

Inspection of Great Whelnetham Church of England Primary School

Stanningfield Road, Great Whelnetham, Bury St. Edmunds IP30 0UA

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school of this school is Bobby Varela. This school is part of the All Saints Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Melanie Barrow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Hargrave. There is also an executive headteacher, Claire Flatman, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are happy and safe. They speak with excitement about their learning, especially their reading.

From the moment they join the school, pupils are encouraged to 'nurture, grow and succeed together'. They rise to these high expectations. Most pupils achieve well. However, pupils' written work in subjects other than English is of variable quality.

Pupils treat each other and adults with respect. Most pupils behave well in lessons. Some pupils need gentle reminders to focus in lessons, but learning mostly goes on undisturbed by pupils' behaviour.

Pupils are encouraged to be independent and confident to take on new challenges both in and out of the classroom. Many pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. These include sporting, dance and choir clubs. Pupils can follow their interests and develop their talents. Pupils take part in a variety of trips and visits that help make learning relevant and enable them to gain a range of new experiences.

Pupils are proud to adopt leadership roles, including the school council, eco-leaders and play leaders.

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

The school ensures that pupils study a broad and ambitious curriculum. This curriculum embeds the school's values. Teachers choose books to read with pupils that will enhance the topics pupils study. In this way, pupils read a wide variety of different texts. This helps promote pupils' lifelong love of reading.

Children develop a very strong foundation in reading from the start in early years. They learn to read with staff who are experts in teaching phonics. Adults provide interactive opportunities to play and learn about phonics. Pupils practise using their phonics knowledge regularly. They read books that are well matched to the sounds they know. This helps pupils to read fluently. Teachers check pupils' progress in reading carefully. Pupils who fall behind are quickly identified and helped to catch up. Older pupils who struggle with reading are very well supported by adults to become confident readers.

In many subjects, the school has identified exactly what pupils should learn at different times. Teachers check what pupils know and can do. They identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning.

Pupils' writing in different subject areas is not always of the same high standard as it is in English. Teachers' expectations of written work in some subjects are not as high. Therefore, pupils do not apply their writing knowledge as well as they could.

This means that they do not always show the depth of their knowledge in all subjects. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.

The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access the full curriculum. Staff quickly identify pupils' specific learning needs. This means that teachers put in place the appropriate support in the classroom. Regular reviews of support plans ensure that pupils' needs are continually met. Most pupils with SEND achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics.

All pupils have activities that prepare them for their future lives. They participate in entrepreneurial projects and hear talks from local professionals. Pupils learn about and practise democracy by voting for their council representatives and eco-councillors in school. They learn about other faiths and cultures through the rich texts that they read at school.

Pupils are respectful to adults. Pupils play happily together at social times. Most pupils are keen to contribute their ideas in lessons. A very small number need encouragement to do so by their teachers.

Leaders have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance. Leaders are proactive in supporting families to help their child attend regularly.

Pupils contribute positively to the local community. This includes visiting the nearby care home, fundraising for a range of charities, participating in church services and litter picking in the community.

Staff have regular opportunities to talk about their well-being with leaders. School leaders ensure that staff workload is manageable. Trust leaders know the school extremely well. They make sure the actions of school leaders are helping to make things better for the children in their care. Local governors fulfil the responsibilities given to them by the trust. Leaders at all levels are rightly proud of the continual improvements in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Written work completed by pupils is of variable quality across the curriculum. This is because teachers do not insist on the same high expectations of written work in foundation subjects that they do in English. This means that pupils do not consolidate their knowledge of writing for different contexts. In turn, they do not achieve as highly in writing assessments as they could.

The school should ensure that pupils' written work in foundation subjects is of the same high standard as it is in English.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147450
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10295117
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Hargrave
Headteacher	Claire Flatman
Website	www.greatwhelnetham.suffolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the All Saints Schools Trust, a multi-academy trust, in October 2019.
- The multi-academy trust is currently governed by the board of trustees, who delegate responsibilities for monitoring pupils' outcomes and progress towards targets, in line with their scheme of delegation as published on the trust's website.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- There is a separate on-site provider of out-of-school care for children.
- The school's most-recent inspection of its religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place on 19 March 2018. The next section 48 inspection is likely to take place before 2025.
- Great Whelnetham Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy in October 2019. When its predecessor school, Great Whelnetham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged inadequate.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the trust, executive headteacher, head of school, special educational needs coordinator, members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust and members of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, 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 evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside during social times.
- Inspectors viewed a range of the school's documentation provided at the start of the inspection, including the school improvement plan and minutes from meetings of the local governing body as well as the local improvement board.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses and free-text comments to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors met with staff and considered responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lucy Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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