

Ulceby St Nicholas Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Ulceby, Lincolnshire DN39 6TB

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2018

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 is relentless in her drive for continuous improvement. She has worked unstintingly to successfully remove the school from special measures and to ensure that the school's overall effectiveness is now good.
- She is very ably supported by the head of school. Their combined knowledge and skills have transformed the school into one that is professionally focused on improving pupils' outcomes, academically, pastorally and socially.
- Middle leaders undertake their roles with increased confidence and effectiveness. The impact of their work can be seen clearly in the improvement to pupils' outcomes and the progress evident in pupils' books.
- Governors are highly skilled. They undertake their strategic duties with due diligence and play a full role in the school's improvement. This means they have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.
- The trust acted quickly to strengthen the school's leadership following the previous inspection. They continue to offer insightful support to current school leaders.
- Pupils behave well. They are considerate of others, routinely holding doors open and offering smiles and good manners to each other and to visitors.
- Previously weaker teaching has been eliminated. The quality of teaching and learning is now good. Teachers value the guidance they receive to improve their practice. There is now greater collaboration between teachers to share good practice.
- The effectiveness of teaching assistants is variable. In some year groups, additional support is purposeful and effective. However, this is not yet consistent in all classes.
- Curriculum plans detail appropriate subject-specific progression. This enables teachers to plan lessons that build pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding sequentially. Leaders know that these are only recently implemented and that there is more to do to embed them fully.
- Pupils currently in the school make good progress. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to fully eliminate historical gaps in pupils' knowledge and to ensure that more pupils reach the higher standards of which they are capable.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management further by ensuring that:
 - recently implemented approaches to the school’s curriculum are thoroughly embedded across the school
 - teaching assistants receive the training and support needed to ensure that they offer consistently effective support to pupils.
- Improve pupils’ outcomes further by ensuring that:
 - any remaining gaps in pupils’ knowledge and skills due to historically weak teaching are eliminated
 - more pupils can reach the higher standards that they are capable of in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher was appointed immediately after the previous inspection. Since then, she has been unremitting in her resolve to turn around the fortunes of the school. One of her first tasks was to eliminate weak teaching. She has done this successfully. Her high expectations for what pupils can achieve and for the quality of teaching and learning she wants to see across the school are now firmly established and implemented to good effect.
- The executive headteacher has systematically tackled the areas for improvement given at the previous inspection and subsequent monitoring visits. She has done so quickly, but, more importantly, with great professionalism and sensitivity. Her continuing mantra, 'the children deserve the best', has guided her through this difficult period and underpinned her decision-making since her appointment. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the school is now good.
- In 2017, a new head of school was appointed to strengthen the senior leadership of the school. She is a highly skilled practitioner, who has boundless enthusiasm for her role and who provides greater continuity, in the executive headteacher's absence, than was previously the case. Together, they make a forceful senior leadership team, whose combined skills have transformed the effectiveness of the school in a relatively short space of time. This is no longer a school that is inadequate, but a good school that seeks continuous improvement, that is self-sustaining and outward facing. Leaders' aspirations for further improvement are high. Their positive mind-set, clear guidance and strong ambition are infectious. They have galvanised the staff team, whose morale is now high.
- Leaders have established a strong programme of monitoring across the school, which comprehensively links pupils' achievement to teachers' practice and school improvement priorities. Leaders are swift to hold teachers to account for any underachievement noted in pupils' outcomes and for any underperformance against the teachers' standards. This is now an embedded process and one which has contributed to the significant improvement to the school's overall effectiveness since it was last inspected.
- Middle leaders are empowered to undertake their roles effectively. Previously, although they were in post, they played no part in school improvement. This is no longer the case. Investment in high-quality training, and high levels of support from the executive headteacher and the trust's adviser, has seen a transformation in their effectiveness. They now lead their subjects with great confidence and purpose. The impact of their actions can be seen clearly in the progression of knowledge and skills evident in pupils' work and in the improving pupils' outcomes, which are now good. This has strengthened the school's capacity for further improvement considerably.
- The special educational needs (SEN) coordinator, has undertaken a comprehensive review of policy and procedure in the school. She has meticulously and diligently improved procedures for identification, strengthened the target-setting process and ensured that expert advice and guidance is sought in a timely manner. As a result,

provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved considerably since the last inspection.

