

The Isaac Newton Primary School

Dysart Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 7DG

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2017

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, supported well by senior leaders, has improved all aspects of the school. Leaders share a common vision of aspiration and high attainment for all pupils.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Leaders and governors ensure that the frequent monitoring of teaching standards and pupils' attainment leads to pupils making good progress across the curriculum.
- The trust has provided good support to school leaders and governors. Team leaders, in particular, welcome professional development and the opportunity to moderate pupils' work with other schools.
- Leaders responsible for the early years and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are knowledgeable and ensure that these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of fundamental British values and are understanding of those who are different from themselves.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. These include sports clubs, musical instrument tuition and educational and residential visits.
- Pupils' conduct is very good in classrooms, corridors and when playing on the playground. They are confident, enthusiastic and polite.
- Teaching assistants are effective in helping to ensure that pupils who require extra support are making good progress in a range of subjects.
- The headteacher enjoys the overwhelming support of staff, parents and governors.
- The school is a warm and welcoming environment that celebrates pupils' successes through displays in classrooms and corridors. The school is highly inclusive, and all feel valued and welcome.
- The leadership, evaluation and monitoring of subjects other than English and mathematics are not as well developed as they could be.
- Teachers do not always move the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, on to more challenging work quickly enough in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attendance rates are just below the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the leadership, evaluation and monitoring of subjects other than English and mathematics, to ensure that pupils' progress and attainment are equally strong in all subjects.
- Increase the proportions of pupils achieving at a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by moving the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, on to challenging work more quickly.
- Improve pupils' personal development and welfare by working creatively with targeted pupils and their families to improve punctuality and levels of attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his appointment in 2014, the headteacher, along with the enthusiastic and dedicated leadership team, has transformed the school. There have been sustained improvements across all areas of the school. The headteacher enjoys the full support of parents, staff and governors.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and team leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Accurate self-evaluation and detailed school improvement planning have ensured that, for example, the quality of teaching, pupil assessment and standards of behaviour have all improved considerably over recent years.
- Leaders have made positive links with other schools locally and with schools from within the trust. This enables subject and team leaders to share good practice and allows pupils' work to be moderated, therefore ensuring that judgements teachers make are secure.
- The headteacher and governors set challenging targets for teachers' performance management. Targets are set for pupils' progress, personal development and a whole-school area from the development plan. There is a mid-year review that contains clearly identified achievements and any required next steps. Consequently, teachers are held to account for the progress of pupils in their classes.
- The headteacher has undertaken considerable work to improve the accuracy of assessment. The system is consistent throughout the school, therefore leading to teachers having a clear and accurate understanding of pupils' abilities in each class.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Pupils' personal development is supported alongside their academic progress. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. The experienced and well-qualified coordinator has a clear overview of pupils who require extra support and the progress that they make. She undertakes regular reviews of the interventions to ensure that they are having the necessary impact. The school has recently gained the AIM4Lincs inclusion mark for autism, therefore demonstrating a commitment to support pupils with autistic spectrum disorders who require extra help. The extra funding received by the school is spent effectively.
- Team leaders are responsible for the curriculum, quality of teaching and assessment in their particular phases of the school. Frequent monitoring of pupils' books and assessment data alongside half-termly pupil progress meetings with class teachers ensure that standards remain high in all classes.
- Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum that provides equal opportunities for all and enables pupils to develop knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. Pupils relish the opportunity of residential visits in Years 4 and 6 as well as

other educational visits to enhance their learning. Recent examples of visits include Lincoln Museum and Castle, and Eureka to complement the science curriculum.

- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well throughout the school. For example, pupils attend the annual Grantham carnival, enjoy visits from theatre groups, have the opportunity to play musical instruments, raise funds for charities and welcome Paralympians into assemblies to talk about their training and competitions. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Additional primary school sports funding has been used extremely effectively in enabling a large number of pupils to experience a wide variety of sports and after-school clubs, including golf, rugby, badminton, cricket, gymnastics, football, volleyball and indoor athletics. The school is currently champion in six of these areas and holds the gold Sportsmark award.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, with the vast majority agreeing that their children are happy, safe, being taught well and making good progress.
- The trust offers effective support to the headteacher, leaders and governors. Termly health checks provided by the trust accurately describe the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders have responded well to advice and guidance, acting on recommendations for school improvement.
- The leadership, monitoring and evaluation of subjects other than English and mathematics are not as good as they could be. Leaders are therefore not clear as to pupils' attainment and progress in these subjects.

