

Inspection of a good school: Alford Primary School

Hanby Lane, Alford, Lincolnshire LN13 9BJ

Inspection dates:

14–15 January 2020

Outcome

Alford Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy, welcoming school which takes good care of pupils. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. Pupils enjoy school and attend well. They know that staff expect them to do their best.

Behaviour is good around school and in lessons. Pupils are polite and help each other and the adults in the school. Relationships are good. Pupils say that bullying is not tolerated and that their school is friendly. They trust staff to sort out any incidents that arise. In classes, pupils work hard and listen carefully. They take pride in their work and try to write neatly.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They learn about this in lessons and assemblies. They are well versed in how to keep themselves safe online.

Pupils achieve well in all subjects. Many are keen readers and take up reading as a hobby. Older pupils enjoy being reading buddies of Reception children. They like the books that staff read to them.

Many pupils spoke about the six characters they learn about in school, such as 'Resilient Rosie'. These characters help them learn how to develop important personal qualities.

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

Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for pupils. All staff work together well to make the school better. Leaders have improved the curriculum for all subjects, and pupils achieve well. In each subject, well-trained subject leaders do their jobs well. They provide regular training to staff. This training ensures that staff build on what pupils have learned before. Teachers and teaching assistants know what learning is expected in each year and in each subject.

Leaders ensure that early reading and number work are given priority. Staff make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds they are learning. The phonics leader knows exactly what staff are teaching in phonics sessions. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained in phonics. They all follow the school's effective approach when teaching.

Reading is also taught well in older classes. The school helps pupils develop a real interest in reading. Many pupils work hard to gain a prize for reading at home. The curriculum in English is sometimes not adapted to meet the needs of those who find learning more difficult. They are sometimes asked to concentrate on too many things at once.

The mathematics leader has introduced a new way of teaching the subject this year. Teachers and teaching assistants have been thoroughly trained on the changes. Staff feel well supported and say that they have improved their teaching of mathematics. The pupils are responding well to the new approach and are achieving well. Leaders are aware that pupils do not calculate numbers or know their times tables as well as they need to. They have introduced improved ways of helping pupils be more fluent with numbers. Pupils are keen to gain recognition as experts in times tables.

The curriculum for science is strong and well led. Pupils enjoy doing experiments. They show good knowledge of basic scientific facts and how to test things out.

The school's curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Staff teach about safety and how to build up strength of character. Pupils take pride in their work. They know they have to do their best. They concentrate well and work hard. They learn to be resilient and never give up. They learn these and other qualities in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is strong. Their cultural development is held back by lack of knowledge and experience of the wide range of cultures and lifestyles in modern Britain.

During lesson visits, I was able to see how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included well in all activities and learning. Each pupil with SEND has a plan which helps guide their development. Parents of pupils with SEND told me how well the school caters for their children's needs.

Children settle well in the early years. Leaders are keen that children develop the skills that they need right from the start of Reception. They are taught to sit and listen well. They know how to hold their pencils correctly. Staff make sure that they all remember the sounds and numbers they are learning. Parents are involved in their children's learning. They are kept informed about how they might help them at home. Learning activities in the early years are well planned and often exciting. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority for all leaders and staff. Staff and governors understand the important role they play in keeping children safe. Arrangements to check that pupils are safeguarded are well organised, thorough and regularly checked and audited.

Leaders, governors and staff all receive regular training. New staff are thoroughly inducted into the school's procedures. Ways of identifying and reporting risks are comprehensive.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is modified well in the early years and key stage 1 to meet the learning needs of all pupils, including the most able and those who find learning difficult. In key stage 2, the curriculum is not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of those who struggle with their learning. Leaders should ensure that the key stage 2 English curriculum successfully meets pupils' needs, by building consistently on what pupils are able to do.
- Pupils learn about other faiths in their religious education lessons, but their knowledge of other faiths and ways of life in modern Britain is limited. Leaders should work to increase pupils' knowledge and experience of other faiths and ways of life in modern Britain.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 17–18 May 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	120440
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10121280
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Willoughby
Headteacher	Vicky Ross
Website	www.alford.lincs.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17–18 May 2016

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, I focused on reading, mathematics and science. This included speaking with leaders, visiting lessons, looking at pupils' books with leaders, talking with pupils about their work, talking to teachers and hearing pupils read.
- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the leader for the provision for pupils with SEND. I also met with the leaders of the early years. I met groups of staff, teaching assistants and pupils. I spoke with pupils on the playground, around school and in lessons.
- I met with nine members of the governing body, including the chair. I also met the local authority's school improvement partner.
- I spoke with 35 parents of 55 children at the start of the second day of the inspection and took account of the 159 responses to the school's survey of parents' views in September 2019. I also considered the 76 responses to the online survey, Parent View, including detailed text comments. I analysed the 36 responses to the staff survey and the 13 responses made by pupils to the pupil survey.

- I examined a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement and its self-evaluation. I looked at minutes of governors' meetings. I considered a range of documents relating to safeguarding, including the school's single central record of checks on staff and others who come to the school. I looked at information and policies on the school's website and analysed the most recent published performance data.

Inspection team

Roger Sadler, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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