- The 'topic-based' approach to the school curriculum is building pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects successfully. Following the last monitoring visit to the school, leaders have worked incredibly hard to improve curriculum plans further. They have created detailed curriculum progression documents that link learning across subjects and that identify the components of learning needed for pupils to achieve the age-related expectations of the national curriculum.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work completed over the previous school year. This review illustrated the significant improvements in pupils' achievements in a range of subjects. For example, during the summer term all pupils completed a local study, applying their literacy and numeracy skills to good effect. Younger pupils captured changes within the village. While older pupils examined the industrial changes within the wider community and the impact of the erection of the Humber Bridge. In all cases, it was evident that teachers had used the progression documents to build pupils' knowledge and skills sequentially, and that strong links are being made between subjects. Leaders are keen to embed their approaches further, so pupils' outcomes continue to improve, particularly at the higher standards.
- Leaders have relaunched their Christian values and ethos into a simple statement: 'a mind to be kind'. Pupils are clear about the expectations they have of themselves to treat others with kindness and respect. This successfully promotes pupils' understanding of British values and is supported by a thoughtful programme of assemblies and a well-considered personal and social curriculum. Leaders recognise that this work is in the earliest stages of implementation but are delighted with pupils' response to it. This is endorsed by parents' views that their children are happy in school.
- The pupil premium funding is spent wisely. Leaders use accurate assessment information to identify precisely where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills and do all they can to diminish these. They know the barriers disadvantaged pupils face, as individuals and collectively, and use additional funding astutely to minimise the effect of these on pupils' achievement. The core purpose of leaders' actions is to ensure disadvantaged pupils' equality of achievement and their equality of access to the wider curriculum, including after-school clubs and trips. Leaders' actions and intentions and the impact of such are recorded in the school's highly detailed pupil premium strategy. This is rigorously reviewed by school leaders, including governors, at regular intervals throughout the school year. Any adjustments that are required to accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress further are made swiftly. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making the same good progress, from their varying starting points, as that of their peers.
- In the past, the physical education (PE) and sports fund was used to improve the quality and sustainability of teaching in PE. This has been achieved successfully, but it limited pupils' access to competitive sport. Leaders acknowledge this and are using the most recent funding to gain access to the local authority 'sports partnership'. This will provide pupils in key stages 1 and 2 with an increasing range of sporting competitions.

- The Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust (LAAT) provides highly effective and ongoing support to the school. They have ironed out the discrepancies raised at the previous inspection over safeguarding responsibilities and have strengthened their procedures as a result. They continue to offer effective challenge to school leaders for further improvement to pupils' outcomes and offer effective support for leaders in tackling staff underperformance.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school has been transformed. Governors are highly skilled professionals who use their combined knowledge and expertise to offer effective support and challenge to school leaders.
- They demonstrate the same level of dedication and ambition as school leaders, to improve pupils' outcomes and ensure that the school continues to build on its successes.
- Organised and led by the chair of the governing body, there is a rigorous programme of monitoring in place, to enable all governors to have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use their evaluations and summaries of their visits to check the accuracy and quality of school leaders' reports. This enables them to maintain their strong focus on the school's journey of improvement and to hold school leaders to account effectively.
- A review of the records from governing body meetings shows the level of questioning posed by governors to leaders. They do not shy away from asking difficult questions, and from demanding detailed analyses of pupils' achievements. Such insightful governance increases the school's capacity for further improvement.
- Governors recognised that initially they needed to focus more inwardly on improving pupils' outcomes and strengthening school systems. They rightly acknowledge that they are now ready for the next phase of their development, which is to place themselves firmly at the heart of the community.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Since the last inspection, leaders, including governors, have been relentless in their efforts to ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. Appropriate checks are made on any adults wishing to work with the pupils to ensure they are suitable to do so. Records of these checks are maintained diligently.
- The safeguarding governor uses her expert knowledge and skills to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Her meticulousness and regular checks ensure that her exacting standards are met and that procedures are relevant and most recent.
- All staff undertake regular training. Such training goes beyond statutory requirements, so that there are emergency drills in place to cover all eventualities. As a result, staff in all roles understand the important role they play in ensuring children are safe and the procedures that they must follow.

