

# The Lincoln St Giles Nursery School

Addison Drive, Lincoln, LN2 4LQ

**Inspection dates** 14–15 January 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The long-serving headteacher has maintained and built upon the school's outstanding effectiveness over many years. She provides excellent leadership for the school that enables children and staff to thrive.
- A friendly, caring atmosphere ensures that everyone feels part of the school community. Staff teamwork is exceptionally strong, underpinned by excellent leadership and management.
- Checks on teaching are rigorous. Leaders, managers and governors ensure that improvements are continuous through high-quality training and the sharing of best practice.
- The knowledgeable and experienced governing body supports and challenges the school with consummate skill.
- Children's well-being and safety are given the highest priority. Consequently, they feel very secure in school and learn quickly how to keep themselves safe.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. Expectations are very high and, as a result, children quickly learn to respect each other and work together.
- Teaching is outstanding. Excellent planning and an emphasis on developing language and number skills make a highly positive impact on children's learning.
- Each classroom is an 'Aladdin's Cave' of stimulating, well-planned activities which spark children's curiosity to find things out. The outdoor area is extensive and offers challenge and excitement for children to develop excellent skills for the future.
- The school promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to great effect. Staff enable children to develop confidence so that they take on new challenges enthusiastically.
- Almost all the children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well in relation to their starting points. They leave the school extremely well prepared for the Reception Year at their next school.
- Parents who stated a view are strongly supportive of the school. They commend the school's 'Family Learning' courses.
- Staff have made good progress in their use of the new electronic system to record children's learning and development. Plans are in hand for parents to contribute to these records.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of sessions, both indoors and out, including those led directly by adults and activities which children had chosen for themselves. Over the two days' inspection, around three hours was spent observing the children jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at children's folders of assessed work from the previous year and the work recorded in the new electronic systems adopted by the school for gathering evidence, making assessments and tracking children's progress. She looked at work displayed around the school and in the classrooms, and talked to children about their work and play.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of staff, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and took account of the school's own consultations with parents. She also considered the 12 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The 10 responses to the staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including data on children's progress, documentation relating to safeguarding, reports on teaching and the most recent reports from the local authority advisers.

## Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is small and comprises two mixed-age classes for pupils aged three to four years. There are no national averages for nursery schools so no comparisons with a national average are possible, for size of school or for groups of children in the school.
- All the children attend on a part-time basis. The majority attend for three hours every morning or every afternoon. Some children come for two-and-a-half days.
- Children start nursery in the term after their third birthday and stay until transferring to the Reception class in one of several local schools.
- Most of the children are White British. The few from minority ethnic heritages, mostly Eastern European, speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is about one in twelve.
- About two-thirds of the children live in a disadvantaged area.
- At the time of the inspection, the lead teacher was on secondment to the local authority's 'Birth to Five' service.
- A children's centre, including its 'wraparound' care facility, is adjacent to the school. It is not run by the governing body. The facility is inspected separately and was not part of this inspection.
- The school has recently become registered as an early years setting for two-year-olds. This provision is managed by the governing body but is separately inspected and was not part of this inspection.
- The school works in partnership with the Kyra Teaching Alliance and a local family of schools, to share training and activities. Senior staff at this school provide early years training for these partners.

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

- Further enhance the records of children's learning and development by ensuring full use of the school's electronic assessment and tracking systems by staff and parents.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher expertly enables staff to work together to fulfil her vision. Excellent teaching and high standards of behaviour flourish in this friendly and caring school.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have an outstanding understanding of the strengths of the school and what is needed. This has ensured that it continues to move forward.
- All staff carry out their allocated responsibilities, as middle or senior leaders, thoroughly, contributing fully to the success of the school. All share the headteacher's infectious enthusiasm for enabling children to learn. While on secondment, the lead teacher continues to support the headteacher.
- Checks on teachers' performance are exceptionally thorough. Staff targets are linked effectively to salary progression.
- The learning experiences offered to the children are rich, varied and exciting, and lead to their outstanding achievement. Both classrooms are set out with exciting activities that stimulate children's development in all the areas of learning. During the inspection, the children's interest was sparked variously by an atmospheric rainforest, complete with tropical birdsong, treasure islands, a pirate ship, cooking in the pizza parlour, challenging mathematics and literacy games on the computers, and painting in the style of famous artists.
- Longer-term projects in the community, such as helping to develop a visitor centre for a nearby historic monument and taking part in a science and mathematics project with the local university, are highly beneficial to children's learning. Recently, the more-able children made a film which was nominated for a LAFTA, a locally-inspired Lincolnshire version of the BAFTA awards (The British Academy of Film and Television Arts).
- Outdoor learning is highly effective and allows children to explore and develop their interests. Children's understanding of the world is promoted through growing vegetables from seed, and nurturing their fruit trees in the orchard.
- The promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength of the school. Children learn with wonder and enthusiasm about the religious importance of, and the traditions linked to, different countries and religions. Their respect and consideration for others is exceptional for their age.
- The school actively promotes equality of opportunity and is highly inclusive in every aspect of its work. Children learn about respect and tolerance, and what these mean in practice, preparing them very well for life in modern Britain.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding are extremely thorough and reviewed regularly by the headteacher and governors. They ensure that all aspects are considered and that children are fully protected.
- The local authority recognises that this is an outstanding school and provides a good range of support. Excellent partnerships with other schools, including the Kyra Teaching Alliance, and with a wide range of agencies, enable children to receive additional support when they need it. They also enable staff training and cross-school checks to ensure that assessments of children's work are accurate. The headteacher and the lead teacher share their expertise with these partner schools.
- Parents are extremely supportive and happy that their children come to this school. They value what the school does for their children. The school has recently adopted electronic systems to record assessments and track children's progress, with software that enables parents to contribute to form a complete picture of children's development. Staff are still getting to grips with the full range of the facility and, although