Governance of the school

- The experienced chair of the governing body has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and development areas. She is clear about the current priorities and frequently checks the progress of these on the school improvement plan.
- Recently appointed governors have strengthened the governing body by adding a mixture of expertise and experience. Governors take part in monitoring activities, including examining pupils' progress in books and assessment information provided by the headteacher. Their findings are reported back to other governors during meetings.
- Governors have received appropriate training in, for example, financial management, safeguarding and understanding pupils' assessment information. Governors understand the importance of ensuring that the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is allocated and monitored effectively by school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school.
- Leaders undertake thorough checks before a member of staff starts working or volunteering at the school. The single central record is well maintained, monitored and updated.

- The designated lead is well trained and keeps comprehensive, well-organised records of any concerns raised by staff regarding pupils' welfare. There are timely referrals made to outside agencies should a child or family require extra support.
- Processes for making referrals are simple, logical and clear. Staff understand and follow agreed systems. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. Staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan learning that is well structured and engaging. The mixture of independent, paired and group work enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in a wide range of curriculum subjects.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and ask questions that help to deepen pupils' thinking. For example, in a Year 6 writing lesson, a pupil was encouraged to think of a different adjective to describe a 'pink' flamingo, eventually settling on the word 'elegant'.
- There are strong links between extended pieces of writing and the wider curriculum. In Year 2, pupils were thoroughly engrossed in writing sentences about a missing penguin in their Antarctica topic, and older pupils had been writing diary entries and letters to support their learning about the Victorians.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' participation and engagement. Pupils are encouraged to join in and contribute. Time in lessons is therefore used productively.
- Homework activities are set over a term and link to the studied topic. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils studying the Vikings recently had the opportunity to make a Viking shield, write a diary of a Viking voyage or compose a song about the Vikings to be shared with the class. Ongoing homework activities include reading and the learning of spellings and times tables. The vast majority of parents and pupils who made their views known to inspectors appreciate this approach to homework.
- The teaching of phonics is strong throughout the school. In the Reception class, pupils were actively engaged in learning the 't' sound, enthusiastically identifying pictures of tigers, tents and toast. Pupils are encouraged to use these phonics skills in all aspects of their work, for example in writing activities.
- Pupils read widely and often, both at home and at school. Younger pupils use their phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words and have books at the appropriate level. Older pupils told the inspector that they enjoy reading and have a wide variety of books to choose from in both their classes and the well-stocked library. Favourite authors include Michael Morpurgo and Philip Pullman.
- Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their learning and to learn from their mistakes, for example when redrafting and improving pieces of writing. Pupils told inspectors that this helps them to make progress.
- Teachers universally apply the school's marking policy. This enables pupils to know clearly what they have done well and where they need to improve.

- Teaching assistants are a strength. They support pupils' learning by intervening appropriately should extra help be required and promoting independence by allowing pupils to complete some activities on their own. Leaders understand the importance of allowing teaching assistants to support pupils of all levels of ability.
- Teachers have a good understanding of what pupils are able to achieve. However, there are occasions when the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, could be further challenged by being moved on to harder work more quickly. These pupils would then be better placed to achieve higher standards.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are resilient and eager learners who talk confidently about building their 'learning power'. Pupils understand their responsibilities when learning something new and are clearly motivated to succeed.
- Pupils have a good understanding of diversity and are accepting and tolerant of others who are different from themselves. One child said, 'It doesn't matter. Everyone gets on with everyone here.'
- Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online and when using social media. They have a good awareness of road, bicycle and fire safety as well as 'stranger danger'. Pupils told inspectors that bullying at the school was rare, with any instances dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They spoke knowledgeably regarding the benefits of taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet.
- A democratically elected school council meets frequently with school staff to discuss any current issues and plans. Recently, the council members have been instrumental in obtaining lockers for pupils in key stage 2. The sports council enjoy the responsibility of organising inter-school sports competitions in the summer term.
- Pupils are proud to be members of Isaac Newton and proud to wear the school uniform. They told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school, feel safe and are making good progress. One remarked, 'I would like to come on Saturdays!' Pupils also value receiving hero stickers and termly medals for hard work and using their manners.
- Pupils have access to the well-organised and popular breakfast club. This ensures that they are prepared and ready to learn at the start of the day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct in classrooms, around the school and when playing outside is good. Pupils respond positively to well-established routines and high expectations from staff.

