

Weston St Mary Church of England Primary School

Small Drove, Weston, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 6HU

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and head of school have been inspirational in their drive for improvement. Through their actions, the quality of education that pupils receive has improved significantly.
- The trust and governors have provided effective support. Careful monitoring of the school's work has helped to ensure that improvements are sustained.
- Teachers use assessment information well to close pupils' gaps in learning. Their effective use of questioning and subject knowledge enables them to deepen and develop pupils' learning.
- The school's outdoor learning curriculum is encouraging pupils to be resilient and determined. Pupils are transferring these characteristics to their class work. They are more willing to take risks and show perseverance when tackling problems.
- The school's core values are at the heart of the curriculum. They are helping pupils become well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents and carers understand the importance of regular attendance. Very few pupils are disadvantaged by persistent absence.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures are robust and fit for purpose. Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the risks that pupils may face.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour.
- Pupils have made very strong progress across the curriculum. More pupils are achieving the expected standard at the end of key stages 1 and 2 than in the past.
- Occasionally, teachers do not develop pupils' writing effectively. They are not routinely providing pupils with high-quality texts to read. The quality of pupils' presentation and handwriting is not consistent.
- Pupils' mathematical knowledge has improved considerably. However, there is inconsistency in pupils' acquisition of problem-solving and mathematical reasoning skills.
- Teachers in the early years plan to meet the needs of children. Occasionally children are not given enough chances to show what they can do in writing and number.
- While keen, a few middle leaders do not have a secure understanding of how to bring about effective change.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that subject leaders are instrumental in driving change to raise standards in their subject and monitor improvements effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers develop pupils' better use of grammar, sentence structure and genre in their writing
 - providing pupils with more high-quality texts which develop their reading skills and love of reading
 - more consistently promoting pupils' ability to problem solve and reason in mathematics.
 - teachers having high expectations of pupils' presentation and handwriting in all aspects of their work.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the early years by:
 - providing children with opportunities to demonstrate what they can do, particularly in writing and number.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher and the head of school are highly ambitious for the school and its pupils. Their relentless drive has enabled them to make changes which have significantly improved the quality of education that pupils receive. Their constant focus on improving pupils' life chances is inspiring.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. School development planning is highly effective. Frequent checking and monitoring ensure that school improvement strategies have maximum impact.
- Leaders use assessment information carefully to check that pupils are making the progress of which they are capable. They know that due to some weaker teaching in the past pupils have gaps in their learning. However, through effective monitoring and tracking, these gaps have been identified and these pupils are achieving more than they have previously.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum which meets the needs of pupils at the school. The development of pupils' learning skills is at the heart of the outdoor curriculum. This is beginning to show in the resilience and concentration that pupils show in lessons. The wider curriculum is designed to provide pupils with more opportunities to philosophise about their learning, drawing on the knowledge they have gained in different subjects to help them come to well-informed and thought-through opinions.
- The leader of the provision for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has a wealth of knowledge in this area. They offer support and advice for staff when needed, to enable them to meet the needs of pupils in class. The support provided is creative and helps pupils to access the curriculum. Resources, such as coloured overlays, enhanced technology and adapted furniture, are used effectively to enable these pupils to settle in class and make good progress.
- Through the effective use of the pupil premium funding, leaders have ensured that disadvantaged pupils receive appropriate support to help them achieve. Individual support is put in place when needed. Leaders have focused on ensuring that effective class teaching enables pupils to make strong progress. Leaders' regular checks on how well pupils are achieving ensure that teachers maintain a focus on their needs.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about the work of different artists, and cultures and to discuss moral issues. For example, pupils learned about the work of Hokusai linked to the class topic of 'Under the Sea'.
- The school's values of tolerance, democracy, mutual respect, individual liberty and the rule of law are woven through all aspects of the school's curriculum. Pupils understand these values relative to their age, which is helping them to become well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have used the primary school sport and physical education (PE) funding well to increase participation in sport. Coaches work alongside teachers to develop the quality of PE teaching. Lunchtime sports clubs have increased pupils' participation in physical activities.

- Some subject leaders do not have a secure understanding of how they have brought about improvements in their subject. Leaders are developing the role of subject leaders, utilising staff's specialist subject knowledge across the group of schools to continue to drive improvements.
- The trust has provided effective support for the school. From the appointment of the executive headteacher and head of school, it has ensured that the school is provided with the help and support it needs to make rapid improvements. Ongoing collaboration within the trust has enabled the school to make strong and sustainable improvements, and to share its good practice with other schools.

