

# Inspection of a good school: Empingham Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Empingham, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8PQ

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Inspection dates:

18 July 2023

## Outcome

Empingham Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this happy village school. They thrive because they are known as individuals. Right from the start of school, staff get to know each child well and show high levels of care for them. Pupils are kept safe. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils appreciate that each teacher makes learning fun in different ways. Many parents comment positively about the 'family feel' provided by the school.

Leaders have established a culture of high expectations. The school's motto, 'Together, we rise to the challenge', exemplifies the ambition leaders have for every pupil. Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They understand the importance of being kind to each other. Pupils make sure that everyone feels welcome and that no one is left out. They listen closely to their teachers. They are active participants in their learning. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils are motivated by the rewards on offer. Everyone wants to earn a 'dojo' point so that they can visit the 'dojo shop' and buy a small item or an experience. Pupils who have collected 100 dojos can use their points to eat their lunch in the staffroom with friends.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that is broad and engaging. They have given careful consideration to the school's context and the needs of pupils as they have mapped out the key knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. The curriculum equips children in the early years with a strong foundation for the learning they will encounter in later years. The early years curriculum also places a strong emphasis on developing the characteristics children need to be successful, both academically and personally.

Leaders are in the process of reviewing curriculum plans. This is to ensure that the most important knowledge is identified with sufficient precision across the curriculum. This critical work has been completed for many, but not all, subjects.

Curriculum leaders across the two schools, led by the executive headteacher, work together closely to share responsibility for subjects. Staff benefit from this approach. It allows them to draw on a wider range of staff expertise. It also serves to reduce their considerable workload for subject leadership in a small school.

Teachers follow the curriculum plans in the detail and order that leaders expect. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They explain new concepts clearly. In a few lessons, teachers do not consistently adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. This can mean that opportunities to extend pupils' learning are missed.

Children in the early years begin to learn phonics as soon as they start at school. Leaders make sure that all pupils develop a strong phonic knowledge. Pupils who find it more difficult to retain new sounds receive extra help so that they do not fall behind. Leaders are determined that all pupils will come to love reading. Pupils participate in reading cafés and enjoy listening to 'mystery readers' who visit the school to share their favourite books and stories.

The school is inclusive. Leaders and governors share the ambition that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) will experience success. These pupils receive effective support to access the same curriculum as their peers and play a full part in school life.

Leaders have ensured that pupils have wide and varied opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils have a strong voice in the school. A 'green team' has been set up to address pupils' concerns about the environment. Pupils have completed litter picks, 'power down' days and an Earth Day. Pupils across all year groups have opportunities to take on positions of responsibility as receptionists, sports leaders and 'osprey ambassadors'. Theatre visits, sports events and residential trips are examples of the wealth of curriculum enrichment activities that pupils can participate in. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Year 6 pupils display confidence and poise as they perform their end of year production for family and friends.

Leaders have worked closely with the trust and governors. They know the school well. They identify its many strengths and clearly communicate their future ambition for the school.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They work together as a team. They agree that leaders consider their workload and well-being. They identify the executive headteacher as a role model for working hard. They say that she is 'not afraid to roll up her sleeves'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have ensured that there are clear policies and procedures in place to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. Staff listen to pupils. They take their worries seriously. They are knowledgeable about the signs that indicate that pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff pass on and record

any concerns they have. Leaders make sure that pupils and their families get the help they need.

Pupils are well educated about how to keep themselves safe. This includes potential risks when working and playing online.

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

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

- Leaders are systematically reviewing curriculum plans for all subjects. They have not yet refined all curriculum plans to ensure that they precisely identify the key knowledge that pupils must know and remember. In the subjects not yet reviewed, pupils are expected to remember too much content. Leaders must continue their plan to strategically refine all curriculum plans.
- On a few occasions, teachers do not adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. This means that pupils are sometimes asked to complete learning activities that do not maximise their learning. Leaders must ensure that teachers consistently provide learning activities that meet the needs of all pupils.

## **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 predecessor school, Empingham CofE Primary School, to be good in November 2010.

## **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>	146425
<b>Local authority</b>	Rutland Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268449
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	79
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Rev James Saunders
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Sally Gooding
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.empinghamprimaryschool.co.uk">www.empinghamprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined The Rutland Learning Trust in March 2019. When its predecessor school, Empingham CofE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Peterborough. The most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in June 2023.
- The executive headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. She is also the headteacher at Great Casterton Church of England Primary School.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club on site that is managed by the school.
- The school does not make use of 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.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed further curriculum plans for geography, history and religious education.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader. She checked records of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe and scrutinised the single central record. Inspectors also discussed the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe with staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at lunchtime and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, as well as the responses to staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nadeem Shah

Ofsted Inspector

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