

Inspection of St Thomas CofE Primary Academy

Wyberton Low Road, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 7RZ

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Joanne Sharples. The school is part of Infinity Academies Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Gavin Booth, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Lancashire.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this exceptional school. Their experiences are rooted in the well-embedded school values, which are, 'compassion, trust, resilience, fellowship and respect'. These values are lived daily. Pupils are very happy and safe. They are very proud of their school. They have a strong sense of belonging.

Consistently high expectations are established for learning. Pupils work diligently. They are highly motivated. They appreciate the school's calm and focused atmosphere. They learn exceptionally well across the whole curriculum.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of purposeful opportunities to support their personal development. They willingly accept additional responsibility. For example, as language ambassadors and attendance officers. Typically, an older pupil commented, 'I am excited to make a difference to our school. I hope to be a role model to others.' Pupils are nurtured to be resilient.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences to develop their interests and talents, such as being sports players, musicians, performers, botanists and meteorologists. Their aspirations are raised and their horizons broadened. Pupils recall many happy and memorable experiences that enrich their learning, including, for example, theatre visits.

Most parents and carers are very positive about the school. A parent, echoing the views of many, commented 'My children are happy and they talk positively about their day at school each evening. My children are thriving at this school.'

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

Leaders, including those with responsibility for governance, lead with a strong moral purpose that places pupils at the heart of all they do. They lead with humility and dedication. They successfully build the school's excellent provision. Much of the school's work is worthy of sharing with others. This is especially the case for the school's work on curriculum ambition, its approach to checking pupils' learning and the opportunities for pupils' personal development.

The school's quality of education is exceptional. Leaders have very precisely identified the key knowledge pupils must learn and when. Each subject curriculum is suitably ambitious and builds pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills from the start of Reception to the end of Year 6. For example, children in Reception gain a wealth of scientific understanding about the world. Older pupils build on this by developing a sophisticated appreciation of biology, chemistry, physics and earth sciences. These pupils are taught to think and work as scientists by focusing on 'big questions'.

Pupils get off to an excellent start in learning to read. Skilled staff deliver the school's chosen phonics scheme well. They systematically check pupils' grasp of the sounds being learned. Staff intervene quickly to support pupils who need to keep up with their peers. Pupils learn to read fluently, confidently and with understanding.

The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is of an exceptional quality. Staff accurately identify pupils with SEND and their needs. Staff are highly skilled in adapting their teaching, enabling these pupils to access the same curriculum as their peers. The school works readily with external professionals when additional support or guidance is needed. It makes sure that pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and those who are new to English are supported to develop their knowledge of English so that they do not miss important learning.

Staff provide high-quality learning experiences. They have expert subject and teaching knowledge. They check effectively what pupils are learning and remembering. Staff address misconceptions and errors in learning swiftly. They ensure that pupils purposefully revisit previous learning. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and those who speak EAL learn very well across the whole curriculum.

The school's published outcomes for 2023 and 2024 are not reflective of the curriculum that pupils currently learn. Pupils' work is of a consistently high standard. They know and remember more of the school's well-sequenced and ambitious curriculum. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next stages of their education.

Children get off to a tremendous start in Reception. The school's early years curriculum builds strong foundations in children's learning. For example, children develop their creativity using different materials to reinforce learning about colour, texture and tone as well as techniques such as layering and scratching. Children benefit from highly ambitious literacy and numeracy curriculums. They learn to read and write well. They gain a sophisticated understanding of number. Children have purposeful opportunities to learn through play. Activities are impactful. Interactions with adults are meaningful and engaging. Staff nurture and support children's personal, social and emotional development very well.

The school establishes clear routines from when pupils join the school. Very high expectations of behaviour are met consistently. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are supported excellently to regulate their behaviour, when needed.

Opportunities for pupils' personal development are outstanding. These opportunities are purposefully planned to meet pupils' needs. The school builds pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles and relationships. They learn to understand potential risks. Pupils deepen their understanding of right and wrong. Their spiritual development is nurtured well. They gain a deep understanding of life in Britain. Diversity is celebrated. Pupils develop a deep sense of respect, equality and justice.

Overwhelmingly, staff comment positively about the school's culture. Staff are respected, valued and work collaboratively. Leaders are mindful of workload and support staff well-being. Staff are proud to be part of this successful school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	146869
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10347685
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Lancashire
CEO of the trust	Gavin Booth
Headteacher	Joanne Sharples
Website	www.stthomasacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Infinity Academies Trust.
- Both chairs of the trustees and the Academy Monitoring Committee took up posts in September 2024.
- The school is a Church of England school with a Christian ethos. It received its Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools in March 2017.
- The school uses the services of one registered 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.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector met with a trustee, the chair of the Academy Monitoring Committee and trust officers. He spoke with a diocesan officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and design, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited sample lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum, reviewed samples of pupils' work and visited lessons in a range of other subjects.
- To review 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 the views of parents who they spoke with as well as those who completed Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses. Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Chris Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

George Huthart

Ofsted Inspector

Tim Leah

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025