

Inspection of Pulham Church of England Primary School

Harleston Road, Pulham Market, Diss, Norfolk IP21 4SZ

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being in a school that is positive and respectful. In lessons, pupils are keen to learn. Their teachers model kindness. Teachers are patient and understanding of pupils' differing needs. Pupils reflect this kindness back to the adults who work with them. Bullying is rare and pupils are safe. Pupils know that if they have a worry, they can go to an adult who will help.

Pupils have opportunities to take part in a range of clubs and activities, such as forest school and visiting the local church. They can also take on responsibilities at school, such as through becoming a 'minister of maths' or a member of the eco-council. Leaders celebrate this mature and responsible behaviour in assemblies. At playtimes, there is plenty for pupils to do. Older pupils help younger pupils to play and make friends.

Pupils engage enthusiastically with learning opportunities the new curriculum provides. This helps pupils learn more about different peoples, places and eras. Sometimes, these topics are tricky for pupils to learn. This is because leaders have not adapted the curriculum enough by taking into account what pupils already know.

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

In the short time that new senior leaders have been working in the school, the curriculum has been comprehensively changed for the better. This is because they have prioritised the quality of pupils' education. Leaders have chosen new schemes of work that set out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. This curriculum is at an early stage of implementation and leaders have not yet perfected ways of checking its implementation. As a result, pupils who have gaps in learning cannot always understand the new curriculum content.

Teachers teach with enthusiasm and commitment. However, the extent to which pupils understand what is being taught in subjects, such as history and geography, is sometimes limited. This is because training to support the teaching and selection of tasks is at an early stage. Further, the tasks that pupils complete sometimes cause them to remember the activity rather than the intended knowledge. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to develop teaching further.

Leaders recognise the importance of teaching reading well, especially as many pupils at the school are at an early stage of reading. This includes pupils in older year groups. Leaders have trained all adults to teach reading. They have invested in more adult support to help pupils to catch up. Frequent and precise assessment helps leaders to make sure that teaching meets pupils' needs. The teaching of reading is excellent. It helps pupils to learn phonics, develop reading fluency and become proficient readers.

Staff in the early years are experienced, knowledgeable and caring. Teachers adapt the curriculum, so that it builds on children's prior knowledge and experiences. Staff use all available opportunities to encourage children to be kind and to share with one another. This helps children to develop their language and communication skills. The stories, songs and rhymes that children learn also help them to learn new vocabulary.

Leaders are quick to identify pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have increased support for pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. They and staff have adjusted the support pupils get to help them learn. This enables pupils with SEND to have access to the full curriculum, in line with their peers.

All adults in the school are committed to developing pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes. Lesson routines help pupils to behave well. Staff model politeness by using consistent language and by considering pupils' needs. This helps pupils to overcome their own worries and anxieties, so that they can fully take part in classroom learning experiences.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils' positive personal development. The age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education and religious education curriculums are part of this picture. Teachers teach pupils to appreciate and respect different opinions, cultures, and religious practices. They learn the ways that families and people are varied and unique. Teachers encourage pupils to be reflective, for example, through daily opportunities to record in their 'gratitude journals'.

School leaders and governors share the same, proactive vision for school improvement. They work together to prioritise areas for improvement, and to manage the pace of change. Parents speak highly of the positive changes that new leaders have set in motion. Staff feel supported with their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff, including leaders and governors, are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They are committed to ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Staff are alert to the signs of harm, aided by the fact that they know the pupils, families and the community very well. A team approach and frequent communication, where 'no concern is too small', helps leaders to secure additional support for pupils in a timely way. Safeguarding records are detailed and well organised. Leaders check these records regularly.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. Leaders' checks of the suitability of adults to work with children are robust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum beyond English and mathematics is at an early stage of implementation. Currently, pupils' learning of this wider curriculum is limited by the way that curriculum plans are not sufficiently adapted to consider their prior learning experiences. This means that pupils do not understand and learn as much of this new curriculum as they could. Leaders should ensure the curriculum is matched well to build on what pupils already know and can do.
- The teaching that pupils receive and the tasks that they are set do not consistently help pupils to learn and remember the knowledge set out in wider curriculum plans. This is because staff do not have enough subject and subject-pedagogic knowledge to make the best choices of how to teach new content and choose tasks for pupils to do. Leaders should ensure that teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to, and use pedagogical approaches which, give pupils the best opportunities to understand and remember the knowledge and skills set out in the curriculum.

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	121051
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10241323
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	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gill Hipwell
Headteacher	Harriet Beckett
Website	http://www.pulham.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school leadership has changed significantly. This includes the appointment of a new headteacher and new members of the governing body.
- The school makes use of a specialist resource base, which is situated at another school within the county.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is required to be inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of this school was in October 2015. The school was rated Outstanding.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Norwich.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke with leaders about some other subjects.
- To inspect the safeguarding arrangements at the school, inspectors spoke with leaders, teachers, and pupils. The lead inspector also reviewed the school's single central record and records of safeguarding concerns.
- The lead inspector spoke, via telephone, with a representative from the specialist resource base that the school uses.
- The lead inspector considered responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, and responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors also observed pupils during their free times and spoke with pupil groups.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lynsey Holzer

Ofsted Inspector

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