

Inspection of Ely St Mary's CofE Junior School

High Barns, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4RB

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Ely St Mary's benefit from the high ambitions that school leaders have for them. The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities, which enables pupils to thrive and fulfil their potential. Their aspirations are raised, and they learn the value of education.

Most pupils are well behaved. They understand and demonstrate the school's 'RESPECT' code and values in, for example, the way they interact with each other and adults. Pupils are tolerant and value each other's differences. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, pupils know teachers will deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and happy.

Pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities beyond academic learning. They learn to play golf at the local golf club. Every pupil learns at least one musical instrument. Pupils have been given the opportunity to learn how to sail with the local sailing club. Some of those pupils have gone on to successfully compete in national competitions. Many pupils take part in public performances with the school choir.

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

Leaders at every level inspire and provide a sense of direction across the school community. They share a common vision of providing pupils with the knowledge necessary to succeed in the future.

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum shows what pupils need to learn to achieve well. Subject leaders have identified the specific elements of knowledge that pupils need in order to progress through the curriculum. Lessons are well sequenced to help pupils with this, building on pupils' existing knowledge. The majority of teachers are proactive in using assessment to identify gaps and misconceptions. They provide regular feedback to pupils as they work through activities. However, not all teachers adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. Some pupils do not access more challenging work quickly enough, while others struggle to complete the tasks they are set.

Staff prioritise reading. Most pupils are developing into fluent and confident readers. Leaders support those who continue to struggle with their reading. They identify specific gaps and address these through a range of strategies, including targeted, one-to-one help. Pupils have a love of books and enjoy reading and listening to poems and stories. They access books from a range of topics and interest areas. They read and listen to increasingly complex books. Books cover a wide variety of cultures and ethnicities. This helps pupils to increase their cultural awareness and celebrate diversity.

Staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave. Most pupils understand these expectations. They learn how to behave well and generally do so. Most pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They have positive attitudes. Occasionally, some pupils' behaviour falls below the high standards set. This is usually picked up and dealt with quickly by staff.

Leaders' cultural guarantee to all pupils is a commitment to supplement and support classroom-based learning through visits and other activities. It brings pupils' learning to life. Inspirational visits by authors, Paralympians and industry leaders help pupils to develop their sense of what they can achieve in life. This programme raises pupils' aspirations and shows them the value of education.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about different lifestyles, religions and beliefs. Pupils speak in detail about what it means to be a good citizen and how we should be tolerant of people's differences. Pupils believe it is important to treat everyone fairly with kindness and understanding.

Leaders are relentless in their pursuit of their vision. They understand the importance of having a highly motivated staff team to achieve this. Leaders, trustees and governors invest heavily in the professional development of all staff. This professional development is focused on securing high-quality learning experiences for pupils. As a result, teachers have secured real depth to their subject knowledge. Teaching in all areas of the curriculum is constantly developing and improving. Leaders have ensured that all staff share their clarity about the school's vision. Leaders engage with staff and use their expertise to refine their thinking. Teachers have confidence in leaders and feel valued. Morale is high. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff understand that keeping pupils safe is their priority. Regular and focused training helps everyone understand the risks that pupils face and the potential signs that they may need help. Staff report any concerns quickly. Leaders are relentless in following these up. They work closely with external agencies to get pupils and their families the support they need.

Leaders' checks carried out on staff and volunteers before they start working at the school are robust and thorough.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe on and offline. They know who to talk to if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not adapt their teaching quickly enough to meet the needs of all pupils. This means that some pupils spend too long repeating learning activities, whereas others struggle to access tasks and complete them. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are skilled in using appropriate resources to ensure all pupils are doing as well as they should.

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	141707
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10255079
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Younger
Headteacher	Rachel Clarke
Website	www.elystmarys.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her position in September 2021, having previously been the deputy headteacher.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school has a religious character, Church of England, and was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 9 December 2022. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- There is childcare provision available on the school site. This is run by a separately registered and inspected childcare provider.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, assistant headteachers and special educational needs coordinator. They met with representatives of the local governing body and board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To further inspect the curriculum, inspectors reviewed curriculum documentation for personal, social and health education, scrutinised pupils' workbooks from across the curriculum, and reviewed documentation setting out support for pupils with SEND.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated and deputy designated safeguarding leads to review safeguarding records and the office coordinator to scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. To further evaluate safeguarding, inspectors also spoke to governors, staff and pupils, and reviewed surveys.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors spent time speaking to pupils. Inspectors also took account of the 14 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To gather parents' views, inspectors reviewed the 47 responses and 31 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector also spoke to some parents at the start of a school day.
- To gather staff's views, inspectors spoke to several staff and reviewed the 29 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Dave Gibson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Fykin	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Gammons	Ofsted Inspector

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