School report

Litcham School

Church Street, Litcham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE32 2NS

Inspection dates	25–26 November 2015
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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher has had a significant impact on raising the expectations of both teachers and pupils. He has swiftly restored the drive to ensure that every pupil must achieve their best.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers use effective questioning to secure pupils' understanding. They readily share good practice in school and with other schools in the local community to sharpen their own teaching skills.
- Most pupils achieve well at this school. Attainment at GCSE is above the national average, and progress in most subjects is at least good.
- Care and support for pupils are outstanding. School leaders place a high priority on pupils' personal development and welfare. The school offers a wide range of enrichment activities which help pupils to be good citizens.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching and use of assessment information to identify pupils who are falling behind.
- The gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 3 are rapidly closing. This is due to leaders using the additional funding effectively.
- The professional development of staff is given a high priority. This results in pupils having quality and up-to–date provision.
- Governors use their considerable knowledge and expertise to support and challenge school leaders robustly and accurately.
- Older pupils act as good role models for younger pupils in the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Expectations for the most-able pupils are not consistently strong. They are not asked to work or think hard enough.
- Leaders have not yet combined their information to have a consistent all-through school overview of the performance of their pupils.
- The early years requires improvement. The outdoor area is lacklustre and does not fully cater for all areas of learning well enough.
- Although starting to improve, results at end of Key Stage 2 are not high enough to meet national expectations.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - making sure pupils are stretched in all lessons by increasing the level of challenge even further, particularly for the most-able pupils
  - raising expectations and the quality of provision in the early years so that it is good.
- Improve outcomes by raising attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 so that results are at least in line with national averages and demonstrate good progress for all pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring a consistent all-through approach to analysing whole-school assessment information.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher has brought renewed energy and drive for school improvement. Together with an experienced team of leaders, he is moving the school forward at pace. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. They know the pupils and families well within the community and are creating a culture where pupils can succeed and are well cared for.
- Leaders at all levels are having a positive impact in their areas of responsibility. For example, within the primary phase, the new primary phase leader has transformed the systems for analysing the information about pupil progress, ensuring a robust and accurate approach. As a result, the progress that pupils are making is being acknowledged and staff held more rigorously to account for standards of education.
- School leaders and governors place a high priority on training staff. Training opportunities and support are closely linked with performance management. The impact of the continuous professional development is regularly checked with the quality of the provision for pupils in class.
- Leaders promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils very well. In both primary and secondary phases, pupils are encouraged to think about their own views and reflect on being a responsible citizen within modern Britain. In one assembly, the youngest pupils in the school were challenged about being good learners, developing their understanding of values such as determination and perseverance.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced range of subjects and wider enrichment activities which prepare them well for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Older pupils take part in 'impact days', where they receive additional careers guidance to enable them to make informed choices about their future education and pathway to employment.
- The leadership of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is highly effective. Careful tracking of these pupils' provision and achievement ensures that their needs are carefully met. External professionals who support the work of the school praise leaders for their tireless efforts to provide effectively for individuals.
- Middle leaders are effective and well supported. They are now more involved in raising the quality of teaching and learning across all phases of the school. For example, some Year 6 pupils already visit the secondary part of the school for additional reading lessons, and secondary phase leaders have taken summer schools for the primary pupils. These initiatives are accelerating the progress of these pupils. Leaders are working together in teams that cross the age ranges; the plans and actions are in place to continue their good practice over this year.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively. Pupil premium funding is used in a number of creative ways to support individuals. For example, additional funding is used to support the transition into secondary school so that disadvantaged pupils have an even greater period of adjustment before starting Year 7. Leaders fund additional support in school that is resulting in these pupils making more progress than previously. The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally in Key Stage 3 are closing, and progress for Key Stage 4 pupils is above national expectations.
- The additional funds the school receives for physical education and sport in the primary phase is used effectively. Specialist coaches provide additional clubs at lunchtimes and training for staff to ensure that the youngest pupils in the school receive high-quality sports provision. There has been an increase in the proportion of pupils attending the extra-curricular activities which help pupils to adopt a healthier lifestyle.
- The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school and the provision that their children receive, especially around transition into Year 7 and the provision of pastoral care. One parent commented: 'Staff are very professional, my children are in safe and caring hands.' Another commented: 'They seem to raise happy and respectful pupils.'
- As part of an all-through school, leaders are working to ensure that assessment systems are consistent, with the same approach and moderation of standards. As this is new, it is too early to assess the impact.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors are very well informed and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have a wide range of skills and expertise that is used well when developing links with staff at the school and ensuring pupils achieve their best. As a consequence, governors challenge senior leaders robustly when required and provide effective support where appropriate.
  - The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for

improvement. They receive regular and accurate information about the performance of pupils. This information enables governors to make a secure evaluation of the impact of leaders' work. They ask questions to satisfy themselves that school leaders are ensuring that pupils are achieving as well as they should.

