

Deeping St Nicholas Primary School

Main Road, Deeping St Nicholas, Spalding PE11 3DG

Inspection dates	7–8 June 2016
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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Parents hold the school in extremely high regard. They are particularly impressed by the welcoming, friendly and caring environment. One parent's view reflects the thoughts of many: 'I could not recommend this school highly enough.'
- The headteacher has provided the key inspiration for the many improvements made since the last inspection. She has ensured that leadership roles are shared out and that the quality of leadership and management provided by all other leaders is now good.
- Governors, senior leaders and staff are united in their desire and drive to continually improve the school. The school is well placed to continue to improve in the future.
- Teaching and learning are now good. All groups of pupils make good progress in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Governors know the school well. They are well organised and have appropriate skills to support and challenge school leaders effectively.
- Children make good progress in the Reception Year and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils are polite and behave well. They enjoy school, attend regularly, work hard and say 'we are small enough to do special things'.
- Pupils feel safe, know how to keep themselves safe and act with respect for the safety of others.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They show a good understanding of British values.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' spelling and punctuation require improvement because they are not always accurate enough.
- Full advantage is not always taken of the school's spacious grounds for pupils' educational benefit.
- Some questions asked by teaching assistants do not ensure recall, reinforce knowledge or challenge pupils to think deeply enough.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement so it is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - pupils' spelling and punctuation skills improve in their accuracy
 - wider opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills in reasoning and problem solving to deepen their understanding of concepts in mathematics
 - the outdoor learning environment is further developed to enrich the learning opportunities for all pupils
 - further training is provided for teaching assistants to enhance their questioning skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, in close partnership with the staff team, has worked tirelessly to improve all aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. The school's ethos of 'Together, we can make a difference!' is very evident in the way that governors and staff are united in their intention to provide the best for all pupils. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school is well led and managed, and all those who completed the questionnaire or spoke with the inspector said they would recommend this school to another parent.
- Every aspect of this small school is known in fine detail by the school's leaders. Consequently, school improvement work is based on an accurate and comprehensive view of where improvements are needed. Regular and detailed checks are made on the quality of teaching and if any weaknesses are identified, suitable action is taken to provide appropriate support, challenge, advice and training.
- The management of teachers' performance is closely linked to pupils' progress. Clear expectations are set for staff that rates of progress for all pupils will increase throughout the school. Staff are well motivated. High-quality professional development is carefully planned to link with whole-school priorities, as well as individual teachers' needs.
- The headteacher has delegated responsibilities more effectively in recent years. Subject and other leaders manage their areas of responsibility well and the headteacher regularly holds them to account for the quality of teaching and learning in their particular areas. All leaders frequently analyse pupils' work, observe teaching and provide useful guidance on how to improve things.
- The well-planned curriculum links subjects together in an interesting and engaging way. Themed work routinely includes visitors to the school and visits to places of interest. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the recent Roman and Viking enrichment days. Learning in English and mathematics is enhanced well by many other subjects and additional activities. For instance, Years 5 and 6 pupils wrote imaginative and creative short stories following their learning about Beowulf.
- The curriculum strongly supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils experience a wide range of interests, including music and sport. The school's revised curriculum is interesting and engaging. Pupils particularly enjoyed the rocket space seed experiments and finding out about the exploits of the British astronaut Tim Peake.
- Increasing use is made of the outside environment to support learning. The school is set in spacious grounds, including a large field and woodland area, but these are not always utilised effectively. Plans are in place to make more effective use of this valuable educational resource to benefit pupils' learning.
- Leaders have designed and are implementing an assessment system that supports pupils' learning and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Regular moderation and progress checks on pupils' attainment and progress help to ensure consistency, and support teaching staff in their planning and assessment practices so pupils make good progress. Teachers are still getting to grips with this new approach but are increasing their confidence and understanding to make accurate judgements.
- The pupil premium, additional government funding, is used effectively to support pupils. This funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well to provide extra help for this group. It ensures the majority of these pupils now make good progress, so that in most year groups there is little difference between their rate of progress and that of other pupils. In fact, in some year groups, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils outstrips that of other pupils.
- The physical education (PE) and sports funding is making a positive difference to pupils' health and well-being. It is used primarily to increase staff confidence to deliver high-quality PE lessons. It also enables a broad range of experiences, such as specialist sports coaches, as well as additional clubs, such as gymnastics, fencing and archery.
- The promotion of British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strong. Positive steps are taken to widen pupils' understanding of different cultures and religions, which help prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils particularly enjoyed the recent street party to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday.
- Strong partnerships formed with six small local primary schools are helping to bring about improvements in teaching. For instance, joint moderation activities have helped increase teacher confidence. Leaders at all levels have the professional trust to challenge and support each other, which is contributing to raised standards and increased staff confidence. The local authority provided intensive support immediately following the previous inspection. As school leaders increased in confidence and capability, the local authority reduced its support because it rightly judged they have good capacity for improvement.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors are knowledgeable about the performance of the school and have a clear understanding of how it compares with other schools nationally. They know all groups make good progress. Governors also check that the actions the school takes have the desired effect on improving pupils' progress.
 - Governors also have a detailed knowledge of the quality of provision, particularly the quality of teaching, and regularly check what is being done to continually improve it.
 - Governors allocate funds effectively. They carefully check that the additional funding, such as the pupil premium and primary sport premium, is used to good effect.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Robust systems are in place in all areas of safeguarding and these are well understood by all staff. Regular and appropriate training for staff is undertaken and is up to date. Strong relationships are in place with a wide range of external agencies to ensure pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is now typically good because teachers have much higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staff are positive, confident and friendly in lessons, which creates a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They use assessment information effectively to identify and plan for each pupil's needs. Lessons are interesting and motivate pupils well so that they want to learn. Teachers question pupils carefully and use their responses to deepen their understanding.
- Positive relationships and well-planned lessons, supported by good resources, help capture pupils' interests. Effective use is made of information and communication technology. Pupils particularly enjoy those lessons that are interactive. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoyed racing round the playground to find and gather sounds located in different places.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively throughout the day. They provide particularly good additional support for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs or disability, those in the early stages of learning English and those identified as being at risk of falling behind. All these groups of pupils make good progress throughout the school. However, questioning by teaching assistants does not always challenge pupils to think deeply enough. Also, they sometimes do not engage those pupils in the early stages of learning English well enough in conversation to develop their language skills or broaden their understanding of English.
- The teaching of reading, mathematics and, in particular, writing is much improved and accounts for the increased progress pupils are making this year throughout the school. Despite these improvements, staff know further work is required to improve the accuracy of some pupils' spelling and punctuation.
- Changes to the way mathematics is taught are ensuring pupils have more regular opportunities to solve problems, leading to good improvement. However, these are not extensive enough yet to ensure pupils deepen their understanding of concepts through reasoning and explaining their ideas and methods.
- Staff develop a strong ethos for learning and good behaviour. Attractive and useful displays help guide pupils' learning and set high expectations. Teachers use rewards well to motivate pupils to do their best. All staff implement the school's behaviour policy effectively and pupils are expected to behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, some pupils sit for too long listening to the teacher or are not fully clear about what they expected to do. When this happens, one or two lose concentration and disengage with their learning.
- In all classes, teachers provide pupils with regular and accurate feedback on their learning, both orally in lessons and when marking their work. Pupils respond promptly to their next steps in learning and are increasingly making assessments of their own and classmates' work against the lessons' learning objectives, which helps them know how well they have done.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils become more confident and self-assured as they move through the school because all adults go out of their way to give them every opportunity to succeed.

