

The Lincoln St Peter-In-Eastgate Church of England (Controlled) Infants School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120560
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327308
Inspection date	8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	John Brennan

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	87
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joanne Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Greetwellgate Lincoln Lincolnshire LN2 4AW
Telephone number	01522526280
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the impact of the school's skill-based curriculum and the effectiveness of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of middle leadership and school development planning
- the effectiveness of the school's efforts to promote attendance.

Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising documents and pupils' work, and from discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This small, popular and oversubscribed school serves a culturally and socially diverse community close to the centre of Lincoln. Reflecting this, children's skills and abilities on entry span the full ability range but overall are at broadly expected levels. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. However, an above average proportion of pupils join the school from several different minority ethnic backgrounds. A small but significant number of pupils start school at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has received a Healthy Schools award and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Parental support for the school is overwhelmingly positive. Comments such as, 'I am delighted with this wonderful school,' are typical of the many received from parents who expressed pleasure and appreciation of the excellent quality of education their children receive.

The school is excellently led and managed. Building upon past strengths, the still relatively new headteacher has brought renewed energy and innovation to the work of the school and leads the school extremely well. Highly consultative leadership, which has pupils' best interests at heart, has helped forge a powerful sense of common purpose and teamwork. Parents and pupils are only too eager to sing the school's praises. Weaknesses noted in the last inspection have been dealt with very effectively. The governing body is extremely effective in both supporting the school and in asking questions of it. Middle leadership has developed well and staff understand the strengths and weaknesses in their various areas of responsibility. They have been helped by management systems which provide rigorous tools to help them carry out their work. Although at an early stage of development, partnerships with nearby schools enable coordinators to 'twin' with counterparts and thus broaden their view of their areas of responsibility. The tracking of pupil progress and use of assessment are first rate and used extremely well in everyday lessons. The monitoring of teaching and learning is sensitive and has helped build consensus and a sense of mutual support. Development planning is detailed and ensures that, befitting a school in which leaders have several responsibilities, priorities are manageable in number. Important issues are dealt with speedily and the impact of initiatives and actions astutely and regularly assessed to ensure that, despite high performance, the school continues to push forward. Self-evaluation is rigorous and very perceptive. The school therefore has excellent capacity to improve further.

Pupils' outstanding personal development reflects their obvious enjoyment of school. Pupils feel very safe and secure within the school's friendly and welcoming environment. Stemming from a clear understanding of the context of the school and the community's needs, much has been done to ensure community cohesion. The school does a very good job in drawing upon pupils' and their parents' diverse cultural backgrounds. As a result, pupils know a lot about life in multicultural Britain. However, pupils' knowledge of the wider global community is more limited and the school has been less active in this regard. Pupils from differing backgrounds work and play harmoniously together. Behaviour is excellent. This is indicative of pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. The pupil voice and influence in the school are strong. Pupils play a central role in the life of the parish and increasingly in the community beyond, for example through links with older people from the area. Helped by tending their own on-site allotment and through activities such as 'Activate', pupils have a very good awareness about how to live a healthy and active life. For their age, they have a good understanding of the importance of looking after the environment and actively recycle what they can. The high standards reached and pupils' willingness and ability to work collaboratively and think critically mean that they are very well prepared for the next stage of education.

Pupils' enthusiasm for school contributes significantly to their rapid progress and the very high standards reached. Standards have risen steadily since the last inspection and for the last two years have been exceptionally high, particularly in reading and in writing. Pupils write with a sense of purpose and carefully construct their ideas. Although not quite as high, standards in mathematics are nevertheless significantly above average. An impressive number of pupils go

beyond expected standards in each subject. After an initial settling in period, the achievement of pupils who join the school speaking little English develops very well. Considerable support and close partnerships with home aid this. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational needs achieve as well as their peers, because of the very effective support that they receive.

