

Inspection of a good school: St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley

Elmham Road, Beetley, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 4BW

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 April 2022

Outcome

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 the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Mary's Community School is a caring and welcoming school. Pupils feel valued and have positive relationships with adults and each other. One parent representing the views of many commented, 'The school is fantastic at promoting a happy, caring and supportive community.'

Pupils work hard and behave well. Pupils can explain what bullying is. They are confident that bullying is not an issue. Pupils feel safe. They know that staff will help them if they are anxious or upset. Pupils model their school's values: 'Care, aware, respect and share, be honest and polite.' They say these values help them do their best. Pupils show kindness to each other and try hard.

Pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy learning a broad and interesting curriculum. However, in some subjects, including reading, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

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

Leaders have created a broad and ambitious curriculum that details what they want pupils to achieve in all subjects. However, in some subjects, leaders have not identified in sufficient detail, the knowledge pupils should learn. As a result, in some subjects, pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge that they should.

In some subjects, teachers successfully check what pupils have understood and remembered. This helps teachers to plan lessons that build on what pupils know and understand. For example, in music, pupils use their prior knowledge to identify if pitch is going up or going down. In mathematics, older pupils apply their knowledge of place value to order decimal numbers. However, in other subjects where the curriculum design is not

as well established, teachers do not know exactly where pupils are in their learning. This makes it difficult for leaders and teachers to check that pupils are achieving as well as they should in each subject.

Leaders ensure that children begin to learn to read from the moment they join the school. Leaders have revised the reading curriculum and introduced a new structured programme to teach phonics. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read are provided with suitable books to practise the sounds they have learned. Leaders quickly identify any pupils who need help to keep up with learning their sounds. However, the phonics programme is very new. Some pupils have not learned all the sounds they should. This means some pupils are not confident with their phonic knowledge. The teaching of phonics needs refining and embedding to ensure it is being delivered consistently.

Leaders and staff work together to identify pupils who may have SEND. Staff are well trained to support pupils with SEND, including pupils with more-complex needs. Leaders advise teachers how to adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND can learn successfully.

Pupils learn to celebrate diversity. They can explain how they value difference and uniqueness. Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular clubs that are on offer. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about a club based on a construction video game. Leaders are reintroducing the wide range of trips and visits that were in place before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Pupils have regular trips and other experiences to help them learn more, such as a recent trip to Norwich Castle.

Governors are supportive of leaders and the school community. Governors' visits have been reintroduced following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. This is enabling governors to see the quality of education in action, so they are in the best position to provide the necessary challenge and support.

Leaders routinely check that pupils attend regularly. Leaders work closely with families to help them understand the importance of regular attendance. However, a small number of pupils do not attend as regularly as they should. These pupils are not as well prepared for their next steps in education.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They say leaders are attentive to workload and their well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that early reading, including the teaching of phonics, the impact of the school's curriculum on pupils' achievement and improving attendance may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide appropriate training to staff, so they keep up to date with safeguarding processes and procedures. Staff are alert to potential safeguarding concerns. They take

timely and appropriate action when necessary. Leaders work well with parents and other agencies to make sure vulnerable pupils and families get the help and support they need.

Governors demonstrate a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. Pupils learn to recognise risks and what to do to keep themselves safe in different situations, for example when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The revised reading curriculum is not fully in place. This means a number of pupils have not learned all the sounds they should have. Leaders need to continue to provide training to teachers and check that there is a consistent, high-quality approach to the teaching of reading, including phonics. This will support pupils in all year groups to become confident, accurate and fluent readers.
- Leaders have not identified clearly enough what pupils should know and understand in some subjects. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects, because the curriculum does not support teachers to plan lessons that help pupils build on what they have learned before. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum sets out precisely what pupils should learn in each subject from the early years to Year 6. They should ensure that teachers have the guidance and support they need to teach the full curriculum effectively.
- A small number of pupils are routinely absent. As a result, these pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that all pupils attend well so that they learn successfully.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use 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	121011
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10200313
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andy Tovell
Headteacher	Jessica Balado
Website	www.beetleyschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 – 4 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The school runs its own before- and after-school provision.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and considered samples of pupils' work. Pupils were listened to reading.
- The inspector considered curriculum plans and spoke with leaders about other subjects.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the leader for SEND. Meetings were held with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body.
- A range of school documentation and policies, including records of governors' meetings, the school's improvement plan and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour, were considered.
- To inspect safeguarding, meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead, teachers, support staff and pupils. The inspector scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- The inspector observed and spoke with pupils, including at breaktimes and lunchtime. The inspector also took account of the 62 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector gathered parents' views. The 43 responses and 40 free-text responses submitted to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were reviewed.
- The inspector also gathered staff views. The inspector took account of the 18 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Jo Nutbeam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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