Governors make efficient use of resources. They place a high priority on the professional development of staff, making sure that staff are well trained and support others, both within school and also in the local community.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders work closely with external agencies and parents to ensure that all pupils are supported and feel safe. Statutory policies and documents, such as the single central register of the checks made on adults working with children, are kept meticulously. Staff are fully trained in the most recent safeguarding procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching is good and sometimes better. Teachers provide effective learning opportunities and engage well with pupils. As a result, pupils absorb new ideas, are keen to learn and make good progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use effectively to question and clarify misconceptions. In a design and technology lesson, pupils confirmed that their teacher challenges them to think deeply and stretches their abilities by encouraging them to try new ideas. As a result, every pupil was able to produce a high-quality design and turn this into a product by using a variety of techniques and resources.
- Teachers use the information about their pupils well to help them plan lessons effectively and precisely to meet their needs. Teachers use the school's chosen method of 'personal registers' across all subject areas to plan appropriate questions and resources for groups of pupils.
- The teaching of reading is given a high priority. The library is well resourced and used extremely well. Older pupils who took part in the 'Kit Lit' quiz succeeded in representing the whole country in a world-wide project where they answered questions on books from around the world. These pupils are now continuing to inspire others to read by holding workshops for younger pupils in the local primary schools.
- The quality of teaching in science is exemplary. The work seen in the books show that this is the case over time. Pupils make exceptional progress in their learning through the secondary phase because of the meticulous preparation and subject knowledge of the teachers. Consequently, pupils enjoy science lessons and perform well at GCSE. Teachers in science now provide highly successful science workshops for the local primary schools.
- Teachers work hard to provide pupils with appropriate written and verbal feedback which focuses on how pupils can improve their work. Teachers generally give pupils opportunities to reflect upon this feedback and consider how to improve their work. Pupils are clear that the feedback they receive allows them to learn from their mistakes and develop their understanding.
- Teachers regularly set appropriate homework. A very large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, believe that pupils receive homework which is appropriate to their age. As a result of regular homework, pupils have opportunities to further develop the learning achieved in their lessons.
- Teachers ensure that pupils develop their skills and abilities in subjects such as art, music and drama extremely well. Teachers plan lessons that help pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points. Consequently, pupils are able to practise and develop their skills. In an extra-curricular drama club, pupils proudly demonstrated their acting skills as they prepare for their production of *Wind in the Willows.*
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of their pupils. Most teachers plan activities that meet the needs of their learners, and stretch and challenge the most-able pupils. However, there is inconsistency across the key stages, subjects and teachers. Consequently, the most-able pupils do not always make as much progress in their learning as they could, especially in the primary phase.
- Due to lower expectations from teachers in the past, pupils in the primary phase have gaps in their learning, particularly in mathematics. This year, leaders have provided smaller classes for the older primary phase pupils so that teachers can meet individual needs precisely, and the pupils are now catching up with their peers nationally.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for at school. They are confident that, should they share a concern with a member of staff, they will be taken seriously and the issue resolved fully.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their child felt safe and happy at school.
- Pupils are well informed about how to stay safe online through their lessons and assemblies. All forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, are rare. Pupils said that on the very rare occasions when bullying does occur, it is swiftly and effectively dealt with.
- Older pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education as a result of effective careers advice and guidance they receive through the 'impact days'. They have a clear understanding of the options available and a high proportion go on to further study.
- The school provides an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to keep themselves healthy, including a range of sporting activities and counselling for pupils who are experiencing difficulties or stress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils throughout the school are polite and well mannered. They have good relationships with each other and with adults. This results in a positive environment in which to learn.
- Pupils look after their school environment well. They take care with the many quality resources available in lessons. At less structured times, pupils hold positions of responsibility which they perform extremely well.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and is above average. This is the result of rigorous monitoring of attendance and the timely follow-up of any concerns by senior leaders. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is decreasing rapidly. Most staff who responded to the staff questionnaire agreed that behaviour is good and is managed well.
- Although the vast majority of pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, in some lessons and in all phases they can lose focus and chat too much. This is typically where the work is not precisely matched to their ability or the activity does not require them to think hard enough.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes for pupils are now good and continue to improve. The proportion of pupils attaining five grades A* to C at GCSE, including English and mathematics, in 2015 was above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress, particularly in science through Key Stage 3. Pupils who had not achieved national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 are catching up quickly with their peers in English and mathematics at Key Stage 3. This is because leaders use additional funds well to support these pupils.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving across the school because their progress and further support is meticulously tracked in all subjects. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than expected nationally by the end of Year 11. Disadvantaged pupils are approximately a grade behind others nationally in English and mathematics, which is a significant reduction from the gaps seen in the last inspection. A very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View expressed the view that their child made good progress at the school.
- Over the last three years, attainment in mathematics has risen ahead of national averages, with higher proportions of pupils making significantly above expected progress in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points across the school. Leaders ensure that the provision for these pupils is precise and meets their needs well.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is improving. In the last academic year, there has been an improvement in the achievement of the most able by the end of Key Stage 1, in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. However, these more-able pupils are not sufficiently and consistently challenged in all lessons across the school, which can slow down the progress they make.
- The small proportion of younger pupils who take the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) test

