

Inspection of Digby Church of England School

Church Street, Digby, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN4 3LZ

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 July 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their small, nurturing village school. They come in every morning with a smile on their faces, ready for a day of exciting learning and fun. There is a strong sense of belonging. Everyone is welcome and valued here. Pupils care for each other and build lifelong friendships.

Pupils welcome the high aspirations that the school has for their achievement. They enjoy interesting lessons and are enthusiastic and engaged learners. They relish challenge, try hard and take care to produce work of the highest quality. They talk about their learning confidently.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in all areas of the school. This is true right from the early years, where children quickly learn the rules and routines that help them play positively. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour. They also support others who may find this trickier. Pupil 'shine-sheriffs' help to notice and celebrate good behaviour.

The school lives its vision 'Opening Doors, Opening Minds' through providing a wide range of enrichment opportunities for pupils. These ensure that pupils build up a sense of themselves, their community and the wider world. Pupils tackle tricky subjects and debate important issues to help build their character.

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

The school has designed an exciting, stimulating curriculum across all subjects. Highly engaging lessons and learning activities ignite pupils' curiosity and desire to learn more. The school has taken care to ensure that learning is well sequenced. Pupils successfully build new knowledge on what they already know. Teachers deliver this curriculum skilfully. Pupils achieve highly and have strong knowledge across all subjects. The early years curriculum is designed around the individual needs of children. It ensures that children learn important foundational knowledge in all areas of learning. Learning dinosaurs, such as the 'explorasaurus', instil important learning behaviours that set children up as learners for life.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a key strength. The school identifies these pupils at the earliest possible point. It puts specific, targeted support plans in place. The school has put a significant amount of work into devising subject-specific adaptations for these pupils. These help them to access the curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND make very good progress through the curriculum.

The school uses assessment to check pupils' learning and to inform future planning. In particular, the school's use of 'thinking squares' allows pupils to demonstrate the depth of their learning at the end of each topic.

The school has trained staff to deliver the early reading and phonics curriculum with high levels of consistency and skill. Pupils quickly build their knowledge of letter sounds and

use this to read words, sentences and increasingly challenging books. Staff identify pupils in danger of falling behind in lessons. These pupils receive extra support to help them keep up. Pupils read confidently and quickly develop fluency and accuracy by the end of Year 2.

There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour. The school has adopted a relational, restorative approach, which engenders high levels of respect. Pupils do the right thing, even when no one is looking. Attendance is high. Pupils want to be in school on time, every day. The school works effectively with families to improve the attendance of the small number of persistently absent pupils.

The school places a high priority on pupils' wider development. It is a small school, but it does not have small horizons. All pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, trips and sporting opportunities. This enables them to develop their talents and interests and provides a window into the wider world. It also opens pupils' minds to their futures. Pupils learn about different religions and discuss a wide and deep range of beliefs. They reflect on the positives of life and life's challenges. The school educates its pupils about different cultures and what it means to be a part of a multi-racial British society. Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and why they are important. They are also sensitive to the ways in which people can be different and can talk about equality and diversity in a considered way.

Leaders have worked with staff to develop strong, shared values and practices which are agreed and upheld by all. This allows the school to achieve its high ambitions for its pupils. Professional development at all levels is a key priority in the school.

The school engages authentically with all members of its community. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about leaders' care for their workload and well-being. They feel included in all areas of decision-making. Parents and carers value the high levels of nurture and care provided by the school. They feel well informed about what their children are learning and the progress they are making.

Governors are extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of the school. This has enabled them to support and challenge the school on its successful journey towards reaching a shared vision to give children the very best start in life.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	120519
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10347432
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Hancy
Headteacher	Donna Winters
Website	www.spiresfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 September 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school in the Diocese of Lincoln. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2023. The next inspection will take place within five years.

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.

- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and a range of other staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and of the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils and viewed examples of pupils' work in a range of 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and while in lessons.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The lead inspector observed pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed key documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school action plans and monitoring records.

Inspection team

Liz Davidson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sean Kelly

Ofsted Inspector

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