

Inspection of a good school: St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School, Lopham

The Street, North Lopham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2LR

Inspection date:

16 November 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at, and speak enthusiastically about, their 'friendly' school. They feel safe because adults have established a very caring ethos. Pupils always have an adult they can turn to if they have a concern.

Pupils behave well. They are respectful to each other, their teachers and to visitors. Pupils say that bullying is very rare. Should it happen, pupils know that teachers will swiftly put a stop to it.

Pupils enjoy learning. Most pupils learn to read fluently. Older pupils like to talk about books and stories. This helps them to build language and express ideas. Younger children do not grasp the basics of reading as quickly as they could. At times, pupils do not learn as much as they might because teachers have not carefully chosen the knowledge pupils should learn.

Pupils learn about their local community through trips to the beach and the theatre. They take part in residential visits. This helps them to develop knowledge they have learned in school while away from home. Some pupils enjoy participating in sporting clubs. Other pupils would like a wider range of extra-curricular activities to help them learn new skills.

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

Leaders are in the process of implementing a new curriculum. Where this work is better established, pupils acquire important knowledge which builds well on what they have learned before. They practise what they have previously learned, which helps them to remember knowledge better. In other areas of the curriculum, leaders have not provided teachers with the precise subject training they need. Staff are, therefore, not always clear what pupils should be learning. As a result of this, pupils do not gain knowledge and

understanding as well as they might. Leaders are aware of this. They are keen to provide teachers with the knowledge they need so that pupils learn better over time.

Leaders are prioritising reading. Recent training, provided by leaders, ensures that most teachers adopt a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Children in Year 1 blend new sounds quickly. They read familiar language fluently because they regularly practise sounds they already know. Pupils read books which are carefully matched to their reading level. Older pupils use their knowledge of punctuation to read with expression. They can retell stories in their own words. Pupils who fall behind with their reading receive focused support to help them catch up. However, the teaching of reading is uneven. Some younger children do not get enough time to practise blending new sounds. Teachers do not systematically pick up on mistakes. As a result of this, some Reception-age children are not learning to read as well as they might.

Leaders have ensured that teachers understand how to adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result of this, pupils with SEND receive the support they need to help them to learn better.

Pupils listen attentively and play well together. Teachers quickly deal with any negative behaviours so that learning is not disrupted. Pupils are caring and kind. They demonstrate empathy and understand how their behaviours may affect others.

Pupils are not developing as rich an understanding of the diverse wider world as they might. Pupils know little about different world religions. They also do not develop a secure understanding that there can be many different types of family. Pupils have few opportunities to gain experience of responsibility and hone important leadership skills. Leaders have plans to ensure that pupils make a more positive contribution to school life and the local community. Some parents feel that leaders are not doing enough to enrich pupils' wider development.

Leaders have a precise understanding of what the school does well and how it needs to improve, especially in the realm of the curriculum and early reading. The recently established interim executive body holds leaders firmly to account. With the support of the local authority, leaders and the interim executive board have brought about rapid change. They have done so while sustaining a very supportive ethos. Teachers appreciate this. They find their workload manageable and welcome further training to help them develop their subject knowledge. The school is well placed to ensure further improvement. Most parents are pleased with the quality of education the school provides. Some parental perceptions are less positive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have provided regular training which ensures that staff know how to identify those children who may be subject to abuse or harm. Staff have a thorough understanding of any local risks. Leaders have established robust systems for all to report concerns.

In response to a concern, leaders intervene swiftly and work with a range of outside providers to ensure that pupils receive the precise support they need.

Pupils know how to act safely when online and when outside of school. Leaders carry out stringent checks on all new members of staff to be assured of their suitability to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, teachers do not have sufficiently precise subject knowledge. As a result, they do not carefully select what knowledge pupils should learn. Teachers do not ensure that this knowledge links well to what pupils have learned before. Pupils' learning is slow as a result. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the support to develop their subject knowledge so that pupils learn more effectively over time.
- The curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient knowledge of different world religions and of protected characteristics. As a result of this, they are not building as rich an understanding of diversity in multicultural Britain and of the wider world as they could. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have opportunities to build their understanding of these important areas.

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 St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School to be good in October 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	121149
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10255210
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	49
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of Interim Executive Body	Kay Swann
Interim Executive Headteacher	Rhiannon Price
Website	federationschools.org/st-andrews/
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Saints Federation.
- The interim executive board was appointed in June 2022.

Information about this inspection

- 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 interim executive headteacher, senior leaders, support staff, members of the interim executive board and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and a review of any curriculum documentation. Inspectors also scrutinised curriculum plans for geography.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding lead. They scrutinised safeguarding records and spoke with pupils and with staff.

- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. There were six responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and 37 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gate. There were 14 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered 14 free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Adam Cooke, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Lesley Daniel

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