

St Norbert's Catholic Primary School

Tollgate, Pennygate, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1NJ

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher's inspiring leadership spreads excellence throughout the school. She has ensured that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum are outstanding. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's leaders and managers form a strong team. Their consistent and rigorous approach to improving teaching and the analysis of all data ensures that any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly helped to succeed.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their attitudes to learning are exemplary. Excellent arrangements are in place to ensure all pupils are safe.
- All the parents who stated a view say their child is safe and happy at the school. They are full of praise for the teaching and the progress their children make.
- The school day is exciting and varied, with a wide range of subjects. Literacy and numeracy are emphasised, and the developing links in other subjects, for these essential skills, have proved successful in helping pupils to do even better.
- The support staff are a huge strength of the school. They are extremely well trained and highly focused on pupils' well-being, personal development and academic achievements.
- Outstanding support by all staff, and other pupils, helps those pupils who speak little or no English on entry to make rapid gains in their learning.
- The early years provision is outstanding. All the children get off to an excellent start and are more than ready for their learning in Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Staff are experienced and highly trained. This, along with exceptionally high levels of care, supports learning extremely well.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make rapid and sustained progress over time. As they move up through the school, pupils are consistently well supported to overcome any difficulties and to achieve as well as they can.
- Governors are extremely skilled. They are very supportive of the school. They constantly challenge leaders to get the best out of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in visits to 30 lessons. About a third of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The work the pupils had completed over the whole school year was examined, jointly with the headteacher, for all year groups, including the early years.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read. They observed support for pupils in whole-class sessions and in small groups. The lead inspector attended an assembly.
- The inspectors talked with many of the pupils about their work and behaviour and held two formal meetings with different groups of pupils who talked about their work and their perceptions of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff. They interviewed the current and previous Chairs of the Governing Body and other governors, and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's summary of its view of its own performance, the school development plan, policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding, information about pupils' attendance and behaviour, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, information about pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- There were 32 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). The inspectors considered the views expressed in these and in summaries of the school's own parental questionnaires. They took account of the 17 responses received to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Croghan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Fewer pupils than average are White British. A much higher proportion of pupils than average enter the school mid-year, and are from Eastern Europe, mostly Poland or Lithuania. The vast majority of these, when they start at the school, are at a very early stage of speaking English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- Early years provision is full time, in one Reception class.
- The headteacher was appointed after the previous inspection, having previously been the deputy headteacher. The majority of the staff are new to the school since that time. Two of the staff have achieved recognition as Specialist Leaders of Education.
- A new Chair of the Governing Body has just been appointed.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has full accreditation as a 'Rights Respecting' school, and has been verified as an 'Expert Centre' by the Global Learning Programme.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the opportunities for pupils in all classes to practise and develop literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, to ensure the fullest understanding.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's relentless focus on excellence has enabled staff to provide a top-quality education for all pupils, in a climate where exemplary behaviour and outstanding teaching thrive.
- Leaders and managers have a shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders check the attendance, behaviour and progress of pupils rigorously on a regular basis. They act quickly to deal with changing circumstances.
- The work in leading provision for the recent influx of many pupils who enter at an early stage of speaking English is exceptional. This is a huge strength of the school which leads to excellent outcomes for the pupils.
- Teaching has improved significantly across the school because leaders make regular and meticulous checks on its quality. Subject and area leaders are very strong, including for the early years. They ensure that any weaker aspects of teaching are tackled very quickly and effectively through targeted and concerted support. The school's outstanding leadership practice in this area has been recognised through the appointment of two Specialist Leaders of Education.
- The management of teachers' performance through setting targets linked to pupils' performance is excellent and has a very positive impact on pupils' learning.
- There is a host of opportunities for pupils to enjoy during their time at the school. Learning outside, in the spacious grounds, is an intrinsic part of every day, not least for growing flowers and vegetables for the younger ones, and an adventurous 'trim-trail' activities for the older ones. Pupils much enjoy the work that links subjects together. This is often through themed days, such as an 'Art and Music Day' and a 'Happy Puzzle Day', that develop thinking skills in a number of subjects. There is some excellent work linking numeracy and literacy in other subjects, in science and history for example, especially in Year 6. Plans are already in hand to ensure these links develop further to promote the highest standards of literacy and numeracy in all classes.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness outstandingly well. An inspiring assembly showed what self-belief and perseverance mean, using an Olympic runner's experience. The school's excellent cultural work has won them recognition as an 'Expert Centre for Global Learning. Pupils enthuse about 'Child Meet' days, which involve children from other schools in visits to see how they can help each other's school to improve.
- The school's work to actively promote fundamental British values is excellent. Religious education teaches full tolerance and respect for others with different beliefs. Pupils vote in a democratic election for school council representatives. 'Bright Ideas' boxes help pupils to have a strong voice in school development. Pupils 'translate' the school development plan into 'pupil-speak', showing 'What we need to do', and, 'How will we know it has worked?', enabling all to contribute to fulfilling its priorities. The work as a 'Rights Respecting' school taught the pupils much about individual liberty and the rule of law.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted very well. Leaders and governors are committed to tackling discrimination of any kind. They ensure that very positive relationships are established, particularly with parents and outside agencies. Parents are highly supportive of the school.
- The pupil premium funding is used exceptionally well to enable eligible pupils to accelerate their progress. Leaders maintain clear records that show exactly how strong the impact of the spending has been.
- The primary school PE and sport funding is used very effectively to purchase resources such as a climbing wall and to provide coaching for teachers to improve their skills. The uptake of sport in the school is now much greater than before this funding was introduced.
- Procedures and policies for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and arrangements are outstandingly effective. Training is regular and thorough. All staff are meticulously vetted for suitability.
- External accreditation, including by the diocese, confirms the outstanding effectiveness of this school. The school is held in high esteem by the local authority, whose representative provides effective support and challenge. The school works informally with a number of other local schools and this enables pupils to link together, as well as staff training and confirmation of the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely knowledgeable and include a range of skilled professionals. They know the school and use all the relevant information and data about pupils' progress to compare the school's performance with that of other schools. Governors provide excellent, robust and rigorous support and challenge, particularly in the acquisition of language across the school. Governors know how good the quality of teaching is and will not stand for anything less than consistently good or better teaching for the pupils at the school. They know the importance of focused school performance management and its

