

Linton C of E Infant School

Church Lane, Linton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB21 4JX

Inspection dates

26–27 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school provides a good quality of education and has some significant strengths.
- As national expectations have risen, the school has not sustained an outstanding standard of education for pupils. However, the determined headteacher has got the school rapidly back on track, so that it is now securely good.
- The headteacher is ably supported by the experienced senior leadership team. The team makes a strong contribution to the good and improving picture of teaching and outcomes.
- Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They understand and are fully committed to their role in improving the quality of education. They are well informed about pupils' learning and effectively hold leaders to account for pupils' achievements.
- The curriculum is well planned, with a rich variety of creative activities and memorable experiences that promote pupils' basic skills and personal development very well.
- The quality of teaching, particularly in phonics, is now effective. A high proportion of pupils are currently producing work of a high standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and well mannered. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They show respect for one another and are rightly proud of the work they produce.
- Parents are very positive about the school and hold it in high regard. They appreciate the hard work of staff and the safe and stimulating environment the school provides for pupils.
- The new curriculum subject leaders are keen and enthusiastic. Monitoring is being developed so that it successfully informs leaders' actions to improve both teaching and pupils' outcomes in all subject areas.
- Staff know the individual needs of pupils well and prepare learning opportunities that are typically well matched to pupils' abilities. However, there are occasions when the quality of questioning does not challenge pupils enough to enable them to achieve as well as they could.
- The early years provides well for children's needs and interests. However, the outdoor learning environment is not yet fully developed, to allow children to be as purposefully engaged when they are not working with an adult.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate and build the capacity of leadership and management further by:
 - developing the role of new subject leaders so that they continue to develop their effective contribution to improving teaching, learning and assessment and, consequently, pupil outcomes across all subjects.

- Strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants regularly provide high-quality questioning that enables pupils to develop their understanding rapidly
 - developing a high-quality outdoor learning environment in early years that will consistently provide higher-quality learning opportunities and outcomes for children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has made a significant and positive difference in the relatively short time she has been at the school. Although the school's journey since the previous inspection has not been without its setbacks, current pupils receive a good and improving education.
- The senior leadership team has established a culture of high expectations. Staff and pupils rise well to this challenge, which is reflected throughout the work of the school. Leaders' clear direction has secured a greater degree of consistency of practice across the school. Teachers are proactive in acting on the guidance that leaders give them about how to improve the provision for pupils.
- Staff morale is high. Staff surveys show unanimously that they feel well supported and proud to be working at the school. Staff take opportunities to learn from each other, try out new ideas and make learning fun. Collaborative teamwork is a strong factor in the school's success.
- The drive for continuous improvement is clear. Leaders carried out a rigorous analysis of why pupils' outcomes in 2016 were lower than those nationally. The decisive action they have taken has secured a rapid upturn in outcomes for current pupils, who are now achieving at least in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have developed a creative and engaging curriculum of well-planned activities that capture the imaginations of pupils. Topics often begin with a school visit, for example to Hunstanton, or include a specific event to stimulate pupils' imaginations, such as following a pebble trail to a gingerbread house, or discovering a message in a bottle in a local river. As a result, pupils make meaningful connections across subjects and are motivated by the purpose of their work.
- Strong leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that funding is well spent. Regular reviews of pupils' progress ensure that teaching, including programmes of support, is well suited to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively. Specialist teachers have been brought in to deliver high-quality physical education lessons. Additionally, pupils have benefited from access to a wide variety of school sports clubs, competitive events and activities. As a result, more pupils are participating in a wider range of sports.
- Leaders successfully use pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. This is achieved through additional learning programmes and successful strategies to improve pupils' well-being and engagement in their learning. As a result, spending contributes to getting pupils ready to learn, as well as providing accurately targeted academic help.
- Parents spoken with during the inspection, the letters they sent to the inspectors and their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, demonstrate that they

overwhelmingly value and support the school. Parents recognise the recent improvements in the school's provision and appreciate the good communication they receive. One parent spoke for many by saying: 'Linton Infants is a very welcoming school. The teachers are enthusiastic and get to know the children really well.'