- Instances of low-level disruption in classrooms are extremely rare. Pupils work harmoniously together, and positive relationships exist between adults and pupils. As a result of this, pupils work hard and make strong progress.
- Pupils show good manners when talking to each other, visitors and staff. They often hold doors open for one another and respectfully allow adults to go first. Pupils greeted inspectors politely and spoke maturely about their learning and the school.
- Pupils show respect for equipment and resources that belong to the school. Consequently, classrooms and shared resource areas are kept neat and tidy.
- Leaders have worked hard with families to improve pupils' absence and persistent absence rates. While persistent absence rates have improved, there is still a gap between the school's and national absence rates.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- As a result of previous inaccurate assessment at the end of key stage 1, pupils in Year 6 in 2017 appeared to have made less progress than the national average. However, work in books and information provided by the school show that this cohort of pupils made good progress during their time at the school. The headteacher has taken effective action to improve assessment practices to ensure that progress information is accurate for future cohorts.
- In 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined was higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving a higher score in reading, writing and mathematics was slightly below the national average.
- Standards in key stage 1 have recently been in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of pupils achieving at a greater depth in these subjects have been slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics has recently been above the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard has been well above the national average for the last two years.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across both key stages.
- The headteacher and team leaders carefully analyse pupil assessment information. They are therefore aware of how different groups of pupils are progressing in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, any pupils who fall behind, including those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are identified quickly and given the help they need to catch up.
- Teachers frequently moderate their assessments of pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics with other schools. This ensures that assessment information is an accurate reflection of pupils' abilities and, therefore, that the next steps in pupils' learning are planned carefully.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are below and sometimes well below those of other children nationally. There are strong links with outside agencies, for example the school nurse and educational psychologist. Staff make home visits and visit children in their nursery setting before they start at the school. Consequently, adults have a good knowledge of children, helping them to settle quickly and make rapid progress.
- Attainment has remained broadly in line with national figures over recent years. The proportions of disadvantaged children who achieved a good level of development have recently been higher than those nationally. This indicates good progress from relatively low starting points. Leaders are therefore ensuring that the pupil premium funding is being used effectively.
- Staff make frequent, detailed assessments of each child in all of areas of learning. Parents are also able to contribute to the assessment process. As a result, staff maintain an up-to-date knowledge of each child and ensure that adults are clear as to the next steps in a child's learning.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by adults who know children well and understand their needs. This has contributed to children making good progress from their various starting points.
- The indoor and outdoor environments are safe, well planned and attractive. Children are encouraged to develop a variety of skills across different activities.
- Leadership in the early years is good. The leader ensures that relevant action plans are written and evaluated regularly. Consequently, any areas for development are identified and then improved during the academic year.
- The behaviour of children when completing activities is good. Children are sustained and focused in their learning because the activities are interesting and stimulating. However, staff occasionally miss opportunities to develop children's language.
- Children work and play happily together. They share resources and take turns where necessary. For example, a group of children were observed sharing a camera to take photographs of each other. Relationships between children and adults are also very positive.
- Children in the early years are well prepared for the next stage in their education because the quality of teaching provided by teachers and teaching assistants is consistently good. Transition between Reception and Year 1 is carefully planned in the summer term to ensure that children are fully prepared for the fresh challenge of the Year 1 curriculum.
- Safeguarding is effective. Children say that they feel safe and that they can talk to an adult if they are worried. Parents are equally as positive about the provision in the early years as they are about the provision in the rest of the school.

School details

Unique reference number	141100
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10035945

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	403
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Pat White
Headteacher	Paul Hill
Telephone number	01476 568616
Website	www.isaacnewton.lincs.sch.uk/
Email address	enquiries@isaacnewton.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Community Inclusive Trust.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll has risen rapidly over recent years.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all year groups and examined a variety of pupils' books from a range of subjects. On a number of occasions, inspectors were accompanied by the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings with the headteacher; senior, subject and team leaders; the chair of governors; and a representative from the trust. They spoke with pupils in groups, in lessons and around the school and listened to them read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the assessments of past cohorts of pupils, minutes of governing body meetings, current assessment information provided by the school, the school development plan, anonymised performance management information, plans written by English and team leaders, and records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors talked with parents before school, and examined the results of the 17 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the 18 free-text responses from parents. There were no responses to the pupil or staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Poole	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector

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