

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

South Street, Great Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 1DF

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto, 'let our light shine', is what pupils at Great Waltham Church of England Primary School are encouraged to do.

Pupils are happy and motivated to learn the interesting curriculum that has been planned. They benefit from a supportive, caring environment which encourages the school values of 'strength' and 'responsibility'.

Pupils say they feel safe and that bullying is rare. If it does happen, they know the trusted adults around them will sort it out. Parents and staff also share this view.

There are clear routines and expectations for behaviour, and pupils respond well to these. Pupils consistently show high levels of concentration and engagement. They work hard to move up the 'learning ladder' behaviour chart and achieve platinum rewards.

Through the range of extra opportunities that leaders provide, pupils gain a deep understanding of the world around them. These range from learning about school life in Kenya to taking part in trips and inter-sports competitions.

Pupils show a mature understanding of their differences and things they have in common with others. For example, they can confidently explain 'Do to others as you would have them do to you' Luke 6:31, as another key aspect of the school's vision.

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

Leaders have ensured that most curriculum thinking takes account of the knowledge they want pupils to learn. It is clearly set out what should be taught and when. Training to deliver the curriculum supports staff to develop strong subject knowledge. Staff help

pupils to build on what they already know by regularly recapping facts taught. Consequently, pupils are secure in their recall of key knowledge in most curriculum areas.

In a few subjects, the curriculum is less well developed. As a result, some teaching is not as clear, and pupils are less able to connect their current learning with vocabulary and concepts they should have learned in the past. Additionally, due to the cycle of learning in these subjects, the content is not always recapped regularly enough. This prevents pupils from being as confident in their learning compared to in other areas of the curriculum.

The teaching of reading has been well considered. Staff have been trained well to deliver the phonics and reading curriculum as leaders intend. Children quickly learn sounds they need to read simple words during the first weeks of attending school. Older pupils receive targeted support if they need extra help with decoding, fluency or comprehension skills. This enables pupils to read books that are well matched to their abilities. Pupils enjoy the ambitious texts that are read to them by their teachers. Teachers take time to explain and define new words they come across. As a result, pupils are able to use the new vocabulary they have learned in their speaking and writing.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified and given the correct support to learn the curriculum alongside their peers. Precise targets are set and agreed upon to ensure that pupils with SEND are achieving well. All staff have the expertise to support pupils to achieve these targets and, consequently, achieve well.

Children in the Reception class benefit from the meaningful curriculum on offer. They show positive learning behaviours and are keen to learn new words and phrases. Staff are skilled at relating the learning to pupils' own experiences. For example, when learning about houses from the past, pupils could link pictures of huts and castles to the stories they have read. The positive relationships pupils have with each other, and their teachers, support pupils to independently practice and embed their learning.

Pupils behave well during lessons and on the playground. Staff consistently apply the positive behaviour reward systems. Pupils respond well to this. Older pupils act as positive role models for the younger pupils, taking on roles such as bronze ambassadors and play leaders. Pupils take these responsibilities very seriously.

The culture and ethos of the school are centred around the values of the school, which include aspiration, integrity and empathy. From the moment pupils start at the school, they are taught about these values and how they contribute to improving their character. Consequently, pupils show high levels of respect for one another. Certificates and rewards reinforce the importance of showing these values each day in school.

The governing body has closely monitored the school's improvement plans, alongside the local authority and the diocese. This has ensured that improving the quality of education has remained a priority. Thoughtful transition arrangements for the appointment of a new headteacher have ensured continuity for the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are tenacious in making sure concerns about pupils' well-being or safety are followed up. Staff receive training to ensure they know the signs of harmful behaviours to be aware of. Where external professional support is necessary to keep a pupil safe, leaders ensure this is promptly put in place.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe on and offline through their computing and personal, social and health education lessons. Staff ensure there is time to discuss current or past issues in circle time. This means pupils are confident to speak out if anything is worrying them.

All recruitment and training checks are monitored by leaders and governors to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few areas of the curriculum do not progressively build on the key subject knowledge about what content should be taught and when. Consequently, pupils are not as confident in their recall of knowledge in these areas. Leaders must ensure curriculum leaders adapt curriculum thinking to clearly outline what must be learned by pupils and when, so that pupils can more easily link learning together and, consequently, remember more over time.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded 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.

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	115114
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10212465
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	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Huggins
Headteacher	Justine Brooks
Website	http://greatwaltham.school
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- Great Waltham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School has a Christian character. The religious aspects of the school's provision were last inspected in January 2017 under section 48 of the Education Act, 2005.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provisions.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and senior leaders. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the school's safeguarding practice, the inspector met with the headteacher, who is the school's designated safeguarding lead, the school business manager and other staff to discuss safeguarding.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans and safeguarding and behaviour records.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. The inspector also observed the behaviour of pupils across the school site.
- Fifty-six responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 53 free-text comments were considered as part of the inspection evidence, alongside 26 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 40 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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