link to pay progression. Governors always ensure the pupil premium is used very effectively to make a significant difference to individual pupils, resulting in outstanding progress. The governing body has made a strong, positive impact on the improvements achieved in many areas in recent years.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. There is a very calm, extremely orderly approach to the beginning and end of the school day and all learning activities. Pupils' attitude to their work is exemplary and this makes an extremely positive contribution to their outstanding progress.
- Pupils are extremely well behaved in and out of the classroom. Tolerance, mutual respect and acceptance of diversity underpin the school's approach to fostering excellent relationships across the school. This results in a harmonious learning environment.
- There is a behaviour policy that pupils know about and follow closely. Pupils are clear about what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour on the playground.
- All adults are excellent role models for pupils, particularly in relation to attitudes and manners. Playtime supervision is excellent. In the dining hall, excellent systems and processes are in place and behaviour is exemplary.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous and are well mannered to each other, to staff and to visitors. They help and support each other very well in class with their work and outside on the playground. For example, pupils who are new to learning English have a 'language buddy' sitting next to them in class who speaks their language and who can translate during lessons when required.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. So many aspects of this work are excellent; for example, regular meetings ensure all staff have a very accurate overview of individual pupils to ensure that they are kept really safe and well. The timely intervention by well-trained, highly focused staff allows pupils to catch up rapidly with their classmates and this makes them feel happier, safe and secure. This is particularly the case when any pupil has a difficulty with the language, as support staff provide very effective help and ensure all pupils feel included.
- Learning about the many different types of bullying feature strongly in assemblies and lessons. Consequently, pupils are able to recognise the difference between bullying and falling out. They informed inspectors that bullying very rarely occurs. When it does, staff are extremely vigilant in monitoring the situation and sort issues out very quickly. The pupils are very confident about approaching any adult in school if they need help to resolve any issue.
- Weekly attendance percentages are displayed in classrooms to ensure everyone knows regular attendance is a really high priority. The school has impressed upon parents the need for their children to attend school regularly and this has paid dividends. Attendance has recently risen to above average. Pupils really do enjoy coming to this school and realise the value of coming to school every day.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- All school information, inspection evidence and work in pupils' books indicate that the quality of teaching in all key stages is outstanding over time. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school.
- From entry to the school to Year 6, the teaching continually motivates and engages pupils. Teacher assessments of what pupils already know and can do are rigorous and used effectively to plan future learning. Activities closely meet pupils' varying needs and abilities and have a very clear purpose.
- Teaching has improved significantly in recent years because staff are now excellent at dealing with the learning needs of those who speak English as an additional language. The school's decision to provide 'sensory plates' on each table transcends the need for language, and, depending on the topic under consideration, contain such things as bunches of lavender and a cut lemon. 'The plates get our imaginations going,' say pupils. Other classroom strategies, such as being able to refer to a teaching assistant who speaks Eastern European languages and the provision of a classmate 'language buddy' to provide one-to-one help, confirm the outstanding quality of the provision and are successful in underpinning the rapid progress noted for this large group of pupils.
- Another success is the school policy of constant use of the extensive grounds to support everyday learning. All pupils, of all ages, can expect to be outside, adding exploration, imagination and curiosity to

their learning, several times a day. 'There's never a dull moment,' say pupils.

