

The Pilgrim School

Carrington Drive, Lincoln, LN6 0DE

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most groups of pupils make good progress. More-able pupils make outstanding progress.
- Many pupils at Key Stage 3 successfully return to their mainstream schools.
- At the end of Year 11, most pupils enter further education because the school prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of learning and use every opportunity to extend pupils' thinking in lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and their behaviour is outstanding. Many pupils make excellent progress in their behaviour and attendance. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning enable them to make good progress.
- Good leadership and management have enabled the school to make good progress since its last inspection. Senior leaders have ensured teaching continues to improve, and have developed an outstanding curriculum which has a positive impact on learning and pupils' well-being.
- The governing body oversees the work of the school effectively and supports leaders in sustaining good teaching and achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few pupils with a statement of special educational needs do not make as much progress as their classmates. This is because information about their prior attainment is not always used well enough to match tasks to their level of ability.
- Teachers do not always inform pupils of their next steps for learning or how to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar when their books are marked.
- Subject leaders are not yet monitoring the impact of teaching on the learning of all groups of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 lessons across four sites taught by eight teachers. Six lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors held meetings with a group of pupils and informal discussions with pupils on each site. Meetings were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body, subject leaders and senior leaders and a local authority representative. Telephone discussions were held with a small number of parents and another member of the governing body.
- The inspectors looked at responses to the school’s own survey of parental views as there were too few completed returns to the online survey Parent View. They also considered the views of 15 staff who returned questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation including its summary self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the school’s records of lesson observations over three years, the recent local authority review of teaching and achievement, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding policies and records of attendance and behaviour.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils’ work on each site including a joint scrutiny of pupils’ work with the English and mathematics co-ordinators on the Lincoln site.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Pilgrim is a hospital school which serves the whole of Lincolnshire and is located on four sites across the county. The main site is in Lincoln and the other sites are in Mablethorpe, Deeping St James and Boston.
- Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are taught on each of the sites. Short-term individual home tuition is provided for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, while they recover from illness. Currently, there are very few pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and there have been no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage for the past five years. Consequently, provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage was not inspected. Almost all pupils are dual registered with mainstream schools.
- The majority of pupils have histories of disruption to their education and poor attendance prior to their admission to school. Many attend part time while they are recovering from illness and gradually build up to a full timetable when they are well enough to engage in learning on a full-time basis. All pupils, other than those with a statement of special educational needs, are supported at school action plus. A significant number of pupils have a statement of special educational needs for additional disabilities and learning difficulties, mainly due to autism.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise achievement, particularly for the few pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, by:
 - always using the information about their prior attainment to match learning tasks to pupils' levels of ability
 - making sure all pupils always know their next steps for learning and how to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - ensuring subject leaders make regular checks on how well teachers are meeting the learning needs of all groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment of entry is below average overall and sometimes it is significantly below average because pupils have not attended school for some time. Nearly all pupils make good progress from their relative starting points to reach broadly average standards by the time they leave school.
- More-able pupils make outstanding progress because their learning tasks are always challenging and teachers skilfully use questioning to extend their thinking. These pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and really want to achieve to their full potential. As a result, many leave school with a range of GCSE subjects at the higher grades and sustain their places in further education.
- The levels of attainment in English and mathematics and at GCSE for those pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support are the same as their classmates. They also make the same good progress as others do in lessons.
- Many pupils at Key Stage 3 return successfully to their mainstream schools because the school supports their transition well by liaising closely with their home schools.
- At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress in work-related learning and in their academic courses, helped by good independent careers guidance and support. Nearly all pupils attained five A* to G grades, including mathematics and English at GCSE or equivalent, in 2013 which is a marked improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils choose examination courses in subjects that they find most interesting, such as GCSE psychology and BTEC engineering, which motivates them to do well. Consequently, students are well prepared for the next stage of their education and manage to sustain their places in further education over time.
- Pupils who attend regularly develop their reading, writing and numeracy skills quickly because these are usually promoted well across different subjects, although the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar is not always promoted as well as it could be in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The majority of pupils with a statement of special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates but a few do not. Information about their prior attainment is not always used well enough to match tasks to their levels of ability.
- School data show that pupils on individual home tuition are making good progress as a result of effective one-to-one teaching. A very small number of pupils at Key Stage 2 are making outstanding progress through highly effective one-to-one tuition at home.

The quality of teaching is good

- Nearly all teaching is good and this is consistent across all four sites. There has been a steady rise in the proportion of outstanding teaching since the previous inspection as a result of the effective management of teachers' performance.

