

Orchard School

South Leverton, Retford, DN22 0DJ

Inspection dates

8–10 July 2014

Overall effectiveness

Good

2

Achievement of pupils

Good

2

Quality of teaching

Good

2

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

2

Leadership and management

Good

2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress in all key stages, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Some pupils make outstanding progress, most notably in reading.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well. They plan interesting activities that engage pupils effectively in their learning.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Key skills in English and mathematics are developed widely in other subjects.
- Pupils behave well. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils are respectful, considerate, cooperative and caring. They have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils are kept safe and they say they feel safe. School leaders, including the proprietors are meticulous in their work in safeguarding and protecting the welfare of the pupils.
- Leadership is focused on enabling the school to fulfil its main aim of successfully ensuring all pupils achieve what they are capable of. The proprietors demonstrate a very strong commitment to secure equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- All staff work collaboratively together and they are supported effectively by the leadership team. As a result the quality of teaching and pupil achievement has improved since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not have annual targets to help them improve their practice still further.
- Planning for improvement in younger pupils' achievement is not sharp enough because the school does not compare its performance with national norms.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (the independent school standards) and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The quality of teaching was observed in 16 part lessons, including 10 joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior staff.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line Parent View survey to gather parents' views. Inspectors spoke to several parents at the beginning of the inspection.
- A meeting was held with representative pupils and inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection in order to gather their views.
- A high proportion of the staff completed the staff questionnaire and spoke with inspectors and their views have also been taken into account.
- Pupils' work was looked at during lessons and a more detailed scrutiny was made of a sample of pupils' written work. A group of pupils read to an inspector.
- A range of written evidence was scrutinised, including evidence about the progress made by pupils, teachers planning and marking, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Webster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Orchard School is an independent day school that is registered for 256 boys and girls between the ages of two and 16. It opened in 1977. It currently provides full-time education for 144 boys and girls between the ages of three and 11. The Early Years Foundation Stage operates on a different site from the rest of the school. The provision for two-year-old children is inspected separately by Ofsted.
- The school is co-owned by two proprietors, one being the headteacher.
- It is a preparatory school that seeks to prepare its pupils for entry to independent or grammar schools at the ages of 11 or 16, although many eleven-year-olds choose to continue their secondary education at this school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well below that found generally. No pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- At the time of the inspection Year 10 pupils were on work experience and Year 11 pupils had completed their exams and had left school. Other than the work experience, the school does not use additional provision.
- The school was last inspected in April 2008. Since then there have been changes in staffing, including several new teachers, teaching assistants and two assistant headteachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching so that more pupils make outstanding progress by:
 - making sure that work is always pitched at the right level of difficulty
 - using probing questions to assess the extent of pupils' understanding in lessons and move their learning on more quickly particularly for the most able pupils
 - setting annual targets for all teaching staff which are reviewed regularly to secure further improvements in the quality of teaching with appropriate training and support.
- Refine the role of teachers with subject or key stage responsibilities so that they have an even greater impact on pupil achievement and the quality of teaching by:
 - using pupils' progress information to set challenging targets in improvement planning and comparing them to national achievement so they know how well they are performing.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- From broadly expected starting points, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1, all children have skills, knowledge and understanding that are at least typical for their age, in all seven areas of learning. Some children exceed these age-related expectations. Teaching prepares children very well for Key Stage 1.
- From Year 1 onwards, supported by effective teaching, pupils continue to achieve well. Most pupils make better than expected progress from their starting points. There are no differences in the progress different groups of pupils make; boys achieve as well as girls, and the most able pupils make at least as much better than expected progress as all other groups.
- There is a strong emphasis on teaching pupils to acquire effective skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers plan well to ensure that these key skills are developed and extended through a wide range of subjects, including statistics, citizenship and other languages, including French, German and Latin.
- Two years ago, the school quickly recognised that achievement in science was not as good as in other subjects and focused on improving the teaching and leadership of this subject. Pupils are now given the opportunity to study those science subjects that interest them and which challenge their thinking. As a result more pupils are achieving the higher grades and now make good progress.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have well-developed skills and a broad range of knowledge and understanding. Pupils have good opportunities to write in both English lessons and in other subjects.

Pupils read widely and often, both in school and at home. They use phonics (the sounds letters make) accurately to read unfamiliar words. Pupils develop a love of reading at a very early age. In Year 2 pupils talked about their favourite authors, including Roald Dahl. They discussed how they enjoy reading 'The Witches' and 'The Fantastic Mr. Fox', reflecting their extensive and well-developed reading skills. Progress in reading is rapid across the school.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given good support. Their progress is carefully monitored and they have individual education plans to make sure that activities help them to work at a good pace. They benefit greatly from the small class sizes as well as weekly 1 to 1 tuition to boost their progress.
- Older pupils benefit from specialist subject teachers. They continue to make better than expected progress in Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4. Pupils study a comprehensive range of subjects, and work towards an impressive number of GCSE's, from 13 years onwards. In 2013 77% of pupils achieved 5 A*-C, with many achieving ten GCSE grade C or above. This year, most pupils are on track to achieve similar results.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Teaching is good because teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils very well. Activities are planned to build on what pupils know and can do. Work is relevant and practical. Learning is often reinforced through first hand experiences. Following a visit to a Sikh Gurdwara, pupils shared a Sikh meal. The teacher questioned them to deepen their understanding about equality, and one pupil explained 'No-one is better than anyone else'.

