

Inspection of an outstanding school: Elveden Church of England Primary Academy

London Road, Elveden, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 3TN

Inspection date:

15 July 2021

Outcome

Elveden Church of England Primary Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Elveden Church of England Primary Academy love coming to school. They care for each other. Pupils are taught to be curious and to keep trying their best. This helps them to be reflective and resilient learners.

Pupils respond positively to adults' high expectations of them. They follow teachers' instructions promptly. They also play well together during breaktimes. Pupils are respectful of the rules and the school environment. Bullying is rare at the school. Pupils trust that staff will sort out any disagreements quickly and effectively.

The shared vision of the school is 'let your light shine'. Pupils have many opportunities to do this. For example, as part of the Young Citizen's Award, pupils raised money to support a local foodbank.

Pupils have access to an ambitious curriculum which supports pupils to be prepared for the next stage of their education. However, teachers do not routinely ensure that pupils have remembered the key subject knowledge they need to know before moving pupils on in their learning. This means that some pupils then struggle when learning newer content because their prior knowledge is not secure.

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

During the spring term 2020, leaders revised and reorganised the curriculum in all subjects. There is a logical order of how teachers should teach important subject knowledge in all areas of the curriculum, starting from, and including early years through to Year 6. Teachers focus on reinforcing subject specific vocabulary to support pupils with their progress in different subjects. For example, in music, pupils in Reception learn about

'pitch' and 'pulse'. Pupils use their knowledge of what these terms mean to help them successfully play in an ensemble. In science, Years 5 and 6 pupils were able to use the correct vocabulary to talk about electric circuits with confidence. However, when teachers' subject specific knowledge is less developed, teachers do not routinely check what pupils know and remember. Consequently, teachers move on with their teaching before pupils have a secure understanding of what has been learned before.

Reading is prioritised by leaders. Staff have had appropriate training to support the teaching of phonics. Leaders are currently considering how to strengthen the teaching of phonics across the school. Weaker readers receive extra support to help them catch up. A love of reading is encouraged. Pupils have access to a wide range of texts in the well-stocked library. This is supporting pupils to become better readers.

Staff model how they expect pupils to behave. Pupils behave well in lessons and during more unstructured times, for example, breaktimes. Pupils show respect for staff and each other. Pupils understand the school values of 'hope, trust, respect and forgiveness' and are taught how to use these in their day-to-day life.

Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils take part in opportunities to support their personal development. Pupils told us that the school encourages them to look after their physical, emotional and mental health. For example, during the school's 'spiritual day', pupils took part in a range of discussions and activities, encouraging them to take time to personally reflect on their own well-being.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Pupils' needs are accurately identified. Teaching assistants understand how to support pupils with SEND. They use a range of strategies to help pupils with SEND access all curriculum subjects alongside their peers.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They know they can speak to leaders if they have any concerns. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. Staff feel valued and listened to.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that ensuring the curriculum is fully embedded across all areas may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture. Staff are confident to report concerns. They know that leaders will act quickly to any concerns reported. Leaders provide regular 'hot topic' training on a range of safeguarding matters such as online safety. This training helps staff to know about the risks which pupils may face. Leaders ensure that pupils get any help they need to be safe.

Pupils learn about how to deal with online and offline risks. For example, pupils spoke proudly of their recent first-aid training. This helped pupils to feel confident about what to do in an emergency.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have revised the curriculum in all subjects. Teachers follow the curriculum plans in place. When teachers' subject knowledge is secure, pupils achieve well. However, there are occasions when teachers do not routinely check that pupils have the knowledge they need to be able to learn more and remember more. Leaders need to support teachers to develop their subject knowledge in all curriculum areas so that teachers know when pupils are ready to move on in their learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	139149
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10199517
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs of governing body	Lynne Proudlock and Claire Goldstone
Headteacher	Lorna Rourke and April Grimes
Website	www.elveden.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 February 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Elveden Church of England Primary Academy works in partnership with Forest Academy in Brandon. While each school has a separate local governing body, the schools share the same co-headteachers.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school is part of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The religious character of the school was inspected in October 2015 and judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection conducted at the school since the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), staff, members of the local governing body

including the chair of governors, a representative from the diocese and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, music and science. Inspectors met with curriculum leaders and teachers. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work, heard pupils read to a familiar adult and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- We carried out a scrutiny of the single central record and other safeguarding records. The lead inspector also spoke to the designated safeguarding leader.
- Inspectors considered 38 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 24 free-text parent comments, and an email from a parent. Inspectors reviewed the 16 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 58 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Maureen Su, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Katherine Douglas

Her Majesty's Inspector

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