- Teachers maintain excellent relationships with their pupils, providing praise and encouragement to build their confidence to do well as they re-engage with learning. In discussion, all pupils spoke very highly of their teachers in helping them to succeed.
- In all lessons, teachers challenge the thinking of all pupils, especially the more able. In a Year 10 psychology lesson, pupils were asked to define introversion, extroversion and neuroticism. They were then challenged to look at Eysenk's research on personality traits within the military and say whether it was sufficiently reliable to apply to the general population, which they did.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught well, although pupils' use of spelling, grammar and punctuation is not always promoted well enough in subjects other than English. This was evident when pupils were writing in lessons where teachers missed the opportunity to correct punctuation, spelling or grammar. It was also evident in pupils' books, where marking did not always identify the next steps for learning, particularly in improving punctuation, spelling or grammar.
- Teachers generally make good use of the information about pupils' prior attainment to match learning tasks to different ability levels and especially to challenge the thinking of more-able pupils through skilful questioning. Occasionally, teachers do not use this information well enough, especially in breaking tasks down into smaller achievable steps for those pupils who find learning more difficult, including pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils' learning and progress by defining any technical words and using examples to clarify meaning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around each of the sites is outstanding. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need for good behaviour in school, at home and in the community. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and show the utmost respect for staff.
- Most pupils make rapid progress in their attitudes to learning which are good because staff have excellent relationships with them.
- Given the nature of their medical needs, where pupils are often absent for sustained periods due to illness or treatment, attendance is below average. Nevertheless, pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in learning.
- In discussion, pupils highlighted the benefits of the new 'Resilient Me' programme of personal, social, and health education, developed by staff, which is having a marked effect on pupils' confidence and enabling them to come to terms with trauma in their lives.
- Pupils stay safe in each of the sites, they use computers safely and avoid the use of mobile phones in school. They keep safe during work experience where all placements are fully assessed for potential risks.
- Pupils acknowledge that bullying is rare and if it should occur, they said that staff would deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils have a good awareness of the different types of bullying and their work shows that they have considered the impact this would have on others and looked at ways of preventing it.
- Parents, in the school's own survey and in discussion, confirmed that behaviour and safety are

consistently good.

The leadership and management are good

- Excellent leadership and direction from the headteacher and senior leaders have ensured continuous development since the last inspection and a strong drive for further improvement among the staff. There has been effective action in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Subject leadership has been strengthened so that these leaders are now monitoring the quality of teachers' planning, moderating their assessments of pupils' progress and scrutinising their work. However, they do not observe teaching directly in lessons to check on the impact of teaching on the progress of different groups of pupils in their subjects, especially those who have a statement for their additional special educational needs.
- The management of teachers' performance, through regular lesson observation, the setting of targets and providing a range of support to meet those targets, is good. This has resulted in an increase in the proportion of outstanding teaching over the last three years and a rise in pupils' achievement, particularly for more-able pupils.
- Leaders provide pupils with excellent opportunities to choose different course of study to follow based on their interests and capabilities. Students may choose from mainly academic, a mixture of academic or work-related or mainly work-related approaches. For example, pupils have opted to follow courses in engineering, animal care and psychology based on their interests, which they intend to pursue in further education and employment when they leave school. The school makes good use of pupil-premium funding to provide a range of different work-related courses to meet pupils' individual needs and interests.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively, through the 'Resilient Me' programme where they develop awareness of diversity and through subjects such as religious education, art and music. For example, in religious education pupils learn about how different faiths view the story of creation.
- Their spiritual development is greatly enhanced as they gain in confidence and have opportunities for reflection, for example, in the completion of their well-conceived personalised career plans giving careful thought to the further education courses they will pursue when they leave school.
- The school has developed strong partnerships with local schools and colleges to make sure the pupils transfer smoothly. It works closely with health professionals and the child and adolescent mental health professionals to ensure pupils' medical and mental health needs are carefully considered in planning their education.
- The local authority professional adviser has recently visited the school to observe teaching and look at its impact on the quality of pupils' learning and achievement and provides a light-touch general overview of its work.
- The school has developed strong links with parents as seen in their very positive responses in the school's survey and in their telephone comments during the inspection.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors oversee the work of the school by carefully scrutinising reports from the senior leaders, which they challenge at their meetings. They have evaluated their own work to identify strengths and areas which they could develop. They gain first-hand knowledge of the school, particularly in how the quality of teaching is improving, through regular visits. Governors use data to consider whole school priorities for development and in ensuring performance management is based on pupil outcomes so that good teaching is rewarded and any weaknesses are tackled effectively. Governors manage financial resources well and hold the school to account for its spending, particularly on the use of pupil-premium funding. They make sure that statutory requirements are met, especially for safeguarding. They do this through for example, the close checking of the suitability of staff to work with children and, updating policies and ensuring risk assessments are carried out on each of the sites and on work experience placements.

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	120753
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	424951

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Thornalley
Headteacher	Christine Seymour
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2010
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