

Castle Acre Church of England Primary Academy

Back Lane, Castle Acre, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE32 2AR

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school has improved significantly since it opened as an academy because staff, governors and the multi-academy trust (MAT) have worked together effectively to ensure that pupils are well taught, make good progress and are well cared for.
- Leaders are ambitious for the school and are determined to ensure that it provides the best possible education. They lead the school with clear vision and determination.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. As a result, improvement plans are effective in driving forward school improvement.
- Middle leaders show a strong understanding of their areas of responsibility and have contributed well to school improvement.
- Children get a good start to school life in early years. Well-planned activities help them develop their skills, and staff create a caring and safe environment in which to learn.
- Pupils make good progress across the school and leave school well equipped to access their secondary education.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress because they are supported well.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are effectively supported to help them to make good progress in their learning.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides pupils with a good range of activities, trips and visitors to extend pupils' experiences and personal development.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is exceptional. Pupils really enjoy school, and this is reflected in their excellent attendance and very positive attitudes to learning.
- The vast majority of parents are of the opinion that their children are happy at school. Parents are unanimous in their view that they are safe and well looked after.
- The most able pupils are not always stretched sufficiently to ensure that they achieve highly.
- Pupils do not have such good opportunities to develop and practise their knowledge and skills in mathematics as they do in English.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their knowledge and skills in mathematics in order to improve outcomes further by embedding the new teaching methods
 - ensuring that the learning activities set in lessons are consistently demanding enough to stretch the most able.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have demonstrated a good determination to provide the best possible education for all pupils who attend Castle Acre Church of England Primary School. Together, they are resilient leaders and successfully influence school improvement.
- Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders have established a strong culture and an eager staff team, whose members work well together and demonstrate positive ambition for continued success.
- The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) provides a suitable balance of support and challenge to senior leaders. The trust has ensured that it has utilised its central staff to provide support to improve leaders' skills and develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Support from the MAT has been pivotal in the school's improvement. It puts in place valuable support where needed. The school works regularly with the MAT's academies executive group principal, who delivers valuable coaching for leaders and guidance for teaching staff.
- Leaders, governors and the MAT have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is embedded in leaders' examination of evidence across the school. They identify where improvements have been secured and where further improvements are needed. There are effective systems to check how well pupils are doing.
- The headteacher and other leaders carefully track pupils' progress. They hold regular discussions with teachers about how well pupils are doing and make sure that any pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly helped to keep up. Systems for checking pupils' progress are very effective, and they allow the school to provide good support for pupils in all year groups.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility and contribute to school improvement planning. They are involved in checking how well pupils are performing in their areas of responsibility, and they provide appropriately targeted training and guidance for teachers. Consequently, middle leaders accurately identify the key areas for development. Middle leaders say that they are well supported by senior leaders.
- The school is federated with two other schools. This enables staff to share expertise, refine their skills and knowledge and reflect on their own practice. Staff also benefit from working with others across the federation. They moderate pupils' work with each other. This ensures that judgements made about pupils' achievement are accurate. Teachers say that they have good opportunities to attend courses and training offered by the MAT.
- The curriculum is wide and varied. It caters well for the individual needs of pupils, and offers pupils imaginative activities to engage them. Pupils appreciate the range of trips and residential visits that the school offers.

- Leaders ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and develop well whatever their background or ability. Leaders make good use of pupil premium funding. This secures disadvantaged pupils' good progress from their individual starting points and full inclusion in the life of the school community.
- Leaders make effective use of the physical education (PE) and sport premium additional funding. The school council actively participates in the selection of new outdoor play equipment to ensure that it meets the needs of their peers. Sports instructors work alongside teachers to improve teachers' confidence in teaching PE. As a result, pupils are regularly active in competitive sports and teams.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Collective worship sessions give them opportunities to reflect on their own faith, feelings and experiences and to consider their rights and responsibilities in relation to others. Pupils have a good awareness of values such as courtesy, tolerance and a respect for differences.
- Leaders have established lots of opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. This is accomplished through assemblies and the celebration of festivals.
- The school is held in high regard by parents and the local community. The vast majority who responded to Parent View were extremely positive about the school and the care and guidance that their children receive. One parent summarised the views of many with the comment: 'I am incredibly glad we chose to send our children to this school and would have no qualms about highly recommending it.'

