

Inspection of a good school: Little Thetford Church of England Primary School

Green Hill, Little Thetford, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 3HD

Inspection date:

6 July 2021

Outcome

Little Thetford Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are friendly, polite, and are proud of their school. They are enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils listen thoughtfully in discussions and confidently share their knowledge and ideas. They enjoy the opportunities they have in school to develop their interests. They are particularly pleased that school trips have resumed following the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Pupils are happy in school and say they feel safe.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Younger pupils quickly learn routines that help them understand the expectations and become independent. There are positive relationships between pupils and adults. Pupils say there is always someone they can talk to if they have worries or concerns. Pupils know what bullying is. They say that bullying is rare. If it does occur, bullying is dealt with appropriately by adults in the school.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are complimentary about how the school has responded to the challenges of the pandemic. They appreciate the school's nurturing and inclusive approach, which enables their children to be successful.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have continued to develop the curriculum. Leaders have further strengthened the curriculum for English (including phonics and reading), mathematics, and science. This work has been detailed and thorough. The plans for these subjects help teachers devise lessons that build on what pupils have learned before. Teachers adapt the curriculum well to ensure that all pupils achieve well in their learning in these subjects.

Children in Reception quickly become confident readers. A systematic approach to teaching phonics and early reading is in place. Leaders have carefully considered the books and resources they use to engage pupils in reading. When they are at the early

stages of learning to read, pupils read books that help them practise the sounds they are learning in school. Less confident readers are given extra support. This helps them catch up quickly. Staff receive regular training to ensure that phonics and reading are taught consistently well. Older pupils talk with interest about the books they are reading. For example, pupils use what they have learned in history to consider in more detail stories that are set in the past. Pupils talk knowledgeably about choices authors make in their writing, and how this influences them as readers. Reading is positively promoted throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to explore new books and give feedback to authors through the school's active book club.

Pupils are becoming fluent and confident mathematicians. Pupils can confidently recall key facts and methods because curriculum plans identify regular opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learned. Pupils know that what they remember from their earlier lessons helps them learn more. The school's calculation policy clearly sets out the methods that pupils are expected to use. It also helps staff identify misconceptions and how to address them, so that pupils' mathematical knowledge is secure. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and can remember and promptly address gaps in understanding. Pupils are secure in their times-table knowledge and can talk through the methods they are using in their calculations.

Teachers adapt the curriculum well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This, along with the additional support pupils receive, helps ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well in all areas of their learning.

Leaders have reviewed the curriculum in all subjects. Leaders identified that the way the curriculum had been organised in the past has meant that pupils' learning in some subjects, for example in history, was particularly strong. However, in some subjects, for example geography, pupils have gaps in their knowledge because previous curriculum plans did not cover in similar depth what pupils needed to learn. Leaders have acted upon this. They have devised new plans for each curriculum subject that clearly show the knowledge and understanding that pupils should gain across all subjects, so pupils are well prepared for the next stage of learning. Most of these plans are already in place. Staff are receiving the training they need to teach these plans effectively.

The school contributes well to pupils' personal development. Through the curriculum, pupils appreciate the traditions and festivals of different cultures. Pupils have opportunities to take part in music and sport. Swimming lessons, which had been disrupted by the pandemic, have resumed this term.

Governors know the school well. They provide effective challenge and support for school leaders. Governors have recently reviewed the effectiveness of their work. The recommendations from this review have been implemented. This is further strengthening governors' roles in holding leaders to account.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that the curriculum for foundation subjects may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a positive safeguarding culture across the school. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront of everyone's minds. Through lessons and assemblies, pupils learn to keep themselves safe online and in the real world. Older pupils are knowledgeable about ways to maintain positive mental health.

Leaders have a clear system in place to identify, support and manage safeguarding concerns. Records are detailed and show that concerns are followed through promptly. This helps ensure that pupils and families get the support they need. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. The single central record of pre-employment checks is up to date and meets statutory requirements. All staff are checked to ensure they are suitable to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors monitor the effectiveness of the new curriculum plans and ensure they are implemented effectively so that pupils gain the knowledge and understanding they need to achieve well across all areas of the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that in implementing the recently devised plans, teachers address gaps in pupils' knowledge that exist because of previous weaknesses in the school's curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 9 June 2011.

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 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	110803
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10193982
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Hazel Morrison
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Wallace
Website	www.littlethetfordprimaryschool.org
Date of previous inspection	4 May 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantage pupils is below national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils at the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- In July 2016, the school was inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The purpose of this inspection was to evaluate the quality of religious education and the Christian nature of the school.

Information about this inspection

- We carried out 'deep dives' in early reading, mathematics and geography.
- We held discussions with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. We met with the special educational needs coordinator.
- We met with pupils to talk with them about their learning and their experiences of school. We observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and in lessons.

- We looked at documentation, including the minutes of governor meetings, the school development plan and leaders' evaluation of the school.
- We reviewed the information that is available on the school's website.
- We met with the headteacher to discuss how the school identifies and follows up concerns relating to safeguarding. We looked at the school's records of behaviour.
- We took account of feedback from 32 parents that was submitted to Ofsted's Parent View, and 24 parent free-text comments. We considered feedback from nine pupils and 11 members of staff that was submitted using the online pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Katherine Douglas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Liz Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

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