

# The Lincoln St Giles Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	120365
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379998
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Rajinder Harrison

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>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	162
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Melanie Markham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Whimster
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Addison Drive Lincoln LN2 4LQ
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Rajinder Harrison

Additional Inspector

Edgar Hastings

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons, taught by teachers and support staff, over approximately eight hours. Three of the lesson observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Meetings were held with three of the school's governing body, a range of staff and children, and informally with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including the tracking of children's progress, evidence from the school's lesson observations, children's completed work, and procedures relating to safeguarding and children's welfare and school improvement plans. Inspectors also analysed the responses to 97 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with those completed by staff.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized nursery, situated in the north of the City of Lincoln. It offers part-time and 39 full-time places. Most children come from the surrounding area and the majority are from White British backgrounds. Eleven per cent of children are learning English as an additional language. Four per cent are disabled or have special educational needs. The school holds a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award, Clean Air Award (Gold).

The school has recently experienced challenges with staffing due to periods of maternity leave and unforeseen staff sickness absences.

The nursery shares a site with St Giles Children's Centre and Magical Moments Day Care. The Children's Centre and the day care for children in the 0-3 age range are inspected separately. Their reports can be found on the Ofsted website.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. Children make exceptional progress because the school fosters their love of learning through its high quality provision for teaching and the curriculum. Excellent care and support arrangements ensure all children thrive and flourish in this calm, productive environment. Children's behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Inspirational leadership by the headteacher drives the school to continually build upon existing outstanding practice. The school is very ambitious for its families; aspirations among children are high, with one four-year-old saying 'I want to be 'a lawyer' and another 'a fireman'.
- Children make rapid progress in all areas of their learning because they feel safe and happy in the nursery and have total trust in adults to care for them and support them. They quickly become confident, independent learners who are very able at directing their own learning, sharing resources and supporting each other in the many exciting adventures and explorations they devise. The achievement of all is outstanding, regardless of their starting points, because it is built upon strong foundations personalised for individual needs.
- Outstanding teaching provides the opportunities, resources and challenge to constantly excite and engage children in their learning. Teachers use accurate observations of children's learning very effectively to plan an outstanding curriculum that captivates their interest and fires their enthusiasm and confidence to find out for themselves. Occasionally, in mixed ability groupings, a few of the more-able children are not always challenged fully.
- Children behave very well. They have extremely positive attitudes to all their activities because teachers plan every day as a new adventure. Children know and understand well the daily routines; expectations of their behaviour and effort are very high. They show kindness and respect for others, particularly in helping children who have special educational needs or who become upset.

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- Leadership and management are outstanding. All staff and the governing body monitor the school's performance rigorously so that it is constantly seeking improvement. Despite recent disruptions in staffing, leadership of teaching by the headteacher is outstanding. The school has successfully maintained and improved on its outstanding performance noted in the previous inspection.

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

- Ensure that, when working in mixed ability groups, all children, particularly the more able, are challenged fully in their literacy and numeracy skills.

**Main report****Achievement of pupils**

All children make rapid and sustained progress in all areas of their learning. Early action is taken to evaluate and meet each individual need. Children who are disabled or have special educational needs are supported exceptionally well through activities that are personalised to help them achieve successfully. Those learning English as an additional language are helped extremely well, with the aid of additional support and resources. Consequently, all children enjoy their learning and achieve equally well. They make rapid progress, particularly in their communication, language and literacy, from starting points which are usually well below those typically expected of children of this age. Their progress and achievement in personal, social and emotional development is exceptional because they are encouraged to recognise the needs of others as well as their own. For example, a child with emotional and social difficulties was very well supported in a rhyming words activity by classmates prompting him patiently. Similarly, a more able mathematician confidently guided the learning of others who were less secure. This high level of maturity and friendship is reflected continuously because children model their behaviour on what they see from teachers.

Children's excellent attitudes to learning stem directly from well-established routines that allow them to know what to expect throughout the session. One child was quick to point out that 'you just missed story time; it was really good. It is snack time now so we have to wash our hands'. Children love learning new words with one showing excellent understanding when he said the sea weed colours were like 'camouflage'.

The development of children's communication and literacy skills is a strength. Children demonstrate how well they learn their letters and sounds as they make excellent attempts at writing and reading their own names and spelling out simple three letter words. Children delight in recalling previous learning, and teachers record each child's experiences in vibrant 'Look what I can do' books, that highlight

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milestones in children's achievement. Children talk constantly about their learning and what they do in each session, transferring and sharing knowledge, thus extending their own and others' learning. For example, having learnt about pirates and treasure, children eagerly searched the sand with metal detectors. They extended their imaginative ideas into the beach and campsite areas, by taking the opportunity to buy and sell ice creams, bacon, eggs, burgers and cups of tea. This highly organised cooperative play, with timely interventions from adults, helped children extend their knowledge and understanding, vocabulary and number skills very effectively. Taking orders for different ice creams was quite a challenge!

Parents and carers believe that their children make at least good progress. Inspection evidence indicates that children's achievement is outstanding. By the time they leave, most children's language and communication skills are at the levels expected nationally. In other areas of learning, children achieve skills and knowledge above those expected for their age, with strengths in their physical, personal and social development and their number skills. The essential learning skills, such as the enjoyment of books, reasoning, problem-solving and knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT) are promoted very well.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is outstanding; parents and carers agree. For instance, they write comments such as 'my child has really flourished here, not only with reading and writing but in his confidence and independence'. This reflects great appreciation of how well the school prepares children for primary school.

