

Linton CofE Infant School

Address: Church Lane, Linton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB21 4JX

Unique reference number (URN): 110832

Inspection report: 23 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 ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders identify pupils' needs and any barriers to learning they face at the earliest stage. They are rigorous in seeking and securing expert assessments and advice. Consequently, the provision leaders design is very well matched to pupils' specific needs.

Leaders and staff set targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Personal plans document these targets and the precise support pupils need to achieve them. These plans are regularly reviewed, updated and shared with staff. As a result, pupils with SEND receive high-quality support that enables them to progress well.

Similar plans identify the barriers disadvantaged pupils face and outline the support they need to succeed academically and socially. This includes pupils in the care of the local authority, whose individual requirements are carefully considered. Leaders ensure that they spend the additional funding disadvantaged pupils attract wisely, for example, on staff training, additional resources and access to enrichment activities.

Leaders' oversight of provision for pupils with additional needs is meticulous and detailed. It enables them to spot when something is not working as well as intended and make the necessary adjustments. On-going effective training equips staff to expertly adapt the curriculum and their teaching. It also provides appropriate pastoral support so that pupils are able to succeed.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Support for pupils' personal development and wellbeing is extensive and impactful. It is deliberately planned to cater for the pupils' age group and needs. The personal, social and health education curriculum, for example, focuses on pupils' social and emotional development so that they are suitably equipped to cope with the challenges life may throw at them. Pupils learn how to form positive attachments, identify comfortable and uncomfortable feelings and manage disagreements between friends. Pupils' emotional literacy is well developed and their mental health supported as a result. They are confident, resilient and independent from early on in their school journey.

The school's values, the curriculum and a programme of assemblies prepare pupils very well for aspects of life in modern Britain. Pupils learn that rules exist to keep us safe, that everyone is unique and that difference is something to celebrate. Pupils vote for members of the school council, understanding that this gives them a say in the way things are run. At an age-appropriate level, pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of diversity, and fundamental British values such as democracy, tolerance and the rule of law.

Extra-curricular activities such as LEGO, art, sewing, musical tuition and various sporting activities enable pupils to discover their skills and talents. Educational visits to venues near and far extend pupils' horizons and enhance their learning. Annual whole-school trips are planned on a 3-year cycle so that every pupil has the same memorable experiences during their time at the school.

Leaders' inclusive approach permeates the wider offer. They track pupils' participation closely to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have the same opportunities as their peers. In some cases, they target individual pupils or groups of pupils so that their personal development and wellbeing needs are particularly well met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Year 1 pupils' achievement in the national phonics screening check has risen in recent years as a result of improvements in the teaching of early reading. It has been close to the national average over time and is improving year on year. In the early years, children achieve increasingly well. Typically, they are ready for Year 1 by the end of the Reception Year.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make suitable, often accelerated progress against their starting points thanks to the high-quality support they receive. Across the curriculum, pupils progress well overall. In lessons, pupils use previous learning to help them understand new ideas. In discussions, pupils generally recall their knowledge well. Pupils' work demonstrates the progress they make. In some cases, however, pupils have gaps in foundational knowledge and skills, such as handwriting and punctuation. These hamper their ability to produce high-quality work.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Regular attendance is a high priority for leaders. They promote its importance often, helping parents and carers to understand the impact absence can have on pupils' chances of social and academic success. Leaders monitor attendance levels carefully. When a concern arises, they seek to understand the reasons for absence. Leaders' knowledge of pupils and relationships with parents enable them to put the right support in place. This work is highly effective. Current attendance levels are above the national average and the number of pupils frequently absent from school is low.

Leaders' strategies for managing behaviour are rooted in relationships, respect and the school's values. Leaders and staff have high expectations. They provide explicit teaching, through the school's personal, social and health education curriculum. This helps pupils to develop skills in emotional regulation and to understand the consequences of their behaviour on others. Leaders recognise that some pupils need an adapted approach. They ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to make positive behaviour choices. As a result, there is a calm atmosphere throughout the school. In lessons, pupils are generally focused and engage well with learning. Bullying and other forms of unkind behaviour are extremely rare.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is broad, ambitious and carefully matched to pupils' needs. Their ongoing and rigorous oversight enables them to refine the curriculum if they identify areas to improve. For example, a renewed approach to teaching early reading has driven up achievement in phonics and increased pupils' confidence. More recent changes to the writing and mathematics curriculums aim to strengthen pupils' basic skills such as handwriting, number fluency and problem solving.

Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach is sound. They use a range of approaches successfully to secure pupils' understanding. For example, teachers revisit previous learning regularly. They model the use of key language structures and vocabulary, providing opportunities for pupils to practise these. Teachers check pupils' understanding often and provide feedback to help them progress. Sometimes, however, this does not lead to improvement and gaps in pupils' knowledge do not close as quickly as they could. More time is needed for the new teaching approaches to become fully embedded.

Staff know pupils' individual needs very well. They make effective adaptations to the curriculum and teaching. These enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other barriers to learning to access the same curriculum as their peers.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders give sufficient priority to the early years, with the intention of providing firm foundations for children's later learning. They have recently strengthened the early years curriculum, ensuring it maps out clearly the key knowledge children should learn across all 7 areas. The curriculum identifies milestones children should reach at each stage of the Reception Year. This helps staff to measure children's progress and prioritise their next steps.

Staff know children very well. They establish warm relationships with them from early on, so that children feel safe and happy. As a result, children are curious, confident and largely independent learners. By the end of the Reception Year, the majority of them are ready for the challenges of key stage 1.

Phonics and number facts are taught well. Consequently, children develop the basic knowledge and skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Where there are gaps in children's knowledge, staff put support in place to close these. During play-based sessions, staff work alongside children, modelling language, narrating play and asking questions to move their learning on. There is some variation in the quality of these interactions. Sometimes, they are not as purposeful or focused on children's next steps as they could be.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a deep knowledge of their school and its pupils. They keep a close eye on the quality of provision in all areas and act decisively if they see something that is not meeting their expectations or pupils' needs. Improvements in pupils' attendance, as well as

refinements to the writing, mathematics and early years curriculums are examples of this. Inclusion is at the heart of leaders' activities. They are united in their desire to provide opportunities for every pupil to succeed, regardless of their starting point.

Relationships between leaders, staff, governors, parents and carers are extremely positive. Leaders invest time and effort in building and maintaining these, for the benefit of pupils. Staff feel valued, as a result of the consideration leaders give to their workload and wellbeing, and the many opportunities for professional development they receive. Leaders see this as an essential tool for school improvement. They use internal expertise and forge effective partnerships with external agencies to offer a range of staff training opportunities that will enhance pupils' experiences.

Governors keep themselves well informed about leaders' work. They oversee safeguarding, effective use of funding and other statutory responsibilities. Governors know the school's strengths and areas to develop well. They hold leaders to account, in a supportive and constructive way, to ensure that improvements happen and are sustained.

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

Pupils attend school increasingly well because they feel happy and safe here. The school's values such as love, gentleness and kindness, underpin pupils' daily behaviour. Their interactions with each other and with staff are warm and respectful. Unkind behaviour, such as bullying, happens exceedingly rarely. Pupils know the routines and what is expected of them. Staff provide appropriate support to any pupil who struggles to meet their high expectations.

A range of exciting trips and activities enrich pupils' learning and extend their life experiences. For example, during their time at the school, all pupils visit the zoo, the seaside, and a woodland adventure park. Pupils from the Reception Year to Year 2 play a part in the running of the school by being members of the school council. A very carefully considered personal, social and health education curriculum prepares pupils extremely well for their next steps in education and in life.

Typically, pupils achieve well. The number of pupils who meet the expected standard in the national Year 1 phonics screening check is high and improving year on year. In the early years, most children reach the expected standard by the end of the Reception Year. If pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills, staff help to close these through specific teaching sessions.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged receive excellent support. Leaders and staff develop a deep knowledge and understanding of each pupil and build trusting relationships with pupils' families. This ensures that any barriers to learning and/or wellbeing that pupils face are very well understood. The support pupils receive enables them to overcome those barriers, achieve success and benefit fully from school life.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers continue to strengthen the renewed approaches to teaching handwriting and mathematics, ensuring that gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge and skills continue to close.
 - Leaders should ensure that interactions between staff and children in the early years are of a consistently high quality and enable children to deepen their knowledge and skills across all areas of learning.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Revd Michael Wilcockson.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, two assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator during the inspection. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair. She also met with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of Ely. Its last section 48 inspection was in March 2026.

The school currently makes use of no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Kelly Harries

Lead inspector:

Caroline Crozier, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Rod Warsap, Ofsted Inspector

Marcus Cooper, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

161

Below 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

180

Below 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)

19.25%

Close to average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

1.86%

Below 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

8.70%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

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).

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)	4.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	5.9%	Close to average

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)	12.7%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	17.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	16.5%	16.2%	Close to average

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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