Governance of the school

- The governors provide expertise in different areas of the school's work. They hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They monitor the school's finances carefully, including the use of pupil premium to improve pupils' achievement and primary sport funding. They are aware of its impact.
- Governors keep detailed records of how they challenge leaders. The governing body have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They gather their own evidence by undertaking a range of activities, including school visits, and they use this evidence well to hold leaders to account.
- Governors check that the procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record meets all statutory requirements. There are rigorous processes for staff recruitment and safeguarding checks.
- The designated safeguarding leaders for safeguarding keep meticulous records of any concerns and how they have been followed up. Referrals are made to external agencies when necessary. Staff are trained and regularly updated on safeguarding arrangements. All staff understand what they need to do to keep children safe.
- Parents have total confidence in the school's work and appreciate the advice they are

given to help them keep their children safe. Parents report that they can approach the school with any problem and it will be addressed effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good for pupils of all age groups and classes within the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to organise exciting and interesting activities. As a result, pupils are well placed to learn well in lessons.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils, who enjoy learning. Teachers have well-established routines and systems to ensure that they make the most of teaching time in lessons. Pupils' previous learning is considered when teachers plan their lessons.
- Teachers' use of questioning is effective. They question pupils to assess their understanding and challenge them to make skilful use of their knowledge. For example, in a mathematics lesson effective questioning by the teacher led to pupils sharing their understanding about division to solve a problem.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive individualised support for their academic and their personal, social and emotional needs. Evidence in disadvantaged pupils' books shows they make good progress.
- The support for pupils with SEND is consistently good, which allows those pupils to make effective progress.
- In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, the teaching of phonics takes place routinely, and there is a consistent approach. The teaching of phonics is consistently strong, and this ensures that younger pupils are able to confidently work out unfamiliar words.
- Leaders' focus on developing handwriting across the school is working well. Pupils present their writing neatly and take care with the presentation of their work. Pupils are applying this skill well in other curriculum areas.
- Pupils are positive about reading and enjoy the opportunities that they are given to read to adults and their peers. There is a well-stocked library, which is a welcoming environment for pupils to enjoy and develop further their reading skills. Pupils talk proficiently about the books they are reading. Reading is well taught.
- Pupils spoke about how they enjoy science because the concepts they study 'are interesting and exciting and related to everyday life'. They spoke about how their teachers extend their learning on topics by taking them on educational visits, such as to the National Space Centre.
- Teaching assistants are competent and well trained. They make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. They understand the needs of the pupils and the way the teacher intends to deliver the task.
- Pupils' progress is not consistently strong in mathematics across all year groups. This is because pupils do not retain knowledge of the mathematical themes taught throughout the year to a high enough standard. The school have introduced a daily 'maths meeting' to revisit topics frequently, which pupils enjoy.
- The progress of the most able pupils is not always as rapid as it could be. Tasks