has risen over the last three years. The pupils who do not achieve the required level in Year 1 catch up by the end of Year 2. This year, changes have already been made to the structure of lessons with pupils receiving a smaller group approach that is linked to their prior achievement. This approach is accelerating the pupils' progress.

- In 2015, the results for the small proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 were very low in mathematics, reading and writing and did not reach the government's floor standards. Each pupil in this cohort amounted to a larger than average percentage of the overall results. New leaders have addressed the expectations of adults and pupils, and are providing enhanced support from subject leaders in the secondary phase to raise and monitor the quality of the provision for these pupils. The current Year 6 are making accelerated progress as a result, and attainment for pupils is improving.

Early years provision requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement. Systems and processes for assessing the starting points of children and their ongoing progress are in place but these are neither consistent nor secure enough. With such small numbers, the starting points for children vary year-on-year, but the majority of children begin Reception with skills and abilities in communication, literacy and language that are at least typical for their age.
- Adults' expectations of the children in the early years are at times too low. They do not quickly identify or expect enough of the most-able children by providing interesting and stimulating activities that allow them to develop their skills and abilities. For example, there is not enough praise and encouragement for children to accelerate their progress in their writing skills, both inside the class and in the outside area during child-initiated activities. As a result, the most-able children do not make progress as fast as they could.
- The outdoor area requires improvement. Adults do not always ensure that the area is well cared for and children's learning needs fully catered for. There are not enough activities available outside that develop children's writing and sense of number. Some children choose not to play outside during child-initiated activities.
- In some adult-led activities, such as phonics, some children already know the sounds and have advanced further. Teachers do not provide questions and interesting activities for these most-able children to excel.
- The new head of the primary phase and members of the governing body have already recognised the need for improvement in the early years. They have firm plans and actions in place to quickly develop the quality of provision for the youngest children in the school, so that it at least matches the best in the all-through school.
- Children are happy and safe. They have settled well into school life, and know and follow the routines extremely well. They enjoy good friendships and get along well together and with adults. Parents are positive about how well their children have settled at school.
- The large majority of children leave Reception generally achieving national expectations for their age in all areas of learning, so they are well prepared for Year 1 where their learning is accelerating.

School details

Unique reference number	121168
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10005790

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	610
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Falch-Lovesey
Headteacher	Rob Martlew
Telephone number	01328 701265
Website	www.litchamschool.net
Email address	office@litchamschool.net
Date of previous inspection	12–13 September 2013

Information about this school

- Litcham School is a smaller than average-sized school, formed as an all-through school in September 2012 from the local secondary and primary schools. In September 2015, another local primary school amalgamated into Litcham School.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by a statement or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The children in Reception attend full time.
- A new headteacher started in September 2015, together with a new head of the primary phase.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of Key Stage 4 but not at the end of Key Stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 35 lessons, 13 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior and other key leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their books to take account of the work and progress that pupils make over time.
- The inspection team observed pupils during play and the lunch break, and heard some of them read. Assemblies were also observed.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. In addition, the school's systems for assessing, tracking and evaluating pupils' progress were examined.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils and arrangements for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were examined, including a scrutiny of the single central register.
- Inspectors took account of 82 responses from parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), together with informal conversations on the playground, telephone conversations and letters received.
- Inspectors analysed 49 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jennifer Carpenter	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Shân Oswald	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015