Governance of the school

- Governors' frequent monitoring of the work of the school has ensured that they have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their understanding of the school's assessment information has enabled them to challenge leaders about the progress that pupils are making.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the challenges presented by very small group sizes, and the wide and complex needs of pupils.
- While governors have the utmost faith in the leadership team, they are aware they need to continue to monitor the school's overall effectiveness to ensure that improvements at the school continue to be sustained. The strength of expertise within the governing body enables governors to have an accurate oversight of the effectiveness of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that safer recruitment procedures are carried out fully. The school's single central register is up to date, which the trust regularly confirms.
- Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of vulnerable families. It is a priority of leaders to develop close links with families. They provide support and try to spot potential concerns before they become a problem. When cases meet the local authority thresholds for involvement, cases are passed through quickly. Leaders follow up these referrals carefully to ensure that families receive the additional support they need.
- Regular staff training ensures that they have a comprehensive understanding of the possible risks that pupils may face. Additional training ensures that staff have insight into different forms of abuse. They are aware of the different signs that pupils may display to alert them to any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have a good understanding of where pupils are in their learning. Effective assessment within a lesson enables them to have a secure view of what pupils know and what they need to achieve next.

- Teachers use effective questioning to develop and deepen pupils' thinking. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which enables them to probe and develop pupils' understanding, and provide guidance as to what pupils need to include in their work. For example, in the Years 3/4/5 class, the teacher encouraged pupils to think about the different aspects they may wish to include in their writing. When pupils responded with ideas, such as using direct and indirect speech, the teacher asked them to give examples to clarify and deepen understanding.
- The support provided for pupils with SEND enables them to make strong progress. Frequent assessment of their needs ensures that these pupils are provided with adapted tasks or equipment to enable them to access learning fully. Disadvantaged pupils are provided with appropriate support to meet their needs. Teachers are ambitious for these pupils and challenge them to achieve their full potential.
- In mathematics, teachers use their knowledge of what pupils can already do to plan activities which provide different levels of challenge. Some teachers deepen pupils' understanding through problem-solving activities. Teachers pose 'what if' questions which pupils consider. These increase in difficulty depending upon pupils' success. However, this approach is not consistently applied for all pupils for whom it would be appropriate.
- Pupils' reading books are well matched to their phonic ability. When pupils are less confident they draw on their phonic knowledge to help them read words. More-fluent readers are provided with greater levels of challenge. These pupils read with confidence, which enables them to improve their skills.
- Pupils' reading skills have improved considerably. They are encouraged to read regularly at home. Teachers develop pupils' fluency and understanding of different texts through small-group discussion. For example, Year 2 pupils compared and contrasted two poems. The teacher encouraged pupils to consider why the poets had decided to choose certain words, and how this affected the meaning of the poem.
- Teachers have not focused fully on developing pupils' love of reading. They do not routinely share high-quality texts with pupils. Some pupils are not encouraged to read a wide range of genres and texts to help them develop their reading and writing skills. Some pupils are not confident in discussing texts in depth or in using more-complex reading skills.
- In writing, teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' skills. Pupils' books show that they write across all subjects. Most teachers use assessment information well to focus on closing pupils' gaps in learning. However, occasionally some teachers do not focus sharply enough on what skills pupils need to develop next to enable them to achieve at the standard of which they are capable.
- In science, teachers provide pupils with a wide range of tasks to develop their investigative skills. Pupils make well-thought-out hypotheses based on their prior knowledge, and then apply their skills to carry out experiments. Pupils work scientifically to understand how and why things happen. For example, pupils carefully dissected a tulip to identify the different elements of the plant.
- Pupils' presentation and handwriting is generally of a high standard. However, occasionally when pupils assess each other's work, or when recording in subjects other than English and mathematics, the standard slips.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have been determined in their vision to develop pupils' aspirations. Pupils have higher ambitions for themselves and believe that they are able to achieve more. Through the reinforcement of the school's values, and the outdoor-learning curriculum, pupils are developing their understanding of learning and life skills.
- The school's outdoor-learning curriculum has been instrumental in developing pupils' resilience and determination. Pupils achieve success through exploring the environment and taking risks. For example, pupils from the Reception Year to Year 6 used tools to cut and gather resources to make a fire. They identified the risks and the actions to minimise them when making a fire outdoors. They then followed these actions carefully when the fire was lit.
- Staff develop pupils' good behaviour by using 'Mr Men and Little Misses' to exemplify what the different types of behaviour are. For example, 'Little Miss Brainy' can make links in learning and 'Mr Bump' keeps trying. Teachers use these in lessons and when assessing pupils' work. While a few pupils are still a little distracted in lessons, behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- There are frequent occasions to celebrate the different first languages spoken by pupils in the school. Displays and work books include examples of these different languages. Pupils celebrate each other's differences, typically saying, 'it's the differences that make us special'. They understand and accept different faiths, cultures and lifestyles.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online and using the internet. They know not to share their personal information with strangers.
- Pupils understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They explain that it is important to eat five fruit or vegetables a day, and regular exercise is important. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to be active during the school day, whether this is through the use of the outdoor gym equipment, or the lunchtime PE clubs.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and that if there are any occasions where they fall out with their friends, these are sorted out quickly by adults.
- Parents and carers are confident that should an incident of bullying occur, this will be sorted out by leaders.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Around the school, pupils behave well. They are polite and kind to one another, and to adults. They are happy to talk about their learning and are enthusiastic about their school. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare and when they do happen, staff apply consistently the behaviour policy. Occasionally, pupils do not show self-discipline and their behaviour is not appropriate for the task or activity. When these incidents do occur, staff deal with them consistently.