sufficiently build on what pupils already know, but do not always challenge the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are extremely polite and considerate of one another and offer the same respect to all staff and visitors. They have a very mature acceptance of the school's values and wear their school uniform with pride.
- Pupils make a significant contribution to the school. One example is their active work through the respected school council, which is a fully elected body. Pupils can explain what democracy is and how they have made conditions better in the school because of the school council. They enjoy meeting with school leaders to carry out their work and to discuss the future of the school.
- Pupils are very active in helping others through charity and community work. They actively support local, national and international charities. The school presently support the People for Animal Care Trust. Last year it was Save the Children. The school is at the heart of the community and is heavily supported by the local community. Events such as the annual duck race, the Christmas fayre and poetry recitals raise money for good causes. Pupils are very proud of their achievements, and they talk in great depth about the work they do.
- Pupils are supported to develop their confidence and abilities by presenting their work to the general public. For example, pupils submit work to an art exhibition at a local theatre. Pupils are very proud of their peers who have work displayed at the theatre and see it as a huge accomplishment when a piece of art work from the school is represented in the theatre community flyer.
- Pupils in Years 4 and 6 have opportunities to take part in residential visits. They value the support and care given by staff when experiencing new environments for the first time. One pupil commented: 'It is really good because some of us experience being away from home for the first time.'
- Around school and in lessons, pupils offer each other the highest levels of encouragement and cooperation. They are very patient, considerate and reassure each other if their peer is quizzical about a piece of work. They listen politely to what others say and show a genuine interest in each other's answers. One example was in a key stage 2 lesson when children were asked to listen to their peers as they discussed the arctic and the Antarctic.
- Pupils cherish the achievement of having their work on display on 'The wall that rocks' in the school corridor. Pupils talk with excitement about their own work on display as well as pieces submitted by their class. They are proud of their peers and encourage each other to do well.
- Pupils are very well educated in staying healthy. They are incredibly active in many different sports, participating in competitions against other schools and cross-country

events. They are provided with a balanced lunch menu and know how to eat healthily.

- Pupils experience a range of school trips and activities, for example at the London Natural History museum, the zoo, and at Bollywood and bhangra dancing.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes in lessons are exceedingly positive and they are wholly dedicated to learning well and succeeding. They are inquisitive, keen and have the resilience not to give up easily. They take great pride in their work and are proud to talk about their learning to their peers and adults.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is excellent. They move around safely and are well-mannered, thoughtful and considerate of their peers. They wait their turn in the lunch queue and eat their food sensibly. Lunchtimes and breaktimes are well supervised. Pupils thoroughly enjoy each other's company and participate in games, using the well-resourced outside play area.
- Pupils report that bullying is extremely rare and, should it happen, they can speak to adults who will deal with it decisively and quickly.
- The vast majority of parents agree that the school ensures that behaviour is of the highest standard and that it is promoted exceptionally well.
- Attendance is above the national average and persistent absence is low. All staff, governors and the trust work effectively to explain the importance of high attendance.
- There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions in recent years, which reflects the high standards of behaviour and development of the children.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Very small and varied numbers of pupils in different year groups make year-on-year comparisons of pupils' attainment difficult. The school's current information, including assessments of pupils on entry to the school, pupils' current progress, and work in pupils' books, shows that the majority of pupils are making good progress.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is in line with the national average. Teaching is effective, and the majority of the youngest pupils and children use their phonics knowledge skilfully.
- The progress of pupils currently in key stage 1 is good in reading, writing and mathematics. Current work and accurate assessment records show that Years 1 and 2 are making good progress. The progress of pupils currently in key stage 2 is good. The school's assessment records, pupils' work in books and visits to lessons show that pupils are making good progress. This represents an important improvement on past results.
- Writing has been a priority for improvement. Pupils get regular opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences. Pupils are carefully encouraged to consider the impact of effective grammar and punctuation in their writing. Pupils' books show that

most pupils make good progress with their writing.

