

# Witham St Hughs Academy

Muntjac Way, Witham St Hughs, Lincoln, LN6 9WF

## Inspection dates

6–7 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding because all groups of pupils make rapid and consistent progress throughout the school and attain much higher standards in English and mathematics than average.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Not only do they develop exceptionally strong academic skills but they also have outstanding personal qualities.
- Teaching is never less than good and much is outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and of themselves. Lessons are very carefully planned to ensure all pupils do their very best work at all times.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of exciting activities in all subjects. They reach high standards in all subjects including art and history. They also benefit from lessons in philosophy and enterprise skills.
- Attendance is high.
- Behaviour is exemplary and pupils take a pride in themselves and the school. They feel safe, get on well with and care for each other. They have excellent attitudes to learning in all lessons.
- Outstanding leadership has ensured consistently high standards. The headteacher has created a teaching team which includes all staff members, who work closely and effectively together to ensure pupils progress quickly.
- Many pupils make very rapid progress and achieve high standards in all subjects. They do particularly well in mathematics.
- The headteacher is constantly looking for ways in which the school can improve even further. New initiatives are very well thought through and implemented consistently.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to become very involved in their child's education and are well informed about what their children learn in school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, visiting 18 lessons and part lessons and observing all teachers.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher and other leaders and managers and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including reports to the governing body, the school development plan, safeguarding arrangements and work in pupils' books.
- Parents and carers were asked for their views at the start of the day. The views of 34 parents and carers who contributed to the Parent View survey, wrote letters and called in to speak to inspectors were considered.

## Inspection team

Simon Griffiths, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Lagden

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- There are fewer pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds than in most schools of this size.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below the national average but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school has a breakfast club which is not managed by the governors.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Witham St Hughs Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2012. When its previous school Witham St Hughs Primary was inspected it was judged to be good overall.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is outstanding in all lessons by:
  - sharing the high levels of teaching expertise in the school with all staff
  - refining the lesson observations undertaken by senior staff so that they concentrate explicitly on identifying how much new learning is taking place.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge close to those expected. In the Early Years Foundation Stage they make quick and secure progress across the full range of aspects, including communication skills and personal development. By the time they enter Key Stage 1 they are working at levels which are consistently above average.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to make progress, which is at least good, and often better. They acquire the skills of matching sounds and letters quickly and are able to read and decode words with confidence. The most recent phonics test indicates a far higher than average proportion reaches the expected standard.
- In 2012 pupils left Key Stage 1 having achieved levels which were well above those nationally. Standards in reading and mathematics are significantly above average and above average in writing. Pupils in the current Year 2 are making good progress in lessons. Results are improving year on year.
- Pupils make rapid and consistent progress across Key Stage 2. Test results show that they learn at much faster rates than pupils nationally, with many more pupils making expected and better progress. Progress in mathematics is particularly rapid.
- Pupils consistently leave the school with exceptionally high attainment in mathematics and well-above-average results in English. They exhibit high levels of personal development and excellent learning habits. They are able to wrestle with problems, and work happily, both together and by themselves. They share ideas with confidence in lessons and are not afraid to say when they find something difficult. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The early gains that are made in reading are sustained across the school and older pupils enjoy reading and read widely.
- Pupils with special educational needs make above average progress. Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of all groups of pupils in lessons. Their consistent use of praise helps ensure pupils feel confident when tackling work that is challenging.
- Pupils who attract pupil premium funding make faster progress than those nationally. The extra money is spent on direct teaching and extra teaching assistant support. A proportion is also spent on ensuring full access to the wide range of additional opportunities offered by the school.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is always good and often outstanding. Teachers set themselves very high standards and consistently expect their lessons to be outstanding.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is very effective. Teachers are skilled at prompting children to develop vocabulary and speaking and listening skills. Children are able to choose activities and equipment and work together confidently. This is because of the excellent, calm learning atmosphere. In sessions directly led by teachers, good opportunities are created for children to solve problems and learn early writing skills.

