

Inspection of a good school: Elsworth CofE VA Primary School

Broad End, Elsworth, Cambridgeshire CB23 4JD

Inspection dates:

4 May 2023

Outcome

Elsworth CofE VA Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They speak positively about being part of a small school where everyone is known, accepted and cared for. Pupils are motivated by the work set for them by staff. They know adults want them to be successful. Pupils like receiving merits for their efforts.

Pupils value having their views listened to by adults. Many pupils take an active part in school life. Pupils feel they make a difference through taking on various leadership roles, such as being on the school council, the eco-council or as a junior travel ambassador. Pupils are keen to represent the school in sports festivals and to look after the school guinea pigs. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular clubs such as art, sport and computing. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the various trips and residentials they go on, including singing at the O2 arena and visiting Duxford Air Museum.

Pupils get along well together. They are also respectful towards adults and to the school environment. Pupils feel that staff treat them fairly. Pupils report that bullying is very rare and are in no doubt adults would deal with it if it did happen. This makes them feel safe.

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

Leaders, including governors, have high ambitions for the curriculum. Leaders have ensured that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), successfully access a full and broad curriculum. Staff have good subject knowledge and address misconceptions well. Staff have benefited from effective training from subject leaders on curriculum content and delivery, especially in reading, mathematics and science. Teachers across the school, including early years, skilfully adapt provision to meet pupils' needs. Leaders and teachers are effective in adapting the curriculum to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Pupils, including in early years, do have regular opportunities to read a range of texts and enjoy being read to. Leaders have recently

introduced a new systematic phonics and reading programme. Staff are delivering this effectively and consistently. Pupils who have experienced the new phonics approach from the very start of school are achieving well and can read books matched to the sounds they know. Teachers check how well pupils understand what they have read. Pupils who need extra support with reading are quickly identified and useful interventions are swiftly put in place. Most pupils who struggle with reading catch up quickly. However, a few older pupils, who have not always followed the new phonics programme, still have gaps in their phonic knowledge and so cannot yet read as fluently as they need.

The foundation subjects are designed to build pupils' knowledge over time from early years upwards. However, leaders are currently in the early stages of updating these foundation subjects. This is because leaders have not made it clear to teachers when specific over-arching concepts in these subjects need to be taught. Leaders have also not yet made it clear what exact prior learning pupils must have to then understand these concepts fully. Presently, pupils can recall immediate details of what they have learned in foundation subjects, yet they are not secure in recalling this prior knowledge when applying it to new or future learning. This limits their current depth of understanding in these foundation subjects.

Pupils with SEND achieve well. Leaders and teachers ensure that work is adapted to meet these pupils' needs. Leaders regularly check to see that this support is working.

Pupils know and follow the school rules. They appreciate how adults listen to all viewpoints. Any incidents are quickly resolved. Pupils are taught from as young as early years about how to take turns, share and follow instructions. Older pupils are good role models. Leaders monitor behaviour concerns effectively and listen to parent views. This all contributes to pupils being able to fully focus on their learning in class and play happily outside.

Pupils understand about justice and equality. Leaders have ensured that, through the curriculum and assemblies, including weekly visits from the reverend, that pupils learn about respecting all faiths, about compassion and celebrating differences. Leaders encourage pupils to take on responsibilities across the school, including for health and safety and for caring for the school grounds and fund-raising. Pupils enjoy listening to the prayers and reflections that they write.

Staff are highly positive about working at the school. They feel very well supported and valued.

Governors know the school well and provide appropriate support and challenge. They carry out their role effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know they have trusted adults to help them. Leaders provide regular information to pupils and parents about internet safety, to ensure that pupils are aware of risks of gaming or talking to peers online.

Staff are kept up to date with safeguarding training. They know how to report concerns about pupils or adults. Leaders have robust systems in place for ensuring they action concerns. Leaders regularly review their safeguarding practices. Leaders, including governors, are thorough when making checks on adults that work in school. Governors ensure they regularly check the school's work on safeguarding.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few older pupils who need additional support with reading still have key gaps in their phonic knowledge. This means these pupils are not able to read fluently or independently. Leaders need to ensure that these pupils have their gaps in phonic knowledge quickly filled and that staff are expertly equipped to support these pupils to read fluently and confidently unaided.
- In foundation subjects, leaders and teachers have not laid out explicitly enough the key concepts and required connected knowledge they want pupils to learn. As a result, pupils are not yet embedding in their long-term memory the depth of knowledge leaders want them to have. Leaders need to ensure that these key concepts and required connected knowledge are clearly signposted within the curriculum and understood by staff. Leaders and teachers should then check that sufficient time is given for pupils to securely recall, revisit and build on their knowledge of these concepts.

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 October 2013.

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	110830
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10286239
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	125
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Nicholas Wright
Headteacher	Elizabeth Bennett
Website	www.elsworthprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs its own before- and after-school provision.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, subject leaders, teachers and some support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector met representatives from the governing body and from the local authority.

- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of meetings of the governing board and the school development plan.
- The inspectors looked at the arrangements for safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks. The inspectors spoke with leaders and staff about the systems and processes to support safeguarding, and the safeguarding ethos in the school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 56 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 17 staff survey responses. There were no responses to the pupil survey. However, inspectors spoke to many pupils across the school during the inspection.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Julie Harrison

Ofsted Inspector

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