- Participation in a broad range of extra-curricular activities, often provided through effective use of the PE and sports funding, opens their eyes to new interests and horizons.
- Pupils feel perfectly safe in school. They say there is little poor behaviour, bullying or abuse of any description. The school's records confirm their positive view. Pupils say that if they have problems they would completely trust the adults in school to help them. Parents spoken with at the beginning and end of the school day feel that bullying is rare and adults in school deal with any problems quickly.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe because the school makes every effort to ensure that they fully appreciate any potential threats to their welfare, such as the dangers posed by roads, strangers and the internet.
- All staff are committed to building strong and constructive relationships with parents. Every effort is made to keep them informed about what their child is learning and how they can contact the school to raise concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- All adults in school work effectively as a team to establish clear expectations and routines from the time that pupils join the school. Consequently, pupils conduct themselves well in class, when moving around the school, socialising in play areas and having lunch.
- The very few pupils with behavioural needs are well supported to ensure their behaviour does not get in the way of their learning and does not distract others' learning. Despite this, there have been two fixed-term exclusions this year.
- Pupils quickly develop positive attitudes to learning and relate well to teachers and teaching assistants. In classes, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere for learning. From the start pupils are encouraged to take turns in answering questions in class and working in pairs or groups. Over time, pupils develop resilience and perseverance, and sustain their concentration to produce extended pieces of work.
- Very occasionally, pupils become disengaged in class when work is not quite matched to their need or the pace of learning slackens.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly over recent years to broadly average levels for primary schools. Persistent absence has fallen as a result of rigorous monitoring and effective contacts with many families.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' work and the school's accurate records point to substantial improvement in both pupils' attainment and their rates of progress this year. Many more pupils than previously now make expected progress and better than expected progress. Progress is now good in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability and those in the early stages of learning English generally make good progress due to the targeted support they receive. Opportunities are not always taken to develop pupils' language skills and increase their understanding of new vocabulary. For instance, when building a bird hide, pupils were not questioned about the materials they used or how they intended to construct the shelter.
- The most able pupils also make good progress because work is carefully matched to their specific needs. For example, in Years 5 and 6, the most able pupils undertake demanding work and respond well to this high level of challenge.
- In the 2015 national assessments, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils was too large, especially in Year 6. Much work, often funded through the pupil premium funding, has been undertaken to improve the quality of teaching and level of additional support these pupils receive. Consequently, this year pupils' work and the school's records indicate considerable improvement in the progress of these pupils throughout the school and a narrowing of the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils. In some instances, their achievement is higher than that of other pupils.
- National assessment results in 2015 indicated that mathematics was the weakest subject. This year, progress in mathematics is much better. The subject leader has helped secure improvements in the teaching of calculation and problem solving. Further developments are scheduled to help pupils improve their reasoning skills by providing more opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and consider alternative approaches to solving problems.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' writing is much improved both in quality and quantity. Handwriting is neat and carefully presented and pupils strive hard to get their 'pen licence'. This is awarded when pupils