The quality of the curriculum and teaching and learning is outstanding. An exceptional range of trips, clubs and visitors to school makes the school a very good place in which to learn. A recent revamping of the curriculum has harnessed these first-hand experiences very effectively. Learning is often woven together into exciting and imaginative themes. Work on transport, for example, involved a magic carpet ride to many different places and incorporated work ranging across several subjects. Thoughtful use is made of the school building and grounds. Increasing use is made of outdoor learning and small spaces have been adapted well to specialist use such as cooking. Classrooms are vibrant and displays, which involve pupils working together to produce work for public display, celebrate their achievements very well. Pupils' work demonstrates a great deal of pride and care. Teachers aim high and have the expertise necessary to help pupils achieve challenging goals. Stemming from a detailed knowledge of the needs of individual pupils, planning is thorough and work is pitched at the right level for individuals. Subtle strategies are used to telling effect to support the range of abilities and disparate needs of pupils. The use of 'mini lessons', where short whole class teaching is followed by a burst of group activity, maintains pace and enables adults to constantly assess pupils' understanding and subsequently adjust the lesson. The flexible groupings of pupils with, at times, the more confident helping the less confident, and the considered use of teaching assistants leads to highly collaborative learning. A move to value pupils' ideas is beginning to impact well. Although not fully evident in all lessons, searching questions are frequently used well to enable pupils to explore their thinking. Open-ended tasks are provided so that pupils can contribute their own ideas and make decisions about how to complete them.

The high quality of the academic guidance given to pupils, which helps them talk with confidence about how to improve their work, forms one facet of the school's outstanding care, support and guidance. Pupils are very well cared for and there are rigorous procedures in place to keep them safe. Pupils feel they can talk to adults and that they will receive a sensitive and positive response from them. The recent appointment of a family liaison worker enables the school to respond sensitively to individual need, including attendance. This and other efforts to improve attendance have reversed previous dips. When pupils are well they attend school and, with the exception of a very small minority of pupils, attendance rates are good. As one parent put it and several others endorsed, her children enjoy learning and are 'often reluctant to leave at the end of the school day'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is good and staff provide interesting activities and experiences. By the time children start Year 1 most have attained the goals expected of them and a significant number have gone beyond them. High levels of support and guidance help children gain confidence quickly when they first start school. Children are very happy in their work and play and relate well to others. Children delight in exploring the well-organised, imaginative activities on offer and love the outdoor area where they are free to extend their skills through independent play. They respond enthusiastically to new challenges, such as tending their allotment to get rid of weeds so their beans have more

space to grow. However, there is a tendency by adults to do too much for children, particularly the more able. This constrains the opportunities for children to contribute their own ideas and thinking, to investigate and work out their own answers and solutions and thus learn more effectively. Children's well-being is a high priority, and those who need individual help receive it promptly because the care and welfare arrangements are outstanding. Parents are confident they can discuss any concerns with staff and say that staff are very approachable. Sensitive management by staff, particularly with children who find learning difficult, allows children to grow and thrive. Leadership and management are good and all staff are involved in planning and teaching. Staff assess children by careful observations and talking to them about their work. As children's literacy and numeracy skills are often the weakest areas when they start school, these are given greater emphasis so children can make rapid gains in these areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, challenge children more, particularly the more able, to investigate and solve problems independently.
- Improve pupils' knowledge of global communities.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of The Lincoln St Peter-in- Eastgate Church of England Infants school, Lincoln, LN2 4AW

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently. It felt like we were visiting one big happy family. I would like to share with you what we found out about your school.

You go to an outstanding school. The headteacher and other leaders have lots of good ideas and think very carefully about your needs. They form a very good team. As a result the school does a first-rate job in helping you learn to read, write and count and ensures that you do so while having fun and doing lots of other interesting activities. Everyone in your school pulls together. All the staff do their best for you and you play your part extremely well in making this the best school it can be.

We could see how well you got on with each other and the very responsible way in which you look after your friends, your school and the environment. Your teachers and other adults in school are very good at making learning interesting. This is helped by the many trips you go on, by visitors to school and the interesting topics you study. You know a lot about how each other live, but we did feel the school could help you learn more about how people in other parts of the world live.

We were impressed with the level of work you were doing, by your keen sense of purpose and by how well you were able to talk to us about how you could make your work better still. We saw your enthusiasm for learning and your grown-up attitude about doing your best. You have lots of good ideas about how to go about your work and we saw that on most occasions staff are good at helping you take your own ideas forward. We did feel that some of the youngest children were very capable of this and have asked the school to make sure that they take their ideas forward more often.

Once again, thank you and good luck in the future.

John Brennan

Lead inspector