- Throughout the school teachers plan lessons thoroughly to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, ensuring the work is pitched at just the right level. Pupils are grouped in 'stations' according to their levels of understanding in the particular area being studied. Pupils understand why this is and they are able to assess their own understanding and progress.
- There is a consistent approach to teaching across the school based on high expectations and lots of praise. Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge and are skilled at assessing pupils' understanding and moving their learning on by clever use of questioning and opportunities for discussion. They regularly check pupils' understanding during lessons and adjust the teaching accordingly. Good use is also made of resources, including individual tablet computers and no time is wasted. For example, in one lesson, the one minute taken by pupils returning to the classroom from a group activity was used to reinforce mathematical facts.
- Where teaching is good rather than outstanding the sense of pace and urgency is not as apparent as in the very best lessons and pupils' progress, though good, is slightly less rapid.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and teach small groups very effectively both in the classroom and the learning space in the corridor. There is a very strong sense of teamwork.
- Pupils with learning difficulties, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, are well taught because teachers plan well to meet their learning needs. Their progress is tracked carefully by those responsible for them who also know them very well as individuals.
- Teachers ensure work is well presented and marked thoroughly. Pupils say how helpful the comments are in helping them know what they need to do better. They also find their targets help them to improve. In Key Stage 1 very good use is made of photographs in children's books. This encourages the pupils, who are proud of their books.
- Lessons invariably take place in lively, bright and attractive classrooms and teachers are always trying to improve them further with excellent feature displays in the centre of the room and the careful choice of wall colours.
- All of the parents who responded to the online survey say they think their children are well taught.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in all lessons are excellent because pupils set themselves high standards and the teaching is interesting. Pupils want to learn and do well with their work.
  - Pupils are relaxed and courteous in their movement around the school. They need very little direction from adults because expectations are clearly established and understood. All adults and pupils get on noticeably well together. The citizenship points that pupils regularly receive are helpful in raising self confidence and deepening respect for each other.
  - Pupils say incidents of bullying are very rare indeed and take responsibility themselves for preventing it. School records confirm this. They feel safe in school. Older pupils give strong support to younger pupils both around school but also with work, for example, helping each
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other with reading.

- Attendance is high and there have been no exclusions.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher is a visionary leader and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Together with governors, they have ensured that pupils make rapid progress and attain high standards. Leaders, including subject leaders, are a united team. They set high standards and take every opportunity to improve the school. Their focus on ensuring the highest possible achievement and personal development from their pupils is relentless.
- Improvement plans are clear and are based on very accurate and robust self evaluation.
- Teaching is monitored thoroughly and accurately. As a consequence, it has improved and ensured that teachers set themselves very high standards. Some teachers say how joining the school has transformed their teaching. Observations are highly detailed but do not always identify explicitly how much new learning has taken place.
- The progress of all groups of pupils, including those for whom the Pupil Premium provides additional funding, is carefully monitored. The rates of progress for this group are above those achieved nationally.
- The school works well with parents and carers; it keeps them well informed. Parents and carers are invited into classrooms to share the work done by their children and to achievement assemblies. Examples of both were seen in the inspection and were well supported by parents.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all requirements.
- All of the parents who responded to the online survey say the school is well led and managed. A number of parents wrote to inspectors or came into school to say how much they valued the work of the headteacher and his team and talked about the improvements their children had made.
- The school makes every effort to increase the pupils' understanding of other cultures and of life in modern democratic Britain and a global society.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very proud of the school and its development since it opened. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly in regard to teaching, and make a good contribution to the school improvement plan. Governors regularly receive information to help them compare the school's performance with other similar schools. They hold the headteacher to account for the performance of all groups of pupils, including pupil premium pupils, and know how the funding is being spent. They fully understand the importance of getting the right link between teacher performance and pay progression. Governors come into school to observe teaching in their area of responsibility and attend training events and complete online training. The school is financially sound.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137978
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403722

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robin Sharpe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Neil Spencelayh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01522 869590
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