

Inspection of Whatfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Rectory Road, Whatfield, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 6QU

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy here. The school is a calm and caring place for them to learn and make friends. Friendships blossom amidst wide open spaces to play. Pupils know that everyone is different. They get on well with each other and are welcoming to visitors. Staff help pupils to overcome personal challenges. Pupils say that the adults help them to feel appreciated and unique.

Pupils learn an interesting curriculum from skilled teachers. Classrooms are carefully set out to give freedom of movement, a sense of personal space and opportunities to focus. Pupils know that their teachers expect them to work hard. Pupils rise to the challenge. They learn how to stay calm when things are tricky. Pupils can go to an adult for help, whether it be to sort out a friendship issue, because they are worried or if they find something difficult to understand.

Every pupil takes part in the range of extra-curricular activities and trips on offer. These include sports tournaments, visiting the owl sanctuary and learning the ukulele. Pupils can also take on responsibilities such as playground monitor, helping with worship assemblies and being part of the school council.

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

The curriculum sets out, in a logical order, the knowledge and skills that pupils will learn. The school has trained teachers in how to teach the curriculum effectively. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding. Pupils enjoy learning about the past and about the world around them. In a small number of subjects such as art, teachers are still getting to grips with how to deliver the curriculum. This means that, occasionally, pupils do not learn new concepts in enough depth.

Teachers use a range of techniques that help pupils to understand new concepts. For example, in mathematics, every lesson begins with a chance for pupils to rehearse mathematical facts and methods learned in previous lessons. However, in some subjects, pupils do not have enough opportunities to rehearse important concepts and skills, such as handwriting. As a result, in subjects such as history, these pupils do not always remember the necessary key knowledge that they need.

The school has prioritised the teaching of reading. The vast majority of pupils quickly learn to read. Lessons begin as soon as pupils join the school. Every adult is an expert in teaching reading. Staff provide extra instruction and rehearsal opportunities for any pupil who needs to catch up. Pupils enjoy being read to. They like their teachers' choices of books.

The school is rightly proud of the work it does to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families. Staff work closely with parents and carers to find out how they can best support pupils with SEND to succeed at school and in life. Leaders secure extra support from experts who can, for example, help with speech and language development or social skills. Staff do all

they can to give additional support in the classroom. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Children in the early years have the best of both worlds: a chance to learn alongside older children and an environment that supports their developmental needs. Each area of the classroom has a different and important educational purpose. Staff prioritise opportunities for interaction, hearing stories and singing songs. This helps children to develop their language, vocabulary and communication skills.

Everyone in this school is polite and respectful. Pupils learn a range of strategies to help them to keep calm. Staff model kindness and make clear their expectations of how pupils should behave. Leaders have thought carefully about and adjusted the physical environment so that it helps pupils to concentrate on what they are learning.

Leaders have set in place a comprehensive personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and safe and how to appreciate different cultures and religions. They also learn the ways that families and individuals can differ. At the same time, they learn how to embrace and understand difference, so that they can become better friends and citizens.

Leaders and governors work closely together to set out the school's priorities. Pupils' needs strongly influence these priorities. Leaders and governors regularly seek out the views of parents, staff and pupils. This has fostered positive relationships with the local community and helps leaders to find ways to minimise staff workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects such as art, implementation of the curriculum is sometimes inconsistent. As a result, pupils occasionally do not learn new concepts and skills in depth. Leaders should strengthen their oversight of these subjects and provide further training for staff in how to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Opportunities to rehearse key content and skills in some subjects are not as well developed. As a result, some pupils do not quickly catch up with skills such as handwriting. Leaders should train teachers in how to build in opportunities for rehearsal of key concepts and skills into lessons. This will enhance pupils' access to new content in subjects such as history.

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	124718
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10287109
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Heather Williams
Headteacher	Julia Shaw
Website	www.whatfield.suffolk.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	6 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is in a federation known as The Partnership of Bildeston Primary and Whatfield CEVC Primary Schools.
- The school is part of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Church of England school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in October 2016.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club which is located in the village hall.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, subject leaders and a variety of staff.
- The lead inspector met with governors and had phone calls with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.
- Inspectors carried out three deep dives into the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also looked at the curriculum and sampled pupils' work in some other subjects.
- 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 lead inspector scrutinised a range of school documentation, including governor minutes and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with parents about their children's experiences of the school. The lead inspector also considered the 22 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including four free-text responses, as well as 12 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. To gather pupils' views, inspectors spoke to a range of pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Harbrow

Ofsted Inspector

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