

Welton St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy

Address: School Drive, Welton, Lincoln, Lincolnshire, LN2 3LA

Unique reference number (URN): 139187

Inspection report: 2 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils' achievement in national tests consistently exceeds national averages. Over their time at the school, pupils gain the essential knowledge in reading, writing, mathematics and communication that they need to progress to the next stages of their education. This means that pupils develop their confidence with learning new skills and achieve highly across the curriculum.

Staff provide targeted and bespoke support for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from support that is tailored to their specific needs. Pupils who are in receipt of additional funding make sustained and significant progress from their individual starting points in learning the curriculum in line with their peers.

Pupils' work across subjects and year groups is consistently of high quality. Pupils talk confidently about their learning and show pride in their work.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance at the school is consistently above national averages. This is because staff have created an environment, where pupils have a clear sense of belonging. Staff help pupils to overcome any barriers to attending well. They establish positive relationships with families. Leaders carefully track absence and act quickly to offer timely support to families.

The school is a positive place to learn. Pupils feel safe. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils are polite and respectful. They show positive attitudes to their learning. The school is calm. Pupils talk about and live out the importance of 'treating others how you wish to be treated'. They understand the importance of showing the school's values of trust, love and friendship, peace, respect, forgiveness and responsibility. Pupils act with growing maturity and independence. Children in the Reception Year concentrate well and develop strong learning behaviours. Pupils in all year groups build on this positive start. Older pupils support younger pupils during social time in joining in with the vast array of activities on offer at the school.

Pupils feel safe because staff create a calm, orderly and supportive environment in which pupils thrive. Although extremely rare, any incidents of bullying are immediately and effectively dealt with. Leaders monitor behaviour carefully and respond quickly and effectively when incidents occur.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. Decisions across all aspects of the school's work are clearly focused on pupils' best interests and the vision of the school to be a place, where all children 'flourish'. The school is at the heart of the community and is highly regarded, both within the local community and beyond.

Leaders have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. Professional learning for staff is aligned to these priorities and, where appropriate, is tailored to individual needs. They have created an environment where staff at all levels strive for excellence. Consequently, staff at all stages of their careers continually strengthen their subject knowledge and refine their teaching practice. They make effective use of professional learning networks and leaders ensure that staff have opportunities to share best practice across the school and beyond.

Trustees live out the vision of the school and share leaders' high ambitions for pupils. They provide well-informed, purposeful challenge alongside appropriate support.

Leaders place a high regard on staff's wellbeing. Staff consistently report that leaders are approachable, caring and mindful of workload. Leaders have created an environment, where staff feel empowered and encouraged in their roles. They regularly seek staff feedback to evaluate the impact of their actions, which helps staff to feel valued and supported.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school's work. They comment favourably on the school's caring and nurturing staff and environment, alongside recognising the wide range of opportunities available to pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

While attending this school, pupils become thoughtful, considerate individuals, who broaden their horizons. Leaders have carefully considered pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils are given the opportunity reflect on their own beliefs while considering the beliefs of others. They show compassion and make well-considered choices.

Leaders have thoughtfully designed a personal development offer that is reflective of the local community and underpinned by the school's values. The offer is ambitious and provides pupils with the guidance that they need to continue to thrive beyond their time at the school. Leaders ensure that the programme is adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils benefit from meaningful experiences, such as residential visits and being part of community events. Pupils are very proud to be hosting an event to celebrate the school's 200th anniversary. They are enjoying learning about the history of the school and engaging in activities, such as maypole dancing.

Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy lifestyles and relationships. They learn what it means to be a good friend and about recognising risks, including when online. Pupils are able to talk about their learning connected to the personal, social and health education curriculum. For example, younger pupils can talk about the recent work they have undertaken connected to understanding ultra-violet rays and the importance of sun protection.

Pastoral support is of consistently high quality. Leaders have responded to changing needs within the school community and have ensured that there are clear support systems in place for children and their families. Staff and parents feel that this valued support enables pupils to get support quickly to help them overcome any challenges that they may face.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. This includes clubs such as ballet and various sports. Pupils are proud to be members of the school community. They

take on a range of leadership opportunities, where they take a lead on making decisions to support the school.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The curriculum is well designed and ensures that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, gain the essential knowledge needed for their next stage of education. Leaders have identified appropriate areas for improvement, for example providing pupils with further opportunities to practise applying what they have learned in mathematics. Leaders have improved the teaching of writing and the impact on pupils' work is evident across the curriculum.

Staff use secure subject knowledge to design activities that enable pupils to gain the fundamental knowledge they need of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils develop secure phonics knowledge and build an understanding of a range of different texts. Staff match books closely to pupils' reading knowledge and give pupils regular reading practice. This helps pupils develop accuracy, fluency and confidence in their reading.

