

# Inspection of Leadenham Church of England Academy

Main Road, Leadenham, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN5 0QB

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Inspection dates:	24 and 25 June 2025
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected

The executive headteacher of this school is John Slater. This 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 Sir Steve Lancashire.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy attending this school and show interest in its broad, ambitious curriculum. The school expects high achievement. However, pupils are not yet reaching the standards they should.

Pupils feel happy and safe at school. Staff teach kindness and respect. Pupils write about their positive actions on a leaf for the 'kindness tree'. Clear routines and high expectations help pupils behave well and stay focused in class. They listen well in assembly, reflecting thoughtfully on the school's values. Pupils often play cooperatively at social times. The school has improved how it supports pupils with their behaviour. However, expectations vary. Sometimes, staff do not address poor behaviour effectively or provide consistent support. This inconsistency makes it harder for pupils to follow the school's values and expectations.

The school offers many opportunities to support pupils' personal growth. Trips to a farm, theme park, sports events, and a residential visit build character and widen pupils' experiences. Pupils looked forward to watching a tennis match at Wimbledon. They learn that resilience means not giving up. Staff teach responsibility. Pupils take active roles as sports ambassadors, school councillors or litter pickers. Several clubs based on pupils' ideas enable them to explore their interests and build confidence.

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

The school offers a broad and ambitious curriculum and has tackled the weaknesses in curriculum design found at the last inspection. It has clearly set out what pupils need to learn and organised content in a logical order to help pupils build knowledge over time. However, pupils' experience of the curriculum is too variable. Often, teaching does not focus on the most important knowledge or help pupils recall prior learning, for example. This limits pupils' ability to develop a secure understanding, and teaching does not identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school recently reviewed the curriculum in some subjects, including early years, to better match the school's context and pupils' needs. Recent changes are beginning to help some pupils make better connections in their learning. Staff are receiving support to deliver the revised curriculum, and there are signs that this is starting to improve the quality of its implementation. While staff explain new ideas clearly, correct misconceptions and are more responsive to pupils' needs, this is not consistent across the school. Although gaps in pupils' prior learning remain, they are beginning to build knowledge more securely.

The school does not set out clear targets for pupils with SEND. This means that staff are unable to adapt their approaches to teaching the curriculum with enough precision. As a result, pupils with SEND do not learn well. They fall behind their peers and do not achieve as well as they should. The school has made some improvements in this. However, these are yet to impact on the experiences in class of pupils with SEND.

The school makes reading a priority and provides a well-structured phonics programme in its curriculum. Pupils enjoy engaging books that match the sounds they know. However, the school has not made sure all staff receive proper training. Some staff lack the expertise to teach phonics and reading well, which affects how they deliver the programme. Pupils who fall behind do not get the right support to become fluent, confident readers as quickly as they should.

The school emphasises the importance of regular attendance. It monitors attendance closely and provides effective support when pupils' attendance declines. This has led to more pupils attending school regularly. Although expectations and pupils' behaviour vary, some of the school's recent improvement, such as the introduction of structured playtime activities, are beginning to build better relationships. Pupils enjoy playing games alongside staff, and the new end-of-play routines help pupils return calmly to class. However, inconsistent responses to poor behaviour mean that the effect of recent improvements is not fully embedded across the school.

The school provides for all aspects of pupils' personal development. Pupils learn the importance of keeping themselves physically and mentally healthy. Staff teach pupils to identify their feelings and manage their emotions. Younger pupils practise calming exercises after busy times of the day. Pupils learn ways to stay safe outside of school, including when they are online. They are developing their understanding of diversity and equalities. Pupils understand that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect. The school helps pupils develop empathy by reflecting on the experiences of others. For example, pupils were so moved by the plight of the rainforest, they decided against buying products containing palm oil.

Since the last inspection, there has been a noticeable decline in some areas, particularly in the quality of education and pupils' behaviour. The school leadership at all levels, including the trust, has not tackled these issues swiftly. The school has seen many leadership and staff changes, which has slowed improvement. Leadership of the school has now settled, with a clearer understanding of the areas that need to improve, and initial actions are underway. The trust is offering support, which is now starting to drive improvement.

Staff feel well supported. The school values their well-being and looks for ways to strengthen their development. Staff enjoy new opportunities to work with colleagues from a nearby school, which helps them make improvements.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school and the trust have not ensured that the weaknesses in the quality of education have been tackled swiftly enough. This means that pupils do not experience a good standard of education. The school and the trust must ensure that the actions required to improve the provision for pupils are implemented in a timely manner.
- The school has not ensured that all staff have the necessary expertise to deliver the phonics programme effectively and provide consistently effective support when pupils fall behind. This means some pupils do not progress with learning to read as well as they could. The school must ensure that staff have the expertise to teach phonics and reading effectively.
- This school has not identified the support pupils with SEND need clearly enough. This means that staff cannot adapt their teaching to help these pupils overcome their barriers to learning. Consequently, pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they should. The school should ensure that the targets for pupils with SEND are appropriate and that the support provided enables them to achieve well.
- The school has not made clear what its expectations for pupils' conduct are or how pupils can achieve these expectations. This means some pupils find it difficult to behave as the school expects and learning is routinely disrupted. The school and the trust must ensure that pupils are supported well to live up to consistently high standards of behaviour.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149272
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10379610
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	26
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sir Steve Lancashire
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Gavin Booth
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Slater
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.leadenhamprimaryacademy.co.uk">www.leadenhamprimaryacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined Infinity Academies Trust in September 2022. When the predecessor school, Leadenham Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to remain good for overall effectiveness.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2024.
- The school ceased its nursery provision for children aged two-to-four years in July 2024.
- Leadenham is a Church of England voluntary controlled primary school within the Diocese of Lincoln. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Church of England school took place in December 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection is planned to take place in the next academic year.
- 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO, a member of the board of trustees and a local academy champion.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders of the school and considered a range of documentation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered evidence about some other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors listened as some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during breaktimes.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors spoke to parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

## Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Westmoreland

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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