- Information notices are prominently placed around the school. They act as reminders to all staff and visitors of the procedures to be followed should any concerns be raised over pupils' welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching across the school is hallmarked by accurate assessment, and teachers' high expectations for pupils to work hard and to contribute to their own learning. In return, teachers work hard to plan lessons that are interesting and thoughtful and that build pupils' knowledge and skills sequentially. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 were greeted by a deluge of lily pads in their classroom and cloak room. This prompted a series of investigative activities that led to high levels of pupil engagement, while teachers systematically developed pupils' literal, deductive and inferential reading skills.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved markedly since the last inspection. In the past, pupils were secure in their arithmetic skills, because of extensive practice of sums, but found it difficult to reason and apply their skills successfully. This is no longer the case. Leaders have provided extensive training, guidance and resources to ensure that teachers are confident to plan effectively and meet the raised expectations of the mathematics national curriculum.
- Pupils' mathematics books now show good progress. There is a clear sequence of learning in place that ensures pupils have the required mathematical fluency to apply to reasoning and problem-solving activities. While this is an improvement, leaders acknowledge that the most able pupils need further challenge to tackle extended problems over time and to articulate with greater clarity their reasoning. Equally, for some pupils there remain pockets of missed knowledge that are the result of previous weaker teaching that still need ironing out.
- The teaching of reading and writing is now closely linked. Teachers use a novel to stimulate pupils' interest and engagement and to provide a context for learning. Pupils' reading skills are developed alongside their understanding of grammatical form, punctuation effects and spelling rules. Pupils then apply this knowledge into writing in a range of different styles. Pupils are taught to edit their work for improvement effectively. From a review of pupils' work there is clear progression in the sophistication and maturity of pupils' writing ability seen at the beginning of the last school year compared to their most recent attempts.
- Teachers expect pupils to apply the same level of accuracy and skill to their writing in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils use what they have learned in their English lessons to write for a purpose. This is reinforcing pupils' writing skills effectively and in a meaningful context.
- One of the first actions the executive headteacher took was to introduce a scheme for the teaching of phonics. This has ensured a consistent approach to teaching and ensured that pupils are taught the sounds letters make in a sequential way. All staff follow the principles of the scheme and use the resources appropriately. As a result, the teaching of phonics has improved. Consequently, in 2018 pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 2 rescreening check were above the national average.