- Pupils who are disadvantaged make similarly good progress to their classmates in all year groups because they get the support that they need.
- The effective use of early initial assessment of SEN pupils' needs ensures that staff know which pupils need extra support and that they deliver activities at a level that helps them to succeed.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their fluency of reading and in understanding what they have read. Pupils are enthusiastic readers. They read a range of texts by well-known and popular authors. They analyse events and characters clearly and confidently.
- Progress in mathematics is not as strong as that in reading and writing because the new teaching methods are not yet fully effective.
- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Therefore, over time, pupils do not consistently achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics of which they are capable.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of early years is good. The leader strives for the very best provision for the children and is always working hard to further improve children's achievement. The leader reflects on what works well and what needs to get better. Consequently, children get off to a good start in their early stages of education.
- Children start Reception Year with skills and knowledge which are broadly typical of their age. Every child's needs have been carefully considered so that they make good progress and, by the end of their time in the early years, they are well prepared for key stage 1.
- Children make a secure start in school from the point at which they join the early years. Children in the current Reception Year are making good progress in different areas of the curriculum. There are no significant gaps between different groups of pupils.
- Activities are tailored to the individual needs of the children. They are exciting, challenging and support the children to think deeply in ways suitable for their age and development. Children are helped to build on prior learning by provision of activities, such as a play or a story, at a level that is demanding but still within the children's reach.
- The youngest in the early years are quickly helped to settle in, and they learn how to notice and respect the needs of others, and to share.
- Children readily engage in the indoor and outdoor activities they choose for themselves or which are directed by adults. The vast majority of children are able to concentrate well for extended periods of time. They enjoy reading stories and talking about what they are learning.
- Arrangements for assessing children on entry to the early years are thorough and effective. Home visits and observations are used well to support accurate assessment.

Leaders provide children with appropriate play, work and learning activities because of the accurate assessment work. Leaders were able to give detailed information on the needs of individual children, and they could show how these needs had been addressed.

- Parents are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children. They have access to their child's learning journey through an online electronic journal. This enables parents to support learning and interests at home, as well as provide feedback to class teachers about learning and achievements outside of school.
- Phonics is taught well with a good mix of physical, visual and verbal activities. Children in the early years and key stage 1 use their understanding of letters and the sounds they make to work out unfamiliar words. This is supporting pupils in their fluency when reading.
- Behaviour is exceptional. Children have an excellent and caring relationship with the teachers and learning support assistants. They listen carefully, support one another and are starting to take on simple responsibilities, such as tidying up. Children want to learn and enjoy being at school.
- Staff in the early years provide children with a safe, secure environment in which to learn and play. The designated safeguarding officer for the school is the class teacher. Adults have a good understanding of how to keep children safe, and they know how to assess when children might be at risk.
- The progress children make can be better. Leaders are prioritising this to ensure children's learning experiences continue to positively impact on the next stages in their education.

School details

Unique reference number	142467
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10056471

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Michael Dwyer
Headteacher	Kelly Scott
Telephone number	01760 755 305
Website	www.castleacre.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	head@castleacre.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Castle Acre Church of England Primary Academy is part of a federation with two other local schools, Narborough Primary Academy and Sporle Primary Academy. The headteacher leads all three schools with the support of the deputy headteacher.
- The school converted to an academy in March 2016, sponsored by the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.
- The MAT's board of trustees has delegated responsibilities to a local governing body, shared between the federation of three schools.
- The school has a local governing body, which is responsible to the trust's board of trustees.
- The school has a Church of England designation. The last section 48 inspection of religious education was in October 2016.

- The school is significantly smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are currently three classes in the school. Reception and Year 1, Years 2 and 3, and Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium is above the national average.
- The number of pupils who have an education, health and care plan and those that speak English as an additional language is too small to report on their progress without the risk of identifying them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all three classes and attended an assembly. All of the observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of books throughout the inspection to assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the leaders for English and mathematics, the early years teacher and a lead teacher. The inspector also met with the MAT, representatives of the local governing body and the academy's executive group principal.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils formally to discuss their learning and aspects of school life.
- The inspector spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktime and at lunchtime to seek their thoughts about the school.
- During the course of the inspection, the inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during breaktime and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- The inspector heard some pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read. The inspector spoke to pupils about their reading preferences and looked at their reading records.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's website and a variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, assessment information, safeguarding documentation, the spending of the pupil premium and the physical education and sport premium, attendance records and details of the trust's work and governors' work.
- The inspector took into account the 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the accompanying 22 free-text responses. The inspector also spoke to some parents before school.
- The views of staff were gathered through discussions and from the eight responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey.
- The 11 responses to the pupil questionnaire were considered.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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