

Inspection of a good school: Old Catton CofE VC Junior School

Church Street, Old Catton, Norwich, Norfolk NR6 7DS

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

Old Catton CofE VC Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Old Catton CofE Junior School, the vision is for pupils' time at school to be filled with 'love, hope and joy'. The curriculum is brought to life by lively and creative lessons. Pupils go through their school life with confidence and a sense of optimism for their future lives. This is reflected in pupils' attitude and views about their school.

Staff have high expectations for all pupils. Because of strong working relationships between the pupils and staff, pupils always work hard to live up to them. Pupils' knowledge builds well across most of the subjects they study.

This is a productive, well-organised school. Pupils know that bullying is unkind. They say that it happens rarely. If it does happen, they know staff will be able to resolve it. Pupils learn how to make safe choices, and they receive lessons on the safe use of the internet.

Pupils take part in a wide range of creative and sports activities. These include singing in the choir or joining the football clubs. Pupils like to practise their teamwork skills. They also enjoy trips to local historic sites, which brings their learning to life.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is interesting, relevant and ambitious. Leaders plan the curriculum so that pupils build strong knowledge in most of the subjects they study. This helps pupils to access and engage with tasks. Throughout their teaching, teachers help pupils to understand and remember what is taught.

Leaders train teachers to help pupils make connections with what they already know. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge when they join the junior school, so they get off to a flying start with their learning. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember throughout each year. They adapt planning and lessons in response to this information.

Leaders are reviewing the curriculum in some subjects so that it focuses on the key concepts they want pupils to learn. In these subjects, pupils do not learn as much as they could. Leaders identify that the curriculum in these subjects needs to be refined.

Lessons in reading are a strength at the school. Staff are experts. They tailor lessons to meet pupils' needs. Younger pupils quickly gain all the knowledge and skills they need to become successful. Staff provide extra practise for pupils who have fallen behind. The school has a rich stock of books to support pupils' reading, both at school and at home. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of classic and modern fiction. This contributes towards pupils broadening their knowledge of more complex vocabulary.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide timely and appropriate support for pupils with SEND. This support helps pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum and overcome any challenges they may encounter in learning. As a consequence, pupils with SEND achieve well and gain confidence when completing their work.

Leaders promote pupils' wider personal development. The pastoral team provides informal mentoring and supports parents to help pupils with, for example, any challenges that are a barrier to learning. Pupils also take on school-wide responsibilities and take pride in the many awards recognising their good work and behaviour.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Disruptions to learning seldom occur. This is because staff, supported by leaders, manage behaviour well. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. For example, they can take a point of view in a debate while respecting the opposing position.

The governing body both supports and challenges school leaders' decisions about school improvement. Leaders take advice from experts within the federation. Staff say that leaders have taken steps to ensure their workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding underpins leaders' intentions to ensure pupils are safe. All the required checks are made when recruiting staff to the school.

Staff are adept at recognising pupils who may need help or are at risk of abuse. They work with a range of external agencies, when necessary, to protect pupils at risk of harm. Staff know the potential risks that pupils may face and report all concerns, which are followed up quickly.

Pupils learn how to recognise unsafe situations. They learn about potential risks and how to protect themselves in a range of contexts and situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few areas of the curriculum, leaders have not fully clarified their expectations for the specific knowledge and skills that should be prioritised and remembered by pupils. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these areas. Leaders should complete the work started to ensure that the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and apply is clear. This will support teachers to build fluency in pupils' ability to recall past learning, enabling them to achieve consistently well in all areas of the curriculum.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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.

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	121050
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10255239
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Hill
Executive Headteacher	Ashley Best-White
Head of School	Emily Emrick
Website	www.oldcatton.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Old Catton CofE VC Junior School is part of the Nebula Federation of schools. This is a local federation of six schools, which share a single governing body and executive leadership team.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of its religious character took place in September 2017.

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 of the school.
- As part of the inspection, the inspector met with the executive headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. He also met with the head of school and the special

educational needs coordinator. The inspector also held meetings with teachers from the school.

- The inspector held meetings with members of the senior leadership team of the Nebula Federation.
- The inspector held a conversation with four members of the governing body.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspector also looked at work in music, design technology and foreign languages.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and spoke with pupils at lunchtimes.
- The inspector considered information relating to safeguarding, including the school's single central register of vetting checks on adults working at the school.
- The inspector took account of 38 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey, including the 31 comments made in the free-text facility. He also took account of the 14 responses to the staff survey and listened to the views of pupils.

Inspection team

Tim McLoughlin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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