- The teaching of subjects beyond English and mathematics has also improved. Teachers plan activities that will engage pupils in their learning and that consider the age-related expectations of the national curriculum. Detailed progression documents are used to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are built sequentially, and these are cross referenced to ensure that learning-links between subjects are reinforced. For example, Year 5 pupils had captured data as part of their geography field work skills on the local area. They were expected to present and analyse their data using line graphs, which correlated with their work in mathematics. Likewise, pupils investigating the lily pads in English were expected to apply their knowledge of amphibians from science to apply their skills of deduction. While this is heartening, leaders know they are in the earliest stages of embedding such cohesive teaching approaches.
- Expectations for teaching assistants to attend training and to be involved in supporting teachers' planning are now firmly in place. While this has improved the quality and effectiveness of some teaching assistants' support to improve pupils' learning, it is not yet widespread. Leaders acknowledge that this is an area for further improvement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders place equal priority on developing pupils' mental and physical well-being as they do their academic success. More recently, leaders have relaunched their ethos, 'a mind to be kind.' This places British values at the core of the school's purpose. Put simply, pupils are encouraged to value each other and to consider others' feelings above their own. Adults model this kindness and, in turn, pupils reciprocate. As a result, relationships are strong, and pupils are happy. A review of the school's own parental consultation results, along with the views of those parents who spoke to inspectors, endorses this.
- In the same way leaders have reviewed and strengthened their academic curriculum, so too have they developed pupils' personal and social curriculum. There is now a detailed programme of study in place which tackles relevant social issues while supporting pupils' mental health.
- A thoughtful programme of assemblies, which links Christian scripture combined with a strong personal and social curriculum and religious education syllabus, is supporting pupils' spiritual, moral and social development effectively. While pupils are aware of the similarities and differences between other religious beliefs, they are less knowledgeable of others' cultural identities and norms. Leaders know that pupils' cultural awareness needs to be developed further and are acting to remedy this.
- Pupils who talked to inspectors say that they feel safe and that there are no unsafe places in school. Older pupils talked openly and confidently about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They were knowledgeable about the dangers of grooming, radicalisation and scamming when using social media and gaming.

- Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying and say that 'bullying used to happen, but it doesn't anymore'. Those pupils who talked to inspectors expressed great confidence that should an incident occur, there is a trusted adult in whom they can confide.
- Older pupils show great affection for the younger pupils in the school, which provides a strong sense of belonging for all and which is promoted by all staff. The older pupils relish the responsibilities they are given, but would happily embrace even more, particularly in representing their school in sporting competitions.
- Procedures for managing pupils' absence have been tightened. Any absence is followed up with due diligence and all pupils are accounted for within 15 minutes of the register closing. Consequently, pupils' attendance is above the national average, the number of pupils regularly away from school has reduced well, and support plans are in place for those families who need it. Despite leaders' Trojan efforts, there are still a small minority of parents who choose to take holidays during term time.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They have established simple rules that pupils, for the most part, abide by. Pupils demonstrating more challenging behaviour receive support from experts to enable them to access mainstream schooling effectively. Pupils who spoke to inspectors wholeheartedly felt that behaviour was better since the appointment of the executive headteacher.
- Playtimes are busy as pupils run off energy. The school grounds are substantial, but there are limited resources for pupils to access and limited interactions between pupils and supervising adults. Leaders have already identified this as an area for improvement and have earmarked some of their sports funding to develop play leaders in the school.
- Pupils' movement around the school is orderly and calm. Pupils readily hold doors open for each other and for adults without prompting. Once into class, there are well established routines to ensure that pupils get straight on with their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Weaker teaching from the past at the school has affected pupils' outcomes over time in the national tests taken at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Consequently, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have been variable at both the expected and higher standard. While there is a legacy of this remaining, the significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning are ensuring that the progress of pupils currently in the school is improving strongly and is now good. This is borne out by the progress seen in pupils' books.
- A review of pupils' work from the last school year, alongside pupils' assessment information, shows that pupils in all year groups made good progress in a range of subjects, particularly reading, writing and mathematics. It also shows that the proportion of pupils achieving the age-related expectations of the national curriculum increased markedly between 2017 and 2018. This represents a significant improvement

on previous years and hallmarks the increased expectations of the current leadership team.

