

Inspection of Necton VA Primary School

School Road, Necton, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 8HT

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and feel safe at Necton VA Primary School. All the parents who gave us their views agreed. Pupils can explain what they would do if they had any concerns or worries. They said that bullying rarely happens at their school. If it did occur, they are confident that adults would sort out any problems quickly.

Pupils live up to the high expectations that staff have of them. Pupils show respect and courtesy to their teachers and other pupils. As one pupil said, 'The best thing about Necton is all the teachers who are kind and helpful.' Most pupils' behaviour is positive. In a few cases, where pupils need extra help to improve their behaviour, staff provide support. Pupils work together well and learn effectively. They are attentive and listen to the opinions of others. Pupils value being rewarded for their positive behaviours with merit badges, five-star learner awards and class reward systems.

Pupils enjoy the various extra-curricular activities, trips and opportunities offered to them. They would like more opportunities, but understand the limitations that the COVID-19 pandemic brings. As one school council pupil said, 'I like pottery club. School council is looking at how we can increase clubs but stay safe with COVID.'

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

Since her arrival in January 2019, the headteacher has worked effectively with leaders and governors to provide stability and high-quality provision in the school, following a period of staffing changes.

The headteacher and her team have focused collectively on creating a curriculum which builds pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding over time. Subject leaders have carefully selected what they want pupils to know and remember. Curriculum plans provide the detail of the subject-specific language and knowledge that pupils need to know. Planning is designed to help pupils build on their previous learning. The curriculum also offers vibrant and high-quality practical opportunities, especially, but not exclusively, in subjects such as music and science.

Staff provide highly effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are well trained in matching activities and resources to meet pupils' individual needs. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) swiftly identifies pupils who need extra support. Teachers and support assistants adapt their planning effectively. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well in the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders prioritise reading and promote a love of books. Phonics teaching begins as soon as children start the school. In early years, children learn to identify initial letter sounds, such as those for their own names. Staff training has ensured a consistent quality of phonics teaching. Books selected to teach children to read are

well matched to the sounds that they are learning. This quickly develops their confidence in using phonics, and improves their reading fluency. Adults ensure that pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive the precise support they need in order to keep up.

Adults deliver the curriculum confidently in most subjects. They make regular checks on pupils' learning to identify gaps. This is so that pupils get the right support and that work is well suited to their needs. However, in a few subjects, teachers' subject knowledge is less secure. Here, teachers' use of assessment does not routinely identify how well pupils have retained knowledge of the content being delivered. When this happens, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils are well supported through the school's personal social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. This promotes pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy, whether physically or emotionally. Pupils are encouraged to share their views in many ways, such as through the school council, eco council or values council. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about the different opportunities they have, such as discussing the role of Parliament, democracy and law with their local MP. They also join in 'Refugee Week', to raise awareness of challenges faced by children around the world. These activities contribute effectively to pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain.

Governors know the school well and are actively engaged in its development. They provide leaders with support and challenge, and carry out their statutory duties to continue the improvement of the provision. Most staff feel that leaders support their workload and well-being appropriately.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have been well trained and understand their responsibilities in line with statutory safeguarding guidance. They know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety. Leaders respond to these concerns quickly. They work effectively with external agencies to make sure that pupils and their families get the help they need.

The curriculum teaches pupils about how to keep themselves safe and manage risks. For instance, they know how to use the internet safely. Pupils report any worrying concerns to adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, adults' subject knowledge is not as well developed as it is in the rest of the curriculum. Adults do not adapt teaching plans or use assessment techniques well enough to find out what pupils know and can do. As a result,

pupils do not make the progress that they do in other areas of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that staff are supported to improve their subject knowledge in these few areas, so that they can deliver the intended curriculum effectively.

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	134043
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10200503
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Barley
Headteacher	Victoria Long
Website	www.necton.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Necton VA Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school's most recent church inspection was in July 2017. The school was graded as good.
- There is an on-site breakfast club, which is run by the governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders, including the SENCo. They also met with the chair of governors, together with members of the

governing body. They spoke with a representative from the diocese and from the local authority on the telephone.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and PSHE. This included meeting with subject leaders and with teachers, visiting lessons, talking with pupils and looking at pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with subject leaders for science, geography and art to evaluate curriculum planning and the use of assessment.
- Inspectors looked at the school's single central record of pre-employment checks. They reviewed the school's procedures for reporting, recording and following up on safeguarding concerns. They looked at the procedures in place to tackle bullying. Inspectors looked at records of bullying and behaviour incidents.
- Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and around the school. They talked with pupils and with staff about the procedures that are in place to manage pupils' behaviour and prevent bullying. Inspectors also considered pupils' attendance and exclusion information.
- Inspectors reviewed the 26 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online parents' survey, including the 18 free-text comments. They spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They considered the 41 responses to the pupil survey, and feedback received through the staff survey from 20 members of staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Cloke, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Simon Eardley

Ofsted Inspector

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