- Staff develop strong relationships with pupils. They take time to get to know pupils, and what is happening in their home lives. Staff sit with pupils at lunchtime. Through their discussions with pupils they model speech and language which pupils begin to copy and emulate in their own interactions with each other and other adults.
- Leaders have ensured that parents have good understanding of why regular attendance is important. The number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has fallen significantly and is now well below the national average. Overall attendance is above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's own assessment information shows that the vast majority of pupils are achieving, and many are exceeding, the school's expectations for their progress. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Staff have high ambitions for what pupils should achieve, which contribute significantly to the fact that many pupils have made very strong progress towards closing any gaps in their learning compared with other pupils. For example, several pupils in key stage 2 who did not achieve the expected standard for their age at the end of key stage 1 are now reaching the age-related standard.
- Pupils' workbooks show that, from their respective starting points, pupils are making very strong progress across the curriculum. Due to some significant gaps in their learning due to weaker teaching in the past, some pupils are not achieving at the level of which they are capable. However, since new leaders have been in place these pupils have made excellent progress and gaps in their learning are closing.
- The number of pupils in each year group is very small. In Year 6 and Year 2 in 2018, each pupil accounted for 25%. Due to this, it is statistically unreliable to make comparisons with national averages.
- In key stage 2, due to weaker teaching in the past, some pupils did not make as much progress as they should. The school expects more pupils to achieve at the expected standard in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 this year than in 2018. Even so, pupils have made considerable progress in writing, and some are not achieving at the standard they should.
- In 2018, in key stage 1, pupils made strong progress and most achieved at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From their respective starting points, pupils make strong progress in phonics. Because there are so few pupils within a year group, a comparison with the national average in the Year 1 national phonics screening check is unreliable.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have a good understanding of the early years curriculum and use this effectively to ensure that tasks set match all areas of learning. Based on children's relative starting points they make strong progress through the early years.
- Children are encouraged to be independent in their learning, yet adults are available to offer support, develop thinking and stimulate learning when necessary. For example,

children made alien creatures from clay. The teacher asked questions as to why they had certain features. Children took photos of their creations and printed these independently.

- Children in the early years participate in the outdoor learning curriculum. Their understanding of the natural world and problem-solving is developed through collaboration with their peers. For example, children gathered resources to build a fire. They teamed up with older pupils to identify materials which would burn. They knew to store them in a dry place, so they would burn well.
- Leaders involve parents with their children's learning through the use of the school's online assessment tool. Parents are encouraged to report children's successes made at home, so these can be included as evidence towards children's learning milestones. Children celebrate their own successes by displaying their work on the celebration wall.
- Children behave well in the early years. They understand class routines and participate well in activities. Very occasionally, children do not fully understand class or group expectations and interrupt learning to share unrelated thoughts.
- Sometimes, children are not provided with enough activities to practise their writing and number skills. While children have made good progress from their respective starting points, evidence of what children can do is not always recorded effectively.
- Leaders have ensured that all welfare and safeguarding requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	140988
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10054091

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	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jeremy Woolner
Executive Headteacher	Alison Flack
Telephone number	01406 370333
Website	www.weston-st-mary.co.uk
Email address	admin.weston@southlincs-hub.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 July 2017

Information about this school

- The school joined the Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust in September 2014. The powers of governance lie with the trustees. The trustees have appointed a committee known as the interim local board of governors. The trustees delegate some of their powers to the local board of governors.
- The executive headteacher is responsible for Weston St Mary, Whaplode and Edenham Church of England Primary Schools. The head of school is based at the school full time.
- This is a Church of England primary school. The last section 48 inspection was carried out in June 2016.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with a first language not believed to be English is above the national average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a number of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the head of school. They observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils read. The inspector also talked with pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, subject leaders, teachers, support staff and representatives of the governing body. The inspector also spoke with the trust CEO.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement; the most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils and the most recent data relating to the attendance of pupils.
- The inspector considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Helen Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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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