

# Inspection of St Edmundsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Grove Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3BJ

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils trust adults to help them when concerns arise. However, leaders in the school do not handle safeguarding concerns appropriately. This puts pupils at risk of harm.

Children in Reception get a good standard of education. In the rest of the school, pupils do not benefit from consistently effective teaching. Learning is sometimes harder for pupils because they have not been taught the knowledge they need to move on to the next steps in their learning.

Pupils usually behave well. However, some pupils are not supported to manage their behaviour positively. Too many pupils experience interruptions to their learning in lessons. Similarly, many are affected by other pupils' poor behaviour on the playground.

Pupils appreciate how staff treat and care for them. Staff build positive relationships with parents and carers to support pupils to attend school. However, many pupils are still absent too frequently, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils enjoy taking part in sports clubs at lunchtime and after school. This allows them to develop teamwork and build confidence.

Many pupils are happy at St Edmundsbury. They are usually polite and show the school's core values through their actions. Bullying is rare and dealt with well. Pupils learn about difference and show tolerance of others.

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

Leaders do not follow up safeguarding concerns about pupils appropriately. Complex and serious concerns about pupils are not reported quickly enough to the local authority.

Leaders, including governors, know that the quality of education provided is not good enough. They are trying to improve it, with some success, for instance in early reading.

The curriculum is sufficiently broad, but leaders' guidance does not enable staff to plan learning opportunities in a sensible order. In some subjects, leaders do not help teachers well enough to plan effective learning activities in the steps pupils need to learn what leaders intend. As a result, pupils do not have the knowledge they need to learn more complex ideas or content. When checking what pupils know and understand, teachers also do not know specifically what they should be looking for. Similarly, when checking the effectiveness of the curriculum, leaders are unclear about what they expect to see pupils learning.

Leaders have rightly prioritised reading as an area for improvement. The teaching of reading starts as soon as the children start Reception. Staff are well trained in leaders' approach to the teaching of early reading. They consistently deliver what leaders expect. Teachers provide books for pupils that are well matched to their abilities. This means that pupils' reading is improving, particularly in key stage 1.

Staff quickly identify when pupils find learning difficult. Leaders work closely with experts to ensure that pupils with SEND get the help they need, including specialist training for staff. Staff consistently follow leaders' guidance in personal 'learning plans' and often provide effective support for pupils in lessons.

Children in the early years are happy. They get off to a good start through well-planned activities and routines that support their learning. Staff match the provision to the needs of pupils effectively, particularly when teaching vocabulary. Children are prepared well for learning in Year 1.

Although leaders identify and tackle poor behaviour, negative incidents are still too common. In some lessons, pupils focus on their learning and work well together. However, this is not always the case across the school. Some pupils struggle to maintain acceptable behaviour. Staff do not always know how to deal with unacceptable behaviour. They do not use the school behaviour policy consistently to ensure that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively.

Despite some improvements, absence is high. Too many pupils, particularly those with SEND, are frequently absent. This means these pupils miss out on learning and do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders' approach to pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils build a mature understanding of different faiths and also learn what makes for a healthy relationship. They understand and respect difference. Pupil leadership is important at the school. They aspire to be house captains and members of the school council.

Governors are new to the role following a period when the school was supported by the local authority with an interim executive board. In their short time in post, they have challenged leaders effectively and have had a strong focus on improving the quality of education. Most staff feel that the leaders of the school are supportive. They value the visits from their link governors, who check on their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff are comprehensively vetted and well trained to identify signs of abuse. They report concerns to leaders without delay. However, leaders do not possess a strong understanding of what to do with this information. Concerns are not always followed up correctly by leaders. On too many occasions, leaders do not pass information to

the appropriate agencies quickly enough to ensure pupils' safety. This means that pupils do not receive the professional support they need to stay safe.

Pupils learn about appropriate relationships and that they are deserving of care and safety.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders do not always follow local and national guidance when they receive safeguarding concerns. Too often, leaders do not pass information to the appropriate agencies quickly enough to ensure pupils' safety. Leaders and governors must take urgent action to ensure that:
  - all designated safeguarding leads follow locally agreed procedures for assessing and reporting safeguarding concerns
  - all referrals and actions are recorded in line with statutory requirements
  - governors develop systems to check the appropriateness and urgency of leaders' actions.
- In a number of curriculum areas, leaders have not provided sufficient guidance for teachers to plan suitable learning activities for pupils. As a result, staff do not know the best ways to deliver the curriculum or which content they should prioritise. This leads to pupils not gaining the knowledge they need for their next steps. Leaders should provide staff with the necessary guidance and training to plan learning so that pupils build on previous knowledge effectively and achieve well across the curriculum.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are too common. This disrupts the learning of pupils and distresses those involved or who witness it on the playground. Leaders must ensure that appropriate training, support and supervision are provided to enable a consistently strong approach to managing behaviour.
- Rates of absence and persistent absence are too high. Too many pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, miss out on significant parts of their education. Leaders must put measures in place to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124762
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255102
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	229
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Frances Parr
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shaun Valentine
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-edmundsbury.suffolk.sch.uk">www.st-edmundsbury.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- An interim executive board established by the local authority ended in October 2022 and new governors were appointed.
- There have been many changes to staff and governors in recent years.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- St Edmundsbury Primary School is a voluntary aided Church of England school. The most recent inspection of its religious character of under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was in May 2019. It will receive its next inspection within eight years of that date.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, and physical education. They discussed the curriculum with leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of the governing body and the governor responsible for safeguarding. They also spoke with representatives of the local authority. Inspectors scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. They also spoke to pupils to gather their views of the school.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They took account of 34 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments made by those who responded.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's website and policies, met with designated safeguarding leaders and spoke with pupils and staff. They scrutinised records of the safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with governors. Inspectors scrutinised a selection of child protection records.

## Inspection team

Sonia Innes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Dan Lambert

His Majesty's Inspector

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