Teachers use ongoing checks effectively so that new learning builds on prior knowledge. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is carefully matched to their individual needs. Pupils who need additional support receive the help that they need to progress with their learning. Retrieval practice is well established to ensure that pupils are able to recall their learning over time. Leaders have identified that, at times, opportunities to deepen pupils' reasoning, curiosity and independent thinking are not consistently embedded.

Early years

Expected standard

Children in the early years make a positive start to their time in school. They benefit from a highly effective and carefully considered transition programme. This enables children and their families to feel part of the school community.

Positive relationships exist between staff and children in the early years. Children are well cared for by kind and nurturing staff. There are clear routines in the early years environment, which means that children know what is expected of them and what to do if they need any help. Children are eager to learn and develop new skills. There is a focus within the environment on developing children's communication and language. Typically, high-quality interactions help children to develop their vocabulary.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers to their learning are well supported by staff. Children make very positive progress through the curriculum by the end of Reception.

The curriculum has been carefully considered to ensure that children develop their communication skills. Carefully planned activities address all areas of learning. The learning

opportunities and intention behind some of the outdoor activities are not consistently as explicit as they could be but this does not prevent pupils from developing their skills across all areas of the early years curriculum.

Children learn to read well with effective phonics teaching. Those who need additional help with their reading quickly get the support that they need. Mathematics is taught through well-designed lessons that support children to develop a secure understanding of number and early mathematical concepts. On occasion, children do not benefit from opportunities to develop their mathematical vocabulary and explain their responses, to ensure depth of knowledge.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Staff know the pupils well at this inclusive school. They work together with families and other agencies to understand any barriers that pupils may be facing and act swiftly to ensure that support is in place. Leaders promptly identify any additional needs that pupils might have. This work is supported by a highly effective transition programme for children entering early years, which enables leaders to ensure that the right support is in place before the children start at the school.

Leaders follow a clear process for reviewing the strategies that they use to support pupils with additional needs. This graduated approach helps disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to children's social care, to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. At times, some of the targets used to support pupils could be more precise, which would ensure a more consistent approach to adaptation in the classroom.

Pupils who are looked after or have previously been looked after are well supported at the school. The school works closely with a range of agencies to ensure that pupils are cared for and are able to access all areas of school life. The school uses additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. This includes supporting pupils pastorally and with their academic achievement.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils experience a strong sense of belonging at this caring and welcoming school. They benefit from high-quality pastoral care and build positive, trusting relationships with staff. The values of the school are integrated through all areas of the school's work. Pupils live out the values and show care and respect in abundance.

Pupils feel safe in school. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils across the school, including children in the early years, interact positively with each other and benefit from carefully considered routines and high expectations. They enjoy attending school and this is reflected in their attendance, which is consistently above that attained in schools nationally.

From the moment they start school in the early years, pupils benefit from a carefully considered curriculum. Pupils achieve well at the school and they are encouraged to be

proud of their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, are fully supported and included in all aspects of school life. They progress very well as a result of leaders' determination to fulfil their vision to create an 'environment in which the whole school community can thrive'.

Pupils build and demonstrate their confidence and teamwork skills through a rich array of activities. They engage enthusiastically in enrichment opportunities and clubs, such as ballet, choir, chess and LEGO-coding club. Pupils take pride in helping to shape decision-making in the school. They enjoy supporting others in roles, such as play leaders, house captains and school council members. Pupils demonstrate strong moral and spiritual understanding. Pupils understand differences between people and show genuine tolerance and compassion towards others.

Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school supports them to flourish, both within the school community and beyond.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that staff check and probe pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching accordingly, to address gaps in knowledge or move pupils on to develop a deeper understanding of key knowledge across the curriculum.
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About this inspection

The school is part of a single academy trust. The chair of the board of trustees in this school is Revd Darren William McFarland.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, other leaders and staff during the inspection. They also spoke with trustees including the chair of trustees.

The school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2029.

Headteacher: Nicola Gough

Lead inspector:

Roxanne Fearn-Davies, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ian McNeilly, Ofsted Inspector

Deborah Tibble, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 2 June 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

394

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

20.81%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.79%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

9.64%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	75%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	72%	60%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	84%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	78%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	79%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	76%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	88%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	89%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	89%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	54%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	76%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	81%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	92%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	59%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	65%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	76%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	54%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	59%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	82%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	76%	59%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	61%	68%	-7 pp
2024/25 (final)	76%	69%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	54%	67%	-14 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	66%	-19 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	76%	80%	-3 pp
2024/25 (final)	81%	81%	0 pp
2023/24 (final)	92%	80%	13 pp
2022/23 (final)	59%	78%	-19 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	65%	78%	-13 pp
2024/25 (final)	76%	78%	-2 pp
2023/24 (final)	54%	78%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	59%	77%	-19 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	82%	80%	3 pp
2024/25 (final)	86%	81%	5 pp
2023/24 (final)	85%	79%	5 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	76%	79%	-3 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	3.5%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.1%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.5%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.3%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.0%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.3%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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