

Inspection of The Donington Cowley Endowed Primary School

Towndam Lane, Donington, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 4TR

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy attending this school. They say they feel safe. The school has high expectations for every pupil. Well-established routines enable pupils to meet these expectations. As a result, lessons are calm and pupils are able to focus on their learning. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their lessons.

Pupils' behaviour in class, around the school and at breaktimes is good. Pupils' relationships with each other and adults are strong and caring. High-quality pastoral support is available for pupils or parents to discuss any concerns they may have. This includes help for pupils in managing their feelings and behaviour. Pupils value the rewards they receive for working hard, including lunchtime golden tickets and time with Arlo the school dog.

Pupils develop their leadership skills as reading ambassadors and school councillors. Many pupils pursue their interests in football, netball, craft and cooking in a range of clubs at the school. Participation in the school art exhibition and the school musical, 'All for 1,2,3,4', allow pupils to excel in art and music. Visits to London and a residential visit widen pupils' horizons and develop their character. Pupils delight in fundraising and make a positive contribution to the local community.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's ambition for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is reflected in the broad curriculum, which has been strengthened over the past two years. The curriculum sets out what pupils will learn as they progress through the school. In lessons, staff present information clearly and demonstrate good subject knowledge. They check pupils' understanding regularly and help them when they find work challenging. This means pupils gain a secure knowledge in much of the curriculum. However, the school recognises that there is more to do to ensure that teachers teach key knowledge in wider curriculum subjects consistently well. In addition, in some subjects, the approach to identifying gaps in pupils' learning is not consistent. As a result, the school is not able to identify precisely what pupils need to do to improve in these subjects.

Reading is a priority across the school. Staff teach the school's phonics programme consistently well. They read to pupils every day. In the Reception Year, children learn to love stories and reading from an early age. Staff identify weaker readers early on and give them effective support to catch up and keep up with their peers. Older pupils continue to enjoy reading. They tackle books of increasing difficulty with confidence and make good progress. However, this is not reflected in the school's 2024 published outcomes for reading.

The school is ambitious for pupils with SEND to achieve well. Support for pupils with SEND is a significant strength. The school identifies the needs of pupils promptly. It seeks appropriate advice from external agencies to support pupils' specific needs. Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. Plans to support their learning are clear. Staff use the

plans consistently effectively to adapt their teaching to meet these pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Children make a positive in early years, particularly in reading and mathematics. Children enjoy their time in the setting. The learning environment is child focused, calm and engaging. Lots of well-planned play opportunities give children a chance to practise and deepen what they know. When necessary, direct instruction from staff is used well to engage children in the activities provided for them.

The school is tenacious in its approach to attendance. It checks pupils' attendance closely. The work the school does with families is improving the attendance of some pupils who are absent from school too often. A behaviour curriculum, based on '5 Rs' (respect, responsibility, relationships, resilience and reflection), begins in early years and reinforces good conduct at the school.

The curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils to become responsible and thoughtful citizens. It also gives pupils the chance to experience the world beyond Donington. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Regular debate enables pupils to be tolerant and respectful of difference and of others. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of major faiths is secure. Pupils speak confidently about fundamental British values.

Governors hold leaders to account effectively and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Their evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement are insightful. Staff say leaders consider their workload and well-being. Staff enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not established a consistent approach to identifying gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, the school is not able to identify what pupils need to do to improve. The school should ensure that checks across all year groups and in all subjects give staff the knowledge they need to determine the right next steps for pupils which meet their needs.
- In some foundation subjects, the planned curriculum is not implemented in line with leaders' expectations as core knowledge and disciplinary knowledge are not taught consistently well. This means that pupils do not learn this content securely and are not able to deepen their understanding as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers have the expertise to deliver the intended curriculum in all subjects so that pupils build the knowledge and skills they need.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked-after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	120556
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10347434
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rob Cole
Headteacher	Sophie Foston
Website	www.cowley.lincs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Horizon Schools Federation with The St Gilbert of Sempringham Church of England Primary School.
- The headteacher took up their post in January 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and governors.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and two assistant headteachers. They also held meetings with leaders responsible for behaviour, attendance, reading, personal development and SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.
- The lead inspector took account of the responses from parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses. He also took into consideration the online Ofsted staff survey.
- The lead inspector spoke with the local authority school improvement adviser.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Stevens	Ofsted Inspector
Priya Saujani	Ofsted Inspector

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