

Inspection of St Helena's Church of England Primary School, Willoughby

Main Road, Willoughby, Alford, Lincolnshire LN13 9NH

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 July 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this caring school. They are well-supported by staff. Teachers make learning enjoyable for pupils. Parents and carers appreciate the support the school gives to their children.

The school is aspirational for its pupils. It also has high expectations of how pupils should behave. Pupils understand the school's values of compassion, endurance, community, friendship, respect, hope, wisdom and thankfulness. These guide pupils so they know how to behave and learn. Pupils achieve well at this school.

Pupils feel safe and happy at the school. They know they have staff who can help them if they have any concerns. At playtime and lunchtime, pupils enjoy playing games together and socialising. Most pupils behave well. They are proud to be recognised as 'pupil of the week'. Pupils strive to earn 'merits' for their positive attitudes to school life.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their talents. For example, the school ensures that every pupil regularly participates in a sports team or a sporting experience. Pupils enjoy attending clubs such as chess, choir, dance and football. They are also proud to help around school. Pupils take on roles such as playground leaders, reading ambassadors and school councillors.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is well-designed. It is ambitious and outlines the knowledge and skills pupils will learn from the early years to Year 6. Teachers have the subject knowledge necessary to teach the curriculum effectively. They explain new learning logically. Teachers use a range of effective methods to check pupils' understanding. Gaps in learning or misconceptions that pupils may have are quickly addressed. As a result, most pupils progress well through the curriculum. The activities staff use in the early years support children's development across the areas of learning. They are well prepared for key stage 1.

The school has prioritised reading. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics curriculum. Phonics is delivered consistently well. Children begin learning phonics from the start of the Reception Year. Pupils read books matched to the sounds they know. This supports them to read fluently and accurately. Any pupil who starts to fall behind with their phonics knowledge is swiftly identified. These pupils receive targeted support. This helps them to catch up. In the early years, staff support children in developing their communication and language effectively. Pupils have regular opportunities to read for pleasure. As a result, pupils soon become confident and fluent readers.

The school has improved its provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The needs of pupils with SEND are quickly identified. Staff receive clear information about the needs of these pupils and the strategies they can use to support them. In the main, this information is used effectively so these pupils can access the curriculum and achieve well. However, on occasion, some teaching and resources are

not adapted well for these pupils. When this is the case, some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could.

The school works well with families to provide timely support as needed so that pupils attend school regularly. The school has established a clear system for addressing any conduct issues. Pupils understand this. Staff use the agreed system fairly. As a result, most pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. In the early years, children concentrate well on learning activities and happily learn together. They understand and follow clear routines.

The school has ensured that there is a well-thought-out programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils know how to stay safe online. They learn how to ride their bike safely. They also know how to eat healthily. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and different types of families.

The school provides trips and residential experiences that enhance the curriculum and develop pupils' character. Pupils have an impressive understanding of fundamental British values and equality. They learn about different religions and cultures. They enjoy visits to the local church and other places of worship, such as mosques. Pupils respect and understand differences. They are well-prepared for their next steps.

The school is well-led and managed. Staff are proud to work at the school. They are supported with their workload and well-being. The school has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas to further improve. Governors ensure that they have the necessary skills to provide effective support and challenge. They fulfil their statutory duties well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of some pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to meet pupils' individual needs effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	120587
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10347438
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hayley Groves
Headteacher	Edward Anderson
Website	www.st-helenascofe.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary controlled school within the Diocese of Lincoln. The school's last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in November 2023.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work, in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.
- The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. Inspectors considered the views of parents through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.

Inspection team

Paul Halcro, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Becky Lyon

Ofsted Inspector

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