



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LINCOLN MINSTER SCHOOL

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Lincoln Minster School

Full Name of School	Lincoln Minster School		
DfE Number	925/6012		
EYFS Number	EY434719		
Registered Charity Number	1016538		
Address	Lincoln Minster School Upper Lindum Street Lincoln Lincolnshire LN2 5RW		
Telephone Number	01522 551300		
Fax Number	01522 551310		
Email Address	enquiries.lincoln@church-schools.com		
Principal	Mr Clive Rickart		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Linda Heaver		
Age Range	2 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	652		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):12	5-11:	157
	3-5 (EYFS):54	11-18:	429
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Susan Skinner		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	12 to 13 Nov 2014		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing on the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspection occurs over a period of two continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in May 2012.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, and examined samples of work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and a governor with special interest in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Miss Patricia Griffin

Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Irene Collins

Team Inspector for Early Years (Head of Early Years, IAPS School)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Lincoln Minster School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 2 to 18. The school was founded in 1996 through the merger of Lincoln Cathedral School, St Joseph's School and Stonehouse School, with a subsequent amalgamation with St Mary's Preparatory School in 2011. It is located in the heart of the city of Lincoln and provides an education for the cathedral choristers, both boys and girls, some of whom are boarders. Local pupils attend from throughout Lincolnshire and parts of Nottinghamshire and boarders come both from the UK and overseas.
- 1.2 The school is part of United Learning (UL), which consists of three charity boards; United Church Schools Foundation (UCSF), United Church Schools Trust (UCST) and United Learning Trust (ULT). It operates under the banner of UL and is governed by UCST. Senior executives of UL take responsibility for discharging the functions of governance on behalf of the board. The school also has a local governing body, which has delegated advisory functions in assisting the operation of the school, its chair also being a member of the UCST board.
- 1.3 The school aims to educate young people to the highest academic standard of which they are capable in an environment which promotes happiness, self-confidence, safety, respect and a growth in self-esteem. As a Christian school, it seeks to promote the teaching of Christianity and instil a grasp of spiritual values and the skills and knowledge needed to live and prosper in the adult world. The school seeks to identify talent in every child and enable them to fulfil their potential in whatever field is appropriate.
- 1.4 Since the previous ISI standard inspection and Ofsted boarding inspection in 2011, Preparatory School accommodation has changed and now occupies two sites; pupils in Years 3 to 6 occupy the redeveloped former Stonefield House site and the former St Mary's site provides accommodation for Years 1 and 2 and the EYFS. The EYFS has an adjoining secure outdoor play area. Since the previous Ofsted EYFS inspection in May 2012, a Nursery leader has been appointed. The leadership arrangements of both the senior and prep schools have been restructured and the local governing body has been reconfigured.
- 1.5 There are 66 children on roll in the EYFS, including 43 who are part-time and 12 under the age of 3. There are 37 boys and 29 girls. The children come from predominantly white British backgrounds where English is the main language spoken. Five children are learning English as an additional language (EAL), and three children have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. SUMMARY

(i) Compliance with statutory requirements

- 2.1 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
1. Make better use of the outdoor area as an extension of the classroom to provide challenging active learning tasks and opportunities for risk taking.
 2. Ensure that staff always use the opportunities provided in the timetable for reflection and observing good practice.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

3.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 3.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Consistently high standards are achieved through well planned educational programmes which help all children to reach, and in some cases exceed, age appropriate levels of development. Children with SEND and EAL are extremely well supported and all children are well prepared for each stage of their learning. Appropriate emphasis is placed on personal, social and emotional development, physical development, communication and language, particularly for the youngest children, to ensure firm foundations are set for future learning. Children in Reception benefit from taking part in assemblies and other activities with the older children. Specialist teaching in music, Spanish and physical education across the EYFS, and swimming for the older Nursery group and Reception, enriches the children's learning experience.
- 3.2 All adults have suitably high expectations, and encourage and enthuse children through a wide variety of learning opportunities, particularly indoors. The easily accessible outdoor areas are not used sufficiently well to provide challenging active learning tasks and opportunities for risk taking. Staff provide suitable opportunities for adult-led and child-initiated activities. Detailed planning and assessments identify each individual's next steps in learning, are well-matched to their needs, and thus ensure the children's progress. Adults encourage independence and a positive attitude to learning.
- 3.3 Relationships with parents are strong and staff work closely with them to ensure children settle happily into school. This excellent partnership enhances the learning and development of all children. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire parents showed overwhelming support and appreciation for the setting. They feel well informed about progress and appreciate their child feels happy and safe at school. Reports give detailed and clear information about the children's development and progress.

3.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

- 3.4 The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being is outstanding. All children, including those under the age of three and those who need additional support, are known extremely well by their key person, who recognises their unique qualities. All adults are highly effective in ensuring that all children form strong relationships at all levels. They promote the excellent standards of behaviour and courtesy expected. From a young age children treat each other with respect and form appropriate bonds with staff. Adults intervene skilfully to avert or resolve any disagreements.
- 3.5 High priority is given to the children's happiness. All adults act as excellent role models so that children learn to play imaginatively and co-operatively, as they explore their well resourced environments. Care practices, particularly for the under-threes, are exemplary. The older children manage their personal hygiene with increasing independence. All children are given numerous opportunities to be physically active and as they get older they know the importance of this. Healthy

eating is strongly promoted. Transitions between different stages of the setting and beyond are carefully managed and ensure all children are sensitively prepared for the next stage of their learning.

3.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

- 3.6 The leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. Governance is highly effective and based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the EYFS requirements. The setting fulfils its responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. The children's well-being and safeguarding are given high priority at all times creating a warm, welcoming and stimulating learning environment for all children.
- 3.7 The increasingly cohesive team shares a clear vision for the continuing progress of the setting, although staff do not make enough use of the timetabled breaks from the classroom for reflection and to observe good practice. Regular self-evaluation provides a continuous review of practice and the setting of appropriately challenging targets for improvement. Managers support staff well through appropriate supervision arrangements and appraisals, so that training needs are identified. This has a significant positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- 3.8 Strong partnerships with parents and outside agencies have been established, contributing greatly to all children's achievements. All adults work hard to promote a positive and inclusive atmosphere which greatly contributes to the progress and development of the children.

3.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

- 3.9 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding. Most children, including those with additional needs, make at least good progress overall, in relation to their individual starting points.
- 3.10 The exciting learning opportunities and level of care provided for children under three enable them to become safe, active and happy learners. They are attentive listeners, describe their feelings and experiences with increasing confidence, and develop their counting and physical skills. By Reception children express themselves articulately, they are using their increasing knowledge of phonics to write simple words, and sometimes sentences, independently. They are becoming enthusiastic readers. They work with numbers to 20 and beyond and are able to do simple addition and subtraction sums. Children use information and communication technology competently to photograph their own work.
- 3.11 The personal and emotional development of all children is excellent. They are able to share resources and take turns and they display increasing levels of independence. Excellent support systems enable them to build trusting relationships with staff.
- 3.12 Welfare and safeguarding procedures are secure, and risk assessments and fire procedures are well known. There is a shared understanding and responsibility of how to protect children. Since the previous inspection the setting has devised a clear development plan which shows a strong commitment to evaluating practice and continuous improvement. This provides all children with firm foundations for the next stage of their education and gives them opportunities to learn in a safe and extremely happy and stimulating environment.