- The diocese and the local authority both provide effective support for the school through training and challenge to secure continued improvement. Leaders actively seek guidance from these advisers to validate that they are evaluating the school's performance accurately and are moving the school forwards.
- The senior leadership team checks teaching effectively by observing in lessons, looking at pupils' work and monitoring teachers' planning. This ensures that the quality of teaching improves because leaders are able to identify areas to develop quickly and, subsequently, can intervene appropriately to help teachers get better. As a result, pupils make good progress. However, leaders acknowledge that curriculum leaders are not yet as skilled in evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all subjects to such a high standard.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide good support and effective challenge to leaders. They ensure that their statutory responsibilities, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met and effective.
- The governing body recently reorganised its committee structure. As a result, governance is more strategic and sharply focused on the key priorities of the school. Governors' regular visits, checks and meetings with leaders are strongly linked with gauging how well school leaders are securing improvement against the school's improvement plans.
- Governors challenge the school strongly, analysing national and school achievement information and holding the school to account for the quality of teaching and the impact this has on the academic standards that pupils achieve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff rightly place a high priority on ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Stringent checks are carried out prior to making any staff appointments. All staff and governors receive regular, appropriate safeguarding training. This means that staff understand and carry out the school's policy and procedures well.
- All staff are vigilant when checking on the safety and welfare of pupils. Staff respond to any concerns, however small. This reflects the school's embedded safeguarding culture where adults know every pupil well and act quickly to ensure their safety and well-being at all times.
- The school works well with parents and professionals from other agencies to get the best for the pupils, and particularly to meet the needs of more vulnerable pupils.
- Parents recognise and appreciate that the school places a high priority on maintaining

pupils' safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- High expectations set by leaders and appropriate training have led to improvements in the quality of teaching. As a result, almost all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils, are now making at least good progress from their starting points.
- The relationship between pupils and all staff is positive, encouraging and highly conducive to learning. The staff know the pupils well. Pupils concentrate well in their lessons. Teachers use assessment to inform pupils of how well they are doing, so they can be moved on quickly when they are able to be. This ensures that pupils enjoy their lessons. Pupils want to learn and respond positively to the tasks they have been given and to the high expectations of their teachers.
- Teachers and other adults have strong subject knowledge. They use this well to make learning points clear for pupils. Sequences of teaching build pupils' understanding systematically. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils were using equipment to work out simple fractions, progressing to simple calculations involving fractions. Pupils clearly understand and can make connections in their learning. They recall information readily and build securely on what they have learned before.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well by the school. They receive appropriate training to support the varying needs of pupils and plan closely with teachers. In particular, teaching assistants provide effective support for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants have a strong understanding of the individual needs of the pupils they work with and adapt their approach accordingly. As a result, teaching assistants' work contributes effectively to the increasing progress that pupils make when in their care.
- Reading has been given a high profile in the school and is taught well. As a result of training, teachers and teaching assistants have strong phonic knowledge. This is used to plan targeted activities for pupils. As a result, pupils quickly learn to use the letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words. Engaging topics of work, based around different books, have been introduced across the school to encourage pupils to enjoy reading for pleasure and to improve their reading skills. This is already making a positive difference. Pupils were able to speak at length about their reading books, their love of reading and the pride they have for the school's recently refurbished library.
- Pupils' achievements in writing are improving over time. Evidence in pupils' books shows that the teaching of writing effectively incorporates spelling, grammar and punctuation skills. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to write extended pieces of writing across the curriculum to improve their writing skills and give maximum opportunity for pupils to apply their learned skills.
- The quality of mathematics teaching is good. Pupils are making greater progress as teachers rigorously check pupils' understanding and set them appropriate next steps for learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop their reasoning skills by solving increasingly complex mathematical problems.
- Adults do not always demonstrate effective questioning skills to support and challenge pupils to make the progress they are capable of. For example, adults do not always

