with good use made of specific vocabulary to support and structure their learning. Good use is made of computer translation applications in lessons for older pupils who can read fluently in their first language.
- Phonics is taught well in the early years and throughout key stage 1. As the school experiences a significant number of pupils joining the school throughout each year, it is also taught in key stage 2, when pupils enter the school without secure phonics knowledge.
- In an afternoon, teaching assistants hold 'learning surgeries', which is a recent but effective initiative for the school. Teachers and teaching assistants identify pupils who would benefit from brief one-to-one sessions to help them catch up or understand a new skill. Pupils themselves can, and do, opt into these sessions if they wish.
- Occasionally, the teaching, particularly for younger pupils in mathematics, is not at the right level for best progress. Pupils are therefore left either unchallenged or struggling with new learning. This is particularly evident when pupils are undertaking problem-solving or reasoning activities.
- Teachers give pupils useful feedback about their learning, which is often linked into their personal targets in English and mathematics.
- Prior to the arrival of the new headteacher, the school had not started to assess pupils' achievement in the new curriculum and had continued with the old system of assessment using levels. The school has therefore only been using up-to-date methods of assessment for a little over a year. Teachers have learned new assessment

concepts and techniques very rapidly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the range of out-of-school clubs, sports competitions, opportunities to sing and perform on their musical instruments, and cultural visits to the theatre.
- There is a strong sense of community in the school underpinned by the school's eight Christian values. These form the basis of both the caring and mutually supportive atmosphere across the school and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 4 were observed discussing how the values of hope and trust affect people's lives, including their own. Pupils have a secure understanding of what values are and are rightly very proud of their school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations. In school, they are confident whom to talk to if they have a problem, but the worry boxes provided are also used by some. Older pupils in particular understand about the risks of using social media and the dangers posed through online contact. Pupils say that adults listen to their concerns and take action to sort out any problems.
- Those pupils spoken to during the inspection were not aware of any bullying, but the school's highly detailed behaviour records show that there have been some instances of bullying, which have been dealt with effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, well mannered and very friendly. Behaviour is also good in the playground and during a wet lunchtime. Pupils happily play a variety of games together. Some older pupils have been trained to act as peer mediators to help to resolve conflict.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as their good attendance shows. There has been a continuous drop in pupils' persistent absence since the previous inspection.
- The younger pupils do not always replicate the exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning of the older ones in Years 4, 5 and 6. Some do not always concentrate or do their very best in lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the last inspection, outcomes for pupils at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have improved considerably. However, the majority of that gain has been made in the last 12 months. Work in current pupils' books across the school, and examination of provisional 2016 assessment information for Years 2 and 6, show that pupils are now achieving well from their starting points.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check continues to rise and is at least in line with national standards. Pupils

use their phonics skills effectively when reading and writing.

- At the end of key stage 1, attainment results in reading, writing and mathematics, when compared with provisional national information, are in line with those nationally. There has therefore been a significant improvement since 2015.
- At the time of the last inspection, pupils at the end of key stage 2 were about one year behind their peers nationally. Attainment improved in 2015 and improved still further in 2016, when results in reading, writing and mathematics showed that pupils' attainment overall was above average when compared with provisional national information. Attainment in reading was high compared with the national average.
- Two years ago, the progress of pupils from key stage 1 to key stage 2 was in the lowest 2% of schools nationally. One year ago, it was still in the bottom 10%. Achievement has improved rapidly for the majority of pupils and progress in 2016 for the end of key stage 2 shows pupils to be making at least average progress against the provisional national information.
- Teachers are still helping pupils to catch up from previous low standards and there are still pockets of underachievement, particularly in writing in some year groups. High-quality teaching and other actions are already having a positive impact, but the school knows that more time is needed before these pupils will catch up.
- Leaders monitor the performance of specific groups of pupils carefully. Regular meetings with teachers ensure that any dip in progress is quickly addressed. Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most-able, are making increasingly rapid progress from their starting points. No comparisons are available yet for disadvantaged pupils against other pupils nationally for 2016. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well in the school, some starting the school with little or no English.
- The most able pupils currently in the school make good progress across the curriculum. In 2016, provisional results showed that similar proportions of pupils achieved greater depth at the end of key stage 1 and the high standard at the end of key stage 2 compared with provisional results nationally.

Early years provision

Good

- A significant proportion of children start in Reception with skills below those typically expected for their age in one or more areas of learning. Good progress is made in all areas and a similar proportion to those nationally are well prepared for Year 1.
- Regular checks are made to ensure the good quality of teaching. Leaders have also ensured that the good-quality tracking and assessment procedures already established in both Nursery and Reception have been continued with the changes in staffing.
- This assessment information is used to aid discussions between teachers and teaching assistants when planning learning activities. Parents and carers are informed about their child's next targets every six weeks, but they are also invited to read and make contributions to their child's online learning journal. Paper copies are provided for parents without internet access and parents are also regularly invited to work alongside their child in school.
- Children understand the 'golden rules' and adults ensure that the environment is safe and welcoming. There is a significant focus on phonics and on speaking and listening

activities. Adults intervene effectively when engaging with children, encouraging them to talk about their learning, and modelling good language for children to hear and to copy. For example, one of the teachers, during an activity when the children were busy washing the teddy bears, ensured that her questions encouraged the children to extend their answers to give her more detail.

- There are opportunities to strengthen children's ability to learn independently, for example by encouraging children to try more challenging, structured activities, particularly in mark making and writing.
- Additional funding is used effectively to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged children. These children have achieved better than other children nationally in two out of three of the most recent years.

School details

Unique reference number	120563
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10019553

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Hewins
Headteacher	Charlotte Hickerton
Telephone number	01522 880 071
Website	www.st-peter-gowts.lincs.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@st-peter-gowts.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school is of average size.
- Provision for the early years comprises one full-time Reception class and part-time Nursery provision.
- Nearly two thirds of pupils are of White British heritage. The largest ethnic group are from 'Any other White background' and make up about a quarter of pupils. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school organises and manages a breakfast and after-school club.
- In 2015, the school met the national floor standards for pupils' achievement.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The chair of the governing body is a national leader of governance.
- The new headteacher was appointed in January 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning at least once and usually twice in each class in the school. In total they visited 17 lessons, or parts of lessons, as well as making further shorter visits to observe teaching.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour at different times throughout the school day, including when they were at play and during lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with several teachers and two members of the governing body. An additional meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and spoke to many others informally throughout the inspection, as well as listening to pupils of all abilities read.
- Inspectors met with several parents at the start of the school day. The 41 parental responses expressed through Parent View were also considered, as were 18 questionnaire responses from staff.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, the school's data for tracking pupils' attainment and progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents used by leaders, governors and the local authority to monitor and evaluate the school's work.
- A review of safeguarding records and procedures was carried out.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

Kevin McHenry

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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