- Improvements in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), including intensive support programmes to boost reading performance, have had a very positive impact on raising standards in reading year on year. Subjects are carefully chosen to encourage reading. Year 4 pupils much enjoyed reading their 'Witch's recipes', including '30 grams of crushed toe-nail clippings', '501 grams of dandruff' and 'two pairs of rats' eyeballs'.
- The teaching of writing encourages pupils to carefully consider the most appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure to use. The most able writers are challenged effectively. In Year 2, for example, some pupils are familiar with the meaning of technical terms for literary devices, such as simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, and personification.
- The teaching of mathematics is very strong across the school. Pupils are provided with activities and challenges that stretch their mathematical thinking skills effectively. Pupils become increasingly familiar with understanding such terms such as quadrilateral, parallelogram and rhombus through frequent use and explanation. This also soon enables those who speak English as an additional language to be as familiar with the terms as others.
- Expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are very high. Pupils are moved on swiftly and expertly as soon as they need further elements of challenge.
- Staff and pupils make excellent use of all resources. Pupils in Year 6 made electronic presentations about their mathematical learning, aimed at helping younger children to understand the work. One said, 'Teaching others is a great way of helping us to understand it ourselves.'
- The quality of marking of pupils' written work across the year groups and subjects is very strong. Teachers follow the school's marking policy with increasing consistency. Pupils receive very clear 'green cloud' instructions about how to improve their writing. In the best examples, pupils provide a 'purple pen' response in a highly effective system that makes improvements easy to spot.
- All teaching assistants are a huge strength of the school. They are very well trained by the teachers and are excellent role models in the classroom with a focus on pupils' well-being, personal development and academic achievements. Teaching assistants are instrumental in delivering high-quality programmes of support in English and mathematics across the whole school, particularly for those who speak English as an additional language and also for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Most children enter the school showing basic skills that are below those typical for their age, mainly due to the increasing proportion with very limited English language acquisition. Often children enter various year groups with little or no understanding whatsoever of spoken or written English. Some do not enter until Year 6.
- School data show that the progress of the large proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is exceptional. This is because teaching is expert and they are helped to learn English quickly.
- After an excellent start to learning in the early years, all groups of pupils between Years 1 and 6 make outstanding progress. This means that, by the end of Year 2, pupils have usually caught up with other seven-year-olds and reach standards that are at the national average.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards have fluctuated over the years, depending on the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who are at an early stage of speaking English. In 2013, pupils reached significantly higher than average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in 2014 dipped, but school data show this cohort of pupils, like that of the previous year, made outstanding progress. In writing, for example, the school was among the top seven per cent of schools in the country for progress, and was in the top one per cent the previous year.
- School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, show that currently even more Year 6 pupils are attaining at the expected level and above, this year, in reading, writing and mathematics, and that progress is at the outstanding levels it has been now for three years.
- In reading, pupils enjoy the wide range of reading materials on offer in classrooms. Discussions about their reading are lively and well considered, and prompt further understanding. Consequently, pupils understand an ever-wider range of vocabulary and this supports them very effectively to succeed with reading tasks.
- In writing, sentences like 'Far away, in an Indian garden, a fresh exotic scent was being carried into the air, attracting myriad creatures' and 'As I wondered slowly in, a strange, powerful smell caught my attention' are typical of the imaginative styles and advanced sentence structures evident. This level of writing, when compared with work at the start of the year for the same pupils, demonstrates the high

levels of progress.

- The most able pupils achieve as well as others. They are always challenged in their learning and are extremely well motivated to do their very best, particularly in Year 6. Pupils who achieve the higher Level 3 in Year 2 go on to achieve at least the higher Level 5 in Year 6. This year, data show that pupils have improved on previous standards and a higher proportion than average are working at the highest level, Level 6, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6 in 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils to compare their performance with that of others without potentially identifying them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and often outstanding progress because of the effective support that they receive from teaching assistants and specialist support staff.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Excellent leadership and management ensure that provision in the early years is outstanding and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The staff ensure that safety procedures are robust and that the partnerships with parents are forged early on in the children's school life. Parents agree that the provision in the early years is excellent and they are very happy with the warm, caring, friendly welcome given by all the staff.
- As in the rest of the school, the excellent use of the outside area promotes learning exceptionally well. During the inspection, large ride-on activities vied with a castle, a tent and a tepee that formed popular reading and writing corners; the sand and water play areas were industrious working areas for measuring and calculating; the musical instrument area was a cacophony of experimental sounds; the gardening area displayed thriving, well-tended flowers and vegetables, and a tea party relished the results of 'recipes' in the 'kitchen', often crafted from malleable materials, promoting children's interest, dexterity and imagination.
- Teaching is outstanding. It is extremely well organised and provides a very calm atmosphere so children feel very safe and secure. The needs of children who are new to speaking English are now well understood. Relationships are excellent and conducive to outstanding progress for all the children. Teaching ensures that learning is really enjoyable and that the activities provided always meet children's varying needs and abilities. For example, children enjoy learning about the letters and the sounds that they make, sharing familiar stories, rhyming songs, dressing up in the role-play area, or finding out about castles and knights' armour.
- Most children start the Reception Year with skills that are below those typically seen, especially in any aspect requiring a command of English, such as reading, writing, listening and attention. This is because the majority enter Reception with little or no understanding of English. Children make outstanding progress during their time in the early years because they are well supported, especially in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. When they leave the Reception Year, more children than average reach a good level of development. They are very well prepared for entry to Year 1.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120616
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	464189

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kay Howard
Headteacher	Louise Yarnell
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2009
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