Children's learning is reviewed rigorously and where necessary, additional resources and help are provided to enable every child to participate fully and make very good progress. For example, high quality questioning and consistently challenging dialogue develop children's thinking, independence, confidence and problem-solving extremely well. The small target group sessions led by the staff are particularly successful in accelerating children's learning. Teachers' high-level communication skills ensure they model talk in carefully-constructed sentences which children replicate independently. Small-group work in language and communication skills, where skills are low on entry, have been successful in raising attainment over the last two years. Children love the little surprises staff plan, such as number cards hidden around the classroom for them to find and sequence, and games that promote listening and thinking. Children enjoyed playing with 'Metal Mike', where they built three letter words by sounding out and reading each word before the robot 'gobbled it up'. The game challenged most children very well. On occasions in mixed ability groups, the level of challenge is not always sufficiently high to extend the more able.

Staff extend children's learning exceptionally well through exciting activities indoors and out. The extensive and highly imaginative outdoor areas encourage children to explore the wider world and develop an excellent awareness of how to play safely. Children's confidence and independence are promoted exceptionally well so that they are able to plan and direct their own play with minimal support from adults. Children

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persevere patiently with challenging tasks because they want to succeed. Very detailed systems record children's progress accurately. Records are updated frequently and used very well by staff to tailor activities that enable every child to achieve their best.

Curriculum topics and activities are varied and allow children to follow their interests and their different cultures and backgrounds. For example, children enjoyed celebrating Chinese New Year and the traditions and music from India. They observe chicks hatching and plant potatoes that they harvest, cook and eat. Such memorable and inspirational experiences make a significant contribution to the children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Children's exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning are firmly rooted in the high expectations of adults. Teachers set excellent examples in their relationships with, and respect for, each other and the children. Children observe this behaviour and make it their own. This develops a powerful atmosphere of mutual respect which children quickly accept as the norm. Outstanding care from staff, who intervene very sensitively when issues arise, ensure that children understand how their behaviour might upset others. Children quickly learn that kindness and saying 'sorry' make the nursery a happy place. As a result, thoughtless, hurtful or bullying behaviour is rare. Children support each other very well by sharing resources, taking turns and including each other in their imaginative play. For example, those playing in the campsite quickly included newcomers and willingly invited them to take meal orders and cook sausages and eggs on the camp fire. Skills such as cooperation, taking turns and sharing resources are better than those usually seen at this age.

Parents and carers are unanimous, and accurate, in their belief that their children are safe and feel safe at school. Children are taught the need for safety and care for themselves and others through simple rules, such as only four in the ball pool. Regular routines are constantly reinforced by teachers. Children show an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, a group of children digging in the sand immediately accepted that scattering it on the decking made the decking difficult to walk on safely. They feel happy, safe and secure and flourish in this vibrant and exciting environment. When asked, they indicate that they 'love' school. Attendance, although not statutory, is good for this age. The vast majority of children attend regularly and any absence is immediately followed up.

**Leadership and management**

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She inspires confidence in her staff and in the parents and carers of the children who attend the school. Strong support is given by other leaders and the governing body. The school has managed recent staffing difficulties very effectively. Success is underpinned by highly effective monitoring that is followed up by developing the expertise and skills of the staff in line with children's needs and curriculum developments. Staff attend relevant courses

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and share best practice, for example regarding assessment, with nearby schools. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The successful strategies to improve children's achievement are evident in the rise in standards of children's language and communication skills over the last two years. The school is in a very strong position to continue to improve.

The highly effective governing body receives good information to enable it to act as a critical friend and work successfully with staff to improve provision. They respond to any concerns promptly and effectively. Systems for the care of children and the safe recruitment of staff are robust. All safeguarding requirements are fully met.

The curriculum is exceptionally well-planned for the children to become independent learners. They are encouraged to follow their interests and explore their ideas in the full confidence that staff will support them in their efforts. Children's outstanding spiritual, moral social and cultural development is planned exceptionally well. Topics reflecting other cultures, increase children's awareness of diversity within society and visits, for example, to the castle increase their understanding of the wider world.

All children have an equal opportunity to succeed. Steps are taken swiftly to help children to overcome any difficulties that arise; discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Through excellent relationships with outside agencies, particularly with the children's centre and the pre-school provider on site, support for children and their families is outstanding. There are strong systems and support for children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, for example, holiday schemes and pre-school courses that help families adjust to school life quickly and confidently.

There are excellent relationships with parents and carers who agree with the inspection judgement of outstanding leadership and management. The school is at the heart of the community. Parents and carers say that they feel fully involved in their children's learning and in the life of the school. They are fulsome in their praise of the school and all it does for their children. The comments of one parent represent the views of many, 'This is an excellent school; staff are brilliant. My child has loved being here and made excellent progress.'



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



13 July 2012

Dear Children

### **Inspection of The Lincoln St Giles Nursery School, Lincoln, LN2 4LQ**

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly to Mr Hastings and myself when we came to visit your school recently. I am writing to tell you what we found out. St Giles Nursery School is an outstanding school; that means that you learn a lot and enjoy yourselves. You are doing really well at school and that is brilliant. The teachers and all the other staff take very good care of you and do their very best to help you. We know you get on with one another and help each other really well and have lots of fun together.

We can see you are happy, enjoy all your activities and feel safe. We were really pleased to see you learning your letters and sounds so well. We enjoyed listening to you talk about your work and joining in with your camping and beach cafe. You played really sensibly outside even though there was so much going on and it felt really busy. We were pleased to see you were well dressed for the weather but fortunately it didn't rain while we were there! We especially enjoyed the way you loved talking to us about your work and we enjoyed reading and talking to you about your special 'Look what I can do' books that record your achievements. The photographs we saw show us what lovely times you have at school.

To help your school become even better, we have asked your teachers to help you even more with your reading, writing and number work, especially those of you who could do harder work.

We hope you carry on enjoying your learning and making good progress. Enjoy your time at St Giles and keep working hard and playing as well as you can!

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison  
Lead inspector

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