achieve the required handwriting standard and are allowed to write with a pen rather than a pencil. Pupils' writing is interesting and engaging because they use a rich and varied vocabulary. Although teachers provide resources to help with spelling, such as word cards and dictionaries, these are not always used by some pupils effectively. Consequently, their spelling of unfamiliar words is not always accurate enough. In addition, a few pupils do not take enough care with their punctuation.

- Standards in reading have remained at a high level. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening test was much lower in 2015 because there was such a high number of pupils new to the country and school in this group. (Phonics refers to letters and the sounds that they make.) The teaching of phonics, daily guided reading sessions and a well-organised home reading programme contribute to pupils' accelerated progress in reading.
- Good improvements have been made in pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics, particularly science.

Early years provision

is good

- Pupils join the Reception Year with skills and knowledge which vary from year to year, but are mostly below or well below those typical for their age.
- There has been a year-on-year improvement in the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year since the last inspection. In 2015, the proportion was in line with that found nationally.
- Pupils achieve well. Current information and the quality of teaching indicate that considerably more are on track to attain a good level of development by the end of this year. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for Year 1 and school life beyond. Additional funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils, those in the early stages of learning English and those with a special educational need or disability.
- Teaching is good and assessment is used well. Staff know the children well and they plan learning activities that interest and inspire them and help them make good progress in all aspects of their learning. For instance, the focus on birds provides pupils with the opportunity to make clay models, nesting boxes, and information books relating to birds. Pupils worked extremely well together to make their bird hide so they could use their binoculars to observe the different types of birds in the school grounds.
- Teaching assistants generally make a consistently strong contribution to pupils' learning but sometimes their questioning does not challenge pupils' thinking enough. The development of speech and language is a high priority in the class, but sometimes pupils are not encouraged to speak enough about what they are doing or finding out.
- Basic skills are well taught. For example, pupils are taught to hold their pencils correctly so that they make a good start to learning to write neatly. They are taught effectively to use letters and the sounds they make to help them read and spell. Pupils' skills are well developed in other areas such as art and technology. A wide range of techniques are taught such as designing, mixing and combining materials to create a range of high-quality work, such as portraits of the Queen, a Roman chariot or a Troll puppet.
- The indoor and outdoor areas provide good facilities and stimulus for learning and are well organised and effectively used. However, insufficient use is made of the extensive school grounds to support learning. For instance, the woodland area was not fully utilised to observe birds and for pupils to record their findings. Opportunities are also not routinely provided to develop pupils' skills of independence and exploration in the grounds.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are good. Pupils are kept safe, looked after and behave well. The early years staff work in close partnership with parents to ensure pupils are happy in school, and to help them learn. There is a well-developed home reading programme. Many parents make an important contribution to the good progress their children make in their reading, for example by hearing them read regularly at home.
- Leadership and management in the early years are good. The early years leader keeps a close eye on where further improvements are needed and is currently planning further improvements to make best use of the outdoor environment to support learning.

School details

Unique reference number	120407
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10001828

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Platt
Headteacher	Anita Bandey
Telephone number	01775 630 280
Website	http://dsnschool.org.uk/
Email address	enquiries@deeping-st-nicholas.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October–1 November 2013

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the averaged-sized primary school. The school currently has three mixed-age classes: an early years /key stage 1 class, a Years 3/4 class and a Years 5/6 class. Each of these has a class teacher.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average, but has risen year on year since the last inspection. An increasing number of pupils mainly from Poland and Lithuania have joined the school. Many speak little or no English on entry.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support for children who are looked after by the local authority and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- Significantly more pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual starting times.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons and attended a class assembly. Four observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to observe learning and small-group activities at other times.
- The inspector held meetings with governors, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including senior and subject leaders.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety, the monitoring of teaching and management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with a group of pupils, as well as informal conversations with them during lessons and at breaktimes. The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- The inspector took account of 19 responses to the online parental questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents informally at the end of the school day. The questionnaires completed by 41 pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Paul Weston, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