- Those pupils working below age-related expectations are supported with a raft of appropriate interventions to ensure that they can catch up in their learning quickly. As a result, lower-attaining pupils made accelerated progress due to the school's assessment system. Work in pupils' books corroborated this.
- Middle- and higher-ability pupils made good progress from their starting points. However, leaders have rightly set priorities for greater consistency in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics of which they are capable.
- Over the last year, the number of disadvantaged pupils has doubled and is now almost a third of the school's roll. Leaders track their progress carefully to ensure that any lull in progress is tackled swiftly and effectively. Of those disadvantaged pupils not reaching age-related expectations, all made accelerated progress to move closer to the required standards.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make equally good progress. Early identification of need has improved markedly, which means pupils now receive any additional support or adaptations in a timely manner. As a result, they make similarly good progress against their targets to that of their peers.
- Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 national phonics screening check improved in 2018 to be above the national average, with all Year 2 pupils who needed to take the rescreening check also achieving national expectations successfully. This is a marked improvement over previous years and is indicative of the improvements to the teaching of phonics.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader was appointed following the previous inspection and has utilised the extensive training offered to her, to great effect. She has skilfully and tirelessly built upon the support she received and has successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning in the early years, which is now good.
- One of her first tasks was to secure assessment information for children when they enter Reception class, which is now accurate. She ensures that assessment information is used successfully to build children's knowledge and develop their skills. Thoughtfully planned activities ensure that children access purposeful and memorable learning opportunities in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Parents play an ever-increasing role in contributing to their children's learning journey. Regular home information and parental workshops provide a means for parents to become more involved. The use of online assessment tools has facilitated this further and is a marked improvement upon previous systems. Leaders are not complacent and have plans in place to improve this further.
- Children thrive in this setting because of the strengths of the relationships that are quickly formed. Adults make effective use of a range of information available to them to ensure that children's needs are identified and met. Strengthened procedures for the

early identification of children who have SEN and/or disabilities ensure that the additional needs of some of the most vulnerable children are met sooner than was previously the case.

- From broadly typical starting points, children make good progress and the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has improved year on year. In 2018, this was above the national average. More importantly, the proportion of children exceeding a good level of development doubled in 2018 and equates to almost one quarter of the class size. This represents a significant improvement from previous years and one which leaders are keen to build upon further.
- Children behave well because of the effective modelling and timely reinforcement of good manners made by adults. Adults are quick to spot and support any children who are less keen to share resources and to take their turn, so that children soon play together cooperatively.
- Activities are well considered to engage children and capture their interests and imagination. For the most part, adults use effective questioning to extend children's learning and to promote children's early literacy and numeracy skills. For example, several boys were observed building houses in the construction area of outdoor learning. Adults intervened and discussed the need for the foremen and designers to work alongside each other to design the homes to be built. The children quickly set about making badges for the foremen and gathering their clipboards and paper to create their home designs. Occasionally, adults try to extend children's learning too quickly, or not quickly enough, and children lose interest. Leaders acknowledge there is more to do to gain greater consistency in the quality of adults' interventions.
- The early years leader has clear plans in place for further improvement. She rightly prioritised securing good outcomes for children and good provision and is now able to focus upon improving her links with the main feeder nursery schools.

School details

Unique reference number	140343
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10045094

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	135
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Magnus Smedley
Executive Headteacher	Vicky Matthews
Telephone number	01469 588219
Website	https://ulcebystnicholas.org.uk
Email address	admin.ulc@laat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2016

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, although it has increased by almost a class size throughout the last school year.
- Although school census information indicates that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is below the national average, this has doubled in the last school year, and is now above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school is part of the LAAT.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were completed alongside the executive headteacher. During lesson observations, inspectors talked to some pupils about their learning and reviewed their work in books.
- An extensive review of pupils' work in a range of books was completed by inspectors, alongside middle leaders and the head of school.
- Meetings were held with the trustees, including: the chair of the local governing body and the designated safeguarding governor, as well as representatives of the LAAT executive body. Inspectors talked to parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of responses to the school's own parent consultation exercises.
- Pupils were observed at playtime and lunchtime. Inspectors talked to groups of pupils about their learning and pupils' behaviour and listened to them read.
- The inspection team reviewed a wide range of school documentation, including: the school's evaluation of its own performance; improvement plans; pupils' assessment information; safeguarding documents, including those related to behaviour and attendance, as well as evaluations of the quality of teaching and minutes of the governing body meetings and monitoring activities.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Angela Harper

Ofsted Inspector

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