

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

School Road, Copford, Colchester, Essex CO6 1BX

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 November 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring school. Pupils arrive at school eager to start the day. They learn in a calm, friendly environment. Pupils describe adults as 'nurturing'. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Pupils get on well together and incidents of bullying are few. Pupils are confident that if bullying occurs then adults would deal with it well. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They feel confident to report any worries to members of staff.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner and show respect for one another. In lessons, pupils are attentive and disruption is rare. Pupils enjoy receiving rewards for their positive attitudes and good work.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They work hard because they want to do well. Pupils complete work to a high standard and receive the help they need to do so.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, pupils enjoyed a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits. They spoke excitedly about the full range starting again. There are opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles, such as house captains and school council positions.

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

Prior to the pandemic, leaders reviewed how teachers delivered the curriculum. They are continuing with these developments. The curriculum is now more ambitious. It is structured so that pupils spend longer studying topics in depth to develop a greater understanding of key knowledge and skills. This enables them to tackle more demanding work. Pupils say they enjoy spending longer on topics because 'the more we do, the more we remember'.

The curriculum in English, mathematics and science is carefully planned from Reception to Year 6. Pupils in each year group are well prepared for the next stage in their learning, including children in the early years who are ready for key stage 1. The curriculum makes clear what pupils are expected to know and remember at the end of each topic. Teachers use informal and formal assessment to identify pupils who need additional support or challenge. They adjust their lesson planning accordingly.

The curriculum in other subjects has been revised to allow pupils to deepen their understanding of important knowledge. In most subjects, the planning and teachers' knowledge support pupils to progress well. However, a few subjects are not yet planned with as much detail about what pupils need to learn, and teachers do not have the depth of knowledge to deliver these subjects as well as they do other subjects.

Reading is given a high priority. Children get off to a good start in Reception and this continues as they move through the school. Teachers are well trained in the school's chosen phonics programme. Pupils are given appropriate time and opportunity to practise their letter sounds. Teaching is well structured and children are interested in the reading activities that adults plan. Pupils who need help with their reading receive effective support to help catch up. Pupils like reading and there are many opportunities to read during the school day.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure pupils have access to the full curriculum on offer. They have detailed knowledge of the needs of individual pupils. Learning plans are sharply focused, enabling teachers to meet pupils' needs in the classroom. Teachers use these plans well, enabling pupils to make good progress. Leaders and staff work closely with parents and other agencies, as well as pupils themselves. Learning support assistants are suitably qualified and know the pupils well. They work effectively with the pupils they support.

Where some pupils have the most complex social and emotional needs, the support for these pupils is of high quality. Leaders work closely with the children, parents and outside agencies to put the right support in place. This helps improve pupils' anxiety and engagement with learning.

Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They receive regular reports from the headteacher about the performance of the school. Governors effectively challenge the assumptions of senior leaders.

A few parents expressed concerns about their child's learning. They feel that their child's progress is slowed as the curriculum spends too long on individual topics. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do to ensure that all parents have confidence in the redeveloped curriculum now in place.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that continuing to develop the foundation curriculum and improving parents' understanding of the curriculum may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure the appropriate checks have been carried out on all adults who work in the school. Leaders ensure that all staff are trained in the latest safeguarding guidance so that they can identify any pupil who may be at risk. All staff know that they are responsible for safeguarding.

There is a culture of vigilance within the school. Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe by ensuring reported incidents are followed up appropriately. The designated safeguarding leads work closely with external agencies and are tenacious in following up referrals.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few curriculum plans lack specificity about what content pupils must learn. Staff are not yet as well trained or as confident to deliver these subjects as they are in most other areas. As a result, staff are not yet able to provide pupils with rich opportunities to progress in these curriculums. Leaders need to ensure that these curriculum plans provide the necessary guidance to staff about the knowledge that pupils must know, and that staff are well trained in the delivery of these subjects.
- A few parents expressed concern about the structure of the curriculum. They felt that repetition of learning is preventing their children from making strong progress. Inspection evidence does not support this view. School leaders need to communicate the rationale behind their curriculum to parents more effectively so that parents have confidence and understand how the curriculum is ambitious in developing pupils' knowledge.

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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 January 2012.

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	115074
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10200317
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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katie Hansom
Headteacher	David Bome
Website	www.copford.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The number of pupils needing SEND support is below average. The number of pupils with an education, health and care plan is average.
- The school has a below average number of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, history and geography. They spoke to leaders about the curriculum, visited lessons and met with teachers from the lessons visited. The inspector looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read, from different year groups.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and members of the governing body, and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at the single central record and spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the 79 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 79 free-text responses. They also considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 65 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Caroline Pardy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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