

Inspection of a good school: Ashwicken Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

East Winch Road, Ashwicken, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE32 1LY

Inspection dates:

27 January 2022

Outcome

Ashwicken Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Askwicken Primary School. It is a safe and friendly place in which to learn.

Pupils know that all the staff care about them and look after them well. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem. Pupils know that staff will help them with any worries they might have.

Pupils behave well in lessons. This is because they are interested in their learning. They know they must listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. This helps them to build on each other's ideas and to learn successfully. Pupils play well together at break- and lunchtimes. They are polite and considerate. Pupils learn how to support each other and to be good friends. It is rare for them to be deliberately unkind to each other. Pupils describe their friendships as being, 'never above, never below, always beside' each other.

Pupils enjoy the wider opportunities that have restarted at the school. After-school clubs enable pupils to pursue interests, including sports, science and crafts. Pupils undertake different roles and responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council or the eco-council. Older pupils look forward to the residential visits that staff organise for them.

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

Leaders have prioritised curriculum development. They have redesigned the curriculum from early years through to Year 6. Leaders have thought carefully about how the curriculum can be taught successfully in the school's mixed-age classes. Curriculum plans set out the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember.

Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable about the subjects they lead. They have provided teachers with the training and support to deliver curriculum plans as leaders intend. Leaders have begun to check that subjects, other than English and mathematics, are being taught consistently across all year groups. However, leaders are not fully confident that the curriculum is effective across all subjects, and that all pupils are learning successfully.

During lessons, teachers check what pupils have remembered. Teachers use this information to recap important learning and to give pupils the help they need to remember essential knowledge. Pupils apply this knowledge to tackle more challenging work. For example, during a mathematics lesson, Year 1 pupils used their knowledge of multiplication to count in steps of 10 and to interpret various pictograms.

Teachers place a strong focus on developing pupils' language. Teachers use subject-specific language to extend pupils' vocabulary. This helps pupils to explain their thinking. When discussing their recent history lessons with inspectors, pupils in the mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class used their knowledge of law and power to accurately explain the difference between trial by ordeal and trial by jury.

The teaching of reading is important in this school. Teachers and teaching assistants follow a well-sequenced programme in phonics lessons. Younger pupils read books that enable them to practise the sounds they are learning. Reading across key stage 2 has been strengthened. There is a greater focus on the teaching of specific reading skills. Pupils who find reading difficult get extra help from well-trained staff. This is helping all pupils to become confident, fluent readers.

Leaders and staff want the best for every pupil. Leaders ensure that all pupils can access a high-quality curriculum. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders identify pupils' additional needs quickly and accurately. They put the right support in place and check that this help is effective. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders make sure that teachers throughout the school have consistent expectations about how pupils should behave. Teachers establish clear routines for pupils to follow. No time is wasted when pupils move from one activity to another. Only gentle reminders are needed when pupils take too long to settle down.

Leaders are committed to developing pupils' wider knowledge and understanding of the world. Leaders recognise the need to promote diversity and enable pupils to learn about life in modern Britain. However, this is not yet systematically embedded in the school's culture, nor the school's curriculum. In some subjects, the content that pupils study does not sufficiently reflect the diversity in British society.

Governors know the school well. They are committed to supporting leaders and staff to further improve the school. Governors have a firm grasp and understanding of the quality of education on offer. They hold leaders to account effectively. Leaders and governors have created a positive working environment for all staff. Staff praise leaders for their care in ensuring their well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the impact of the school's improved curriculum on pupils' achievement may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and regular updates. Staff are clear that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Staff are attentive to pupils' needs. They know what to do if they have any concerns regarding pupils' safety and welfare. Leaders take swift action in a thorough and sensitive manner. When necessary, they work with external partners to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that helps pupils to be mindful of risks and know how to manage risks to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the revised curriculum for some foundation subjects is quite recent. Leaders have made some checks, but do not have a full picture of how well their intended curriculum is being delivered across the school and what needs to be refined further. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are taught effectively, so that pupils learn successfully and achieve well across the curriculum.
- Leaders' personal development programme and curriculum plans do not identify well enough how to promote pupils' understanding of diversity. Consequently, pupils do not have the depth of knowledge that leaders intend. Leaders should further develop their plans to ensure that the personal development programme and curriculum give pupils the knowledge and understanding they need to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

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	121135
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10211437
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Murree Groom
Headteacher	Sophie Dickson
Website	www.ashwickenschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Ashwicken Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a Church of England faith school located in the Diocese of Norwich.
- The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in February 2017.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2019.
- Several class teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation.

- During this inspection, the inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the two senior teachers, the special educational needs coordinator and the office manager.

- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and five other governors.
- The inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. The inspectors met with curriculum leaders for these subjects, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to staff and talked to pupils about their reading habits. The inspectors also checked the curriculum provision and pupils' learning in other subject areas.
- The inspectors met with several groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The inspectors also spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes.
- To check leaders' management of safeguarding, the lead inspector spoke with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector reviewed the single central record and records related to behaviour and safeguarding incidents. The inspector considered the school's processes for reporting safeguarding concerns. Both inspectors spoke with pupils, staff and governors to check their views on safeguarding.
- The inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including the school's own improvement plans and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspectors considered the 52 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 52 responses to Ofsted's free-text system. There were no responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Mellors

Her Majesty's Inspector

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