- Staff have good subject knowledge, and they often enthuse pupils to want to learn more. In an English lesson, pupils were highly motivated to write a diary entry in response to reading a passage in the story of 'Waiting for Anya' by Michael Morpurgo. This had fired their imagination and creativity. Pupils responded by writing for meaning, empathising with the characters, within the context of a German occupation. At the end of the lesson the teacher read out another extract of the story, skilfully leaving pupils in suspense, as to what was going to happen next. One pupil echoed the thoughts of all, exclaiming 'You just leave it there...'. This secured rapid progress.
- Teachers assess and track individual pupils' progress regularly, and, for the most part, they use this successfully to inform the work that they set. Very occasionally, they do not always pitch work at the right level of difficulty. On these very few occasions, the most able pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of. Observations and pupils' workbooks confirm that teachers are good at asking probing questions but again, very occasionally, they are not probing enough.
- The assistant headteacher has implemented this new tracking system to monitor pupils' attainment and progress and this is having a good impact on teaching as teachers now have a better understanding of how well pupils are succeeding. However, this information is not checked against national progress rates. As a result, until the GCSE years, the school does not know with certainty, how well it is doing, compared to the national picture.
- Pupils are able to study a wide range of subjects including creative subjects such as music, art, French, German and Latin. Pupils' work in their books shows that languages are taught well. Pupils become well-rounded learners, and develop a breadth of knowledge.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is also good. All the learning and developmental requirements are met. Staff plan activities which are practical and they make learning fun. Children are engaged in their learning and are able to sustain their concentration. Adults are skilled in interacting with the children in order to model and extend their learning, including their language and communication skills.
- The school has worked hard to improve the quality of marking and it is effective. Pupils are provided with regular feedback on how well they are doing, with clear pointers for improvement.
- Homework is given regularly and linked to pupils' learning in school. It provides good opportunities for pupils to practice and reinforce and extend their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

- Pupil's behaviour is good. Relationships are strong, as one pupil told inspectors 'We all get on well together'. Pupils work hard and because teaching generally engrosses pupils, their love of learning is tangible. Pupil's attitudes to learning are good and it is only on the odd occasion, when the level of challenge slips a little, that their motivation declines.
- Pupils have pride in their work and in their school. They present their work carefully, which is neat and tidy. Classrooms are well ordered. Displays support pupils' learning and also recognise and celebrate their efforts, raising their self-esteem and confidence. The school's records show that the good behaviour observed during the inspection is typical of behaviour overtime.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage also behave well. They have excellent manners, are

considerate of adults and each other, and very cooperative with each other both in their work and play.

- The school's work to promote pupil' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The local chaplain and the assistant headteacher share the lead on this subject. Through Religious Education, personal and social lessons, and through assemblies, visits and visitors, pupils are developing a good understanding of a wide range of topics, for example, different cultural heritages and religions, democracy, human rights, and criminal law. As a result of these activities, pupils have a strong understanding and appreciation of right and wrong, as well as injustice, discrimination and prejudice. Staff make sure that there is an unbiased approach to the teaching of political issues.
- Numerous activities encourage pupils to contribute to the local, national and international communities, including fund raising. Pupils have the opportunity to achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's bronze Award in Year 10 and silver in Year 11. As a result pupils' grow in self-belief, maturity and become responsible citizens.
- Pupils attend regularly and they are punctual. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including on the Internet. They know about different forms of bullying and say that there is little bullying in school, which is confirmed by the staff and by the school records. Those parents who spoke to inspectors were confident that the school keeps their child safe.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently well, including those pupils with challenging behaviour. Over the last academic year there has been a reduction of short term exclusions.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Leaders, demonstrate a strong commitment to the safeguarding of pupils. Arrangements for the recruitment of staff and appropriate training, for example in child protection and first aid, are robust.
- The school undertakes all risk assessments required for trips and visits. All the necessary safety checks of equipment are undertaken and the premises and accommodation support good quality education.

Leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, is well supported by the assistant headteachers. They have secured further improvements since the previous inspection, including the quality of teaching and good achievement in all key stages. They are totally committed to meeting the school aim of ensuring every pupil achieves what they are capable of, irrespective of their background. They have ensured that all the regulations are met.
- Self-evaluation is accurate, because it is based on sound evidence and leads to effective planning for the future. Secondary subject co-ordinators, the Early Years Foundation Stage and the primary co-ordinators are responsible for their subject or key stage. They use pupil progress information to plan work together, as well as identifying any underachievement, and targeting additional support where it is needed. The improvement plans are useful but do not always have measurable targets based on pupil progress.
- All staff share their leaders' ambition. Led effectively by the school's middle managers, teamwork is excellent and staff morale is high. Staff work well together, sharing good practice, and modelling key strengths in their teaching. They readily and enthusiastically work to promote

pupils' welfare and to enrich pupils' experiences through a wide range of activities at lunchtime and after school.

- The headteacher and assistant headteacher check the quality of teaching. Their monitoring is accurate. They provide effective feedback outlining key strengths and areas for improvement. However, this information is not used to set annual personal targets for improvement with tailored support and training to enhance the quality of teaching still further.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. Pupils have many opportunities to study a wide range of subjects and to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in many different situations in the school and beyond. Pupils learn through many first-hand experiences, including visits to the theatre, and field trips in this country and in France and Germany. Pupils have valuable careers advice and support, and all Year 10 pupils successfully take part in work experience. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education.
- All procedures and policies are followed effectively, including those relating to health and safety. The co-proprietor undertakes all checks for health and safety and ensures that all regulations are met meticulously. Likewise the headteacher and assistant headteacher lead well on all safeguarding procedures, including safer recruitment, and child protection. Pupils are kept very safe.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	122933
Inspection number	443469
DfE registration number	891/6015

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	All-through school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Number of part time pupils	10
Proprietor	Sandra Fox and Philip Atkinson
Headteacher	Sandra Fox
Date of previous school inspection	April 2008
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,200 -£6,825
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