

Inspection of a good school: Great Finborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

High Road, Great Finborough, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 3AQ

Inspection date:

29 September 2021

Outcome

Great Finborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils get on well together at this small and friendly school. They are well cared for by school staff. Pupils' learning covers a wide range of subjects. However, the quality of education that they receive, including in English and mathematics, is variable. Pupils enjoy school. They speak enthusiastically about their work in music and art. They are expected to read regularly at home. After-school clubs, sports, and educational visits, for example to historic sites, are back in the timetable this term. Pupils are taught how to keep safe and to be kind to each other. Most attend school regularly.

Behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at breaktimes and lunchtimes is mostly good. Pupils trust adults to look out for them. They say that staff will sort things out if they have a problem. In the early years, children are helped to settle in quickly when they join the school. Routines are targeted at promoting good behaviour. Children are helped to focus on their learning because staff use, for example, music and interesting objects to regain their attention if they are distracted.

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

In this small school, senior leaders take on several roles, including an almost full programme of class teaching. Together with a series of staff changes over time, this has restricted their capacity to improve the school quickly.

While leaders are clear about their curriculum ambition for all pupils in the school, they have not thought carefully enough about the detail of what they want pupils to know and remember in each subject. Curriculum plans are headline statements of end points. They do not set out the precise detail of the important knowledge that pupils will need to grasp to achieve well. Plans do not pinpoint exactly what pupils will have to know to answer the questions posed to them or build in checks to find out if pupils have remembered what they have previously learned. Some staff with subject lead roles have not had the specialist training they need to plan pupils' learning effectively.

Formal and informal checks on pupils' learning are part of regular routines in reading, writing and mathematics. A new mathematics scheme has recently been introduced to help pupils to remember more of what they have learned. Arrangements for checking how well pupils are doing in subjects such as geography, history and French are underdeveloped. This is because leaders are yet to identify exactly what they want pupils to know.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) is focused securely on programmes linked to individual nurture and care. However, some of these pupils spend too much curriculum time with teaching assistants away from lessons. Consequently, they are not accessing the same curriculum as other pupils and so they do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders have made changes to promote pupils' love of reading. Regular reading at home is encouraged and enjoyed. The library has new books that pupils borrow regularly. The books used to support English, including pupils' writing, have been changed to stimulate pupils' imagination and interest. These changes are very new. Staff understanding of how each text builds on previous learning, supporting pupils to apply their knowledge to new things, is not consistent across year groups. This limits the effectiveness of teachers' planning because it is not always clear what pupils are expected to know and remember.

Reading is prioritised as soon as children join the Reception Year. The early years lead ensures that activities are planned to help children learn the sounds that letters represent quickly. Books are now more closely matched to the sounds that children are learning. Some staff have not had recent phonics training, so they are less effective in supporting children who need extra help to catch up. Work with families means that leaders have a good understanding of children's needs and interests before they join the school.

Most pupils behave well and attend school regularly. They form good relationships with each other and with their teachers. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that staff will help them if they are worried. The principles of tolerance, respect and kindness are well promoted, for example through daily collective worship and in personal, social and health education. Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including when they are online.

Staff say that school leaders are very supportive and mindful of their workload. They enjoy being part of the school's warm and welcoming community. Governors understand their responsibility to hold leaders to account for the school's performance. While governors are effective in their oversight of important aspects such as safeguarding, they

have not had the training they need to help leaders to improve the quality of education quickly.

Parents are positive about the community focus of the school. Most of those who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff training is up to date, so they know what to do if they are concerned that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders work closely with external agencies, including health professionals and the local authority, to help vulnerable pupils get the support they need. Safeguarding records are appropriately detailed. The required checks on staff suitability to work with children are completed. Governors understand their responsibilities and play their part in keeping pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In many subjects, the school's curriculum is still under development and staff are not fully trained to deliver it. Plans do not detail the important content that pupils will need to know before they move on to the next stage, or when previous learning will be revisited so that pupils remember more of what they should already know. Leaders must secure planning across subjects that pinpoints exactly what pupils need to know, when they will learn it and when aspects will be revisited, ensuring that staff are appropriately trained, including seeking external subject expertise where it is needed.
- While the welfare needs of pupils with SEND are very well supported, occasionally some of them spend too much time in interventions with teaching assistants outside lessons. Consequently, these pupils are not accessing the same curriculum as others and so not achieving their full potential. Leaders should ensure that the support in place enables these pupils to consistently access the same curriculum as others so that they can progress as well as they should.
- Governors have not had the training they need to help leaders to continue to improve the quality of education. Consequently, they are less well equipped to hold leaders to account in this aspect than they are in other areas of the school's work. Governors should ensure that they have access to suitable training so that they can evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum changes underway.

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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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 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.

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	124732
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10206464
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	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jamie Warner
Headteacher	Stephen Dodd
Website	www.greatfinborough.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Great Finborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.
- The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in 2017 and judged to be good.
- The school is maintained by Suffolk County Council and is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than average.
- The school does not make use of any alternative, off-site provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and the senior teacher, who is also the school's designated safeguarding lead and special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with other school staff, including teaching assistants, the school's business manager and midday supervisors, in meetings and informally around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and school experiences, in small groups and at play and lunchtimes.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors, and held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- In checking the school's safeguarding arrangements, inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding lead, staff and pupils. Inspectors also looked at the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on staff and a sample of other safeguarding records.
- Subjects, including reading, mathematics, art and history, were considered as part of this inspection. Inspectors held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, held meetings with staff and pupils, and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at the 38 responses and free-text comments to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff or the questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Daniels

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021