check pupils' understanding to identify misconceptions, achieve the correct answer or explain their thinking.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop good personal and social skills because adults expect pupils to be respectful to others and to be kind and caring.
- Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They are confident and happy to talk to adults. Pupils generally work hard to present their work neatly and they take good care of school property.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is improving and that bullying is very rare. They said that if bullying does happen the teachers will sort it out quickly.
- Pupils can talk about ways in which they stay safe, including when they are online. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and they can talk to the adults in the school who will help them with any concerns.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to inspectors during the inspection agreed that pupils are well looked after and safe at Linton C of E Infant School.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous, and the school is a calm and orderly place.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved because staff have high expectations of pupils and support them well in achieving good standards. Likewise, the school's behaviour policy and procedures are generally applied consistently across the school.
- School records confirm that incidents of poor behaviour are few and, even so, leaders still work to reduce them even further.
- During the inspection, lessons were purposeful and flowed smoothly. Pupils generally work hard in lessons because they are keen to do their best. Playtimes and lunchtimes are well-supervised occasions that ensure that pupils can play and socialise happily together.
- Attendance is broadly in line with national figures. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and are ready to learn. Leaders are successfully reducing the absenteeism of a small number of disadvantaged pupils by working closely with vulnerable families and providing support to engage pupils in their learning. Leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils by, for example, supporting pupils to attend a morning activity club and helping them to access a variety of enrichment activities.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In recent years, pupils have not achieved as well as they could. Weaker outcomes for Year 2 pupils in 2016 do not reflect the good, and sometimes better, progress of current pupils from their starting points. This is confirmed by the quality of work in pupils' books, which is often of a high standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children enter the early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Through accurate assessment, leaders quickly identify the children's needs and develop appropriate learning experiences for them. The number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is increasing over time and in 2016 was above the national average. Thus, children make good progress from their starting points.
- For the previous three years, the number of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1 had shown a downward trend. However, the school's current assessment information and inspection evidence demonstrate that pupils are making much better progress in phonics throughout the school. This is as a result of phonics being taught more systematically and pupils being able to use their phonics skills accurately when reading books.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, because of improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils across the school are now making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils are now being better equipped with the academic skills to be fully ready for the next stages of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most-able disadvantaged, are well supported and now make good progress from their starting points. This is because the school has effectively used pupil premium funding to provide additional learning and well-being support that ensures that all disadvantaged pupils are academically and emotionally ready to learn. Additionally, the most-able disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and, consequently, more are achieving the higher standard.
- Expectations of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are high. The school identifies and assesses pupils' needs accurately and ensures that the support provided improves their learning and that funding is used appropriately. As a result, these pupils are currently making good progress from their individual starting points.
- Improvements to teaching mean that the most-able pupils are making better progress than in the past. This is because learning activities are providing appropriate challenge for these pupils, requiring them to apply their skills in different situations.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start Reception with skills and abilities broadly typical for their age. Most children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has risen in the last three years. Information from the school and evidence of children's progress in their learning records indicate that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development

will continue to improve.

- The early years provision is well led and managed by the enthusiastic and knowledgeable early years leader. Staff in the Reception classes work together well. They have a good understanding of the early years curriculum. They plan activities that engage children and motivate them to learn. Children's knowledge and skills are assessed regularly, and activities are then provided that capture children's interests and build on what they already know.
 - Children enjoy the activities in Reception and behave well. Classroom routines are well established, and children cooperate well with one another, for example in learning how to share equipment and take turns.
 - Adults ensure that children are safe and that safeguarding arrangements are secure. The children know how to stay safe in the environment and take reasonable steps to manage their own well-being and health. For example, when a child went outside with his friends, he commented, 'All of us need our coats on because it's cold.'
 - The creative curriculum includes many memorable experiences, including visits out of school and visitors coming into school, to extend children's experiences further. For example, children visit places of interest in the local area, dress up for topic days and receive many visitors in role, including a wicked queen!
 - Staff engage well with children's families. Information is frequently shared with parents through an online system, and they are regularly invited into school for workshops and a broad range of events. Consequently, parents are pleased with the early years provision and told inspectors that their children settle quickly and are achieving well.
 - Teachers ensure that children have opportunities to engage both in activities led by adults and tasks that they can choose for themselves. Indoors, the learning areas are welcoming and stimulating. The well-organised resources are accessible, so that children can investigate and explore their own ideas. However, leaders identify that the outdoor learning area is less well developed and does not yet offer children a consistently good range of experiences in all areas of learning or enough opportunities to select activities in order to follow their own interests.
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School details

Unique reference number	110832
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10031414

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Komodromos
Headteacher	Kelly Harries
Telephone number	01223 891421
Website	www.lintoninfants.com
Email address	office@linton-inf.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 October 2007

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements in respect of the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is an average-sized infants' school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and those whose first language is not believed to be English, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended a school assembly. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' workbooks throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader and governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke by telephone to the senior education adviser from the local authority and the deputy diocesan director of education.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Years 1 and 2 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including assessment information, minutes from governors' meetings, the school's own evaluation, improvement plans and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 71 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 17 letters and emails received from parents. Inspectors also spoke to some parents before school at the beginning of the inspection and during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of 27 staff questionnaires, and the school's own surveys of the views of parents and pupils.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

Jane Dooley

Ofsted Inspector

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