this is planned, they have not yet shared it with parents.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors support and challenge the school exceptionally well and with a high degree of skill. Governors value the school's standing in the community and its nurturing ethos. They have a detailed knowledge of how well children learn and of the strengths of the school. They understand data and appreciate how strong teaching is. They are not complacent and regularly check evidence that there is no underperformance. They know where to go for additional information when needed and are not afraid to ask hard questions.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of their role and are careful to ensure that their statutory responsibilities are carried out. As part of their careful financial management, they ensure that staff have met targets before they are rewarded financially.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Children settle and learn routines quickly because they are clearly explained and established from the start. Praise is used very well to encourage children in achieving the very high expectations of staff.
- Staff are highly consistent in their approach. Consequently, children are exceptionally kind and considerate, and they help each other. Children were often heard to say, unprompted, 'You can share mine,' and, 'Your turn now'.
- Nursery is a very happy place. Behaviour in class is exemplary. The buzz of enjoyment in each classroom combines with high levels of concentration and persistence. These equip children very well for their next steps in learning.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. The home visitor spends time getting to know the children and their families before they start nursery. This leads to exceptionally good relationships and means that parents are very confident leaving their children in nursery. All parents who offered a view say their child is safe at school and the inspector agrees.
- Children are taught to keep themselves safe. There are no concerns about bullying or name-calling and children are kind and considerate to each other. The outdoor area is extensive but children know exactly what they need to do to keep safe. They discuss possible risks knowledgeably, such as whether paths are slippery.
- Children are becoming very knowledgeable about caring for the environment. They are very aware of the need to turn off taps or to switch off lights. Their vegetable patches and the orchard help them to understand where food comes from and how it is grown.
- Children attend regularly. Good habits in coming to nursery and punctuality are actively encouraged. The system for self-registration on entry, with parents countersigning, ensures initial safe transfer to the school's care. Similar safe practices operate throughout the day and at home time.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Adults are very knowledgeable about how children learn and they plan activities that inspire and support them. Consequently, children's enjoyment is high and this leads to excellent teaching and learning.
- Workshops for parents and those for 'Family Learning', that include the children, help parents to support their children's learning at home. This helps most children catch up from their low starting points by the

time they leave the nursery.

- Planning for work in class and the use of resources is exceptionally skilled. Combined with high expectations of what children can achieve, lively teaching and clear explanations, this means that most children's language and number skills improve rapidly. For example, the sand area has a 'Danger' sign. A child said, 'That means don't go there.' Another said, 'It means it's dangerous.' In the water pool, children use a fishing net to catch balls that have a number on one side and the number, in dots, on the other, to help them understand the relationship between the written number and what it represents. Adults are on hand to intervene at the right moment to help learning along.
- In addition to adult-led activities and small-group sessions, indoors and outside, children have excellent opportunities to learn through play activities they have chosen. The outside area is extensive and full of exciting things to do. A 'car dashboard' promotes number skills as speeds increase, and an office desk, notebook and telephones enable 'appointments' to be written down and speaking and listening skills to develop. A steel band on dustbins excites attention and develops a sense of rhythm and cooperation. Gardening activities bode well for snack time next term.
- Homework is judiciously chosen when appropriate. It is often used to challenge the more-able children. When children found a fallen fruit under a tree last term, and no-one knew what it was, homework was to find out, through research. Children came in excitedly the next day with the answer: a walnut.
- The outstanding teaching is underpinned by very careful daily assessment. The new electronic systems show clearly what children know, can do and what they need to learn next. This information is regularly shared with parents so that they can support children's learning at home. The previous paper-based systems were highly effective, and staff have made good progress adapting their work to the new ones, but not all staff are completely confident users.

### **The achievement of pupils is outstanding**

- Over two thirds of the children enter nursery with skills below those typical for their age group, particularly in language. By the time they leave nursery, almost all children are achieving at least levels typical for their age. This represents outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Children develop so well because their abilities are carefully assessed on entry and work is tailored to their particular learning needs. Well-designed teaching enables them to make rapid progress, whatever their needs. For this reason, disadvantaged children make similar high rates of progress as others.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs have regularly reviewed 'Play Plans' well known to all staff. These are carefully designed to meet their individual needs. As a result, the children often make outstanding progress from their starting points, with some reaching levels typical for their age.
- Progress in early reading, writing and mathematical skills is excellent because teachers take every opportunity in all the activities to include numeracy and literacy in children's learning. Consequently, children can count how many are at school today, and recognise the number on a number line. They know some letters and sounds, such as 's', 't' and 'p'. When they were making pizzas, they could explain that a pizza can be divided into segments, and that the triangular pieces can fit together to make a circle. In painting, they know that Mondrian often painted rectangles, and they can paint rectangles, themselves.
- A recent focus on boys' writing, as part of a national project, has led to boys making excellent progress because activities that lead to writing are planned to appeal to them. The work on treasure maps in literacy and the area of the classroom designated as a rainforest are particularly successful in this respect. Consequently, boys and girls are inspired to write, and to learn to recognise letters on labels. The self-registration arrangements enable all the children quickly to recognise their name.
- There is some variation in the abilities of the few children of ethnic minority heritage when they start nursery but many are still at an early stage of learning English. They make excellent progress in this and, by the time they leave nursery, most are at or close to levels typical for children of their age.

- The most-able children receive exactly the right level of challenge to develop their thinking further. They are encouraged to work carefully and solve problems, leading to high levels of achievement by the end of nursery.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120365
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	449521

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

<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>	101
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Melanie Markham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Whimster
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 July 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01522 531876
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