

### **Characteristics of the school**

St Helena's Church of England Primary School is of small size and is situated in the centre of a small rural village three miles south of the market town of Alford. In common with similar schools, there are variations in the roll of each year group, ranging from fifteen to twenty-four. There are currently 127 children on roll (and 11 more in the Nursery), the majority of who live within the three mile radius of the school. We are popular because of our reputation for individual care, nurture and support of all children.

### **Our school/community**

Our school serves a diverse area. About 60% of our children are from relatively affluent backgrounds. However, about 40% are not. The school mainly draws its pupils from two adjoining wards. Both of these have below average levels of high social class families. Some parts of this ward have high levels of unemployment and deprivation; 22% of our parents are unemployed.

These overall ranks show that the school is located in an area of prosperity below the national average profile. With this diversity comes a wide range of prior attainment, capabilities and attitudes of our children. This range is also evident in the ability of parents to support their children. The children are therefore from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

We are proud of the strong homeschool relationships fostered through positive communication with our families.

The great majority of the children are from a White British heritage.

The majority of the children are of the Christian faith but do not actively practice their faith. However, parents and carers do strongly expect the school to give their children a good grounding in Christianity. We have a very good partnership with our local church and at the same time we are strengthening our links with other faiths. We take every opportunity to develop the children's knowledge and appreciation of other faiths, cultures and ethnic groups in this rural back water.

### **Characteristics of the pupils**

Overall there is a balance between boys and girls. Approximately 21% of the children are entitled to Pupil Premium. 33% of the children have special needs and there are 5 children with Education Health Care Plans. This is above the national average.

In addition, 17% of the children are in vulnerable families.

Stability is high. Once children join us, they stay. This is evident by how much they enjoy their time in school and making use of the extra curricular opportunities. Attendance is improving.

### **Attainment and ability on entry**

Attainment on entry to YR is broadly in line with national expectations. The weakest areas are Communication, Literacy, Language, Social and Emotional development. This is a high priority in the first term.

Attainment on entry to Year 1 is above the national picture. Communication, language and literacy is the priority for development.

Attainment on entry to Year 3 is approximately in line with the national average. At this point writing remains the weakest aspect of learning and there is a clear difference between boys and girls in their writing ability however care needs to be taken as our yearly cohorts are small.

### **Distinctive aims and special features**

Our mission statement is for the whole community,

*"It is our responsibility to learn and achieve our dreams as a family."*

We endeavour, as a Church of England Primary School, to create a friendly, happy family atmosphere, welcoming parents, visitors and the wider community into our school. All members of the Governing Body and the staff feel it is their responsibility to empower everyone to achieve academic, social and personal recognition for their efforts. We are all committed to developing a learning environment where we can create, perform, think, explore and investigate for ourselves.

Our aims endeavour to help each individual:

- *Be happy and confident within a safe and caring environment,*
- *Reach their full academic and social potential,*
- *Enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum enriched with a wide range of learning opportunities,*
- *Grow up with Christian and moral values, in partnership with parents, the Church and the wider community.*

We are working together with local schools to co-create a Church Schools' Multi Academy Trust (Meridian Education Trust).

The school provides extended support for children and parents through a breakfast club and after school club. We have a Mental Health Champion whose additional support has a very positive impact on strengthening our families and in particular more parents and carers are becoming actively involved in the children's learning.

In the past we have had the following awards:

Three Basic Skills Mark

Gold Activemark

Two Artsmark Golds

Healthy Schools' Award and re-accreditation

We are looking forward to meeting teachers who feel as passionate as us about our vocation and who want to truly make a difference for the children in our care.