

# Inspection of Erpingham Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

School Road, Erpingham, Norwich, Norfolk NR11 7QY

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Inspection dates:

10 and 11 October 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

This is a friendly and welcoming school where pupils treat each other well. They respect each other's differences and play kindly together in their free time.

Pupils enjoy school. They know they can talk to an adult in school if something is worrying them. This is an important part of the open culture which keeps them safe.

The many unusual aspects of this school are welcomed by parents and pupils. For example, pupils relish the unusually high amount of time that they spend outdoors. This helps them develop aspects of their character such as perseverance and resilience. Pupils learn to take risks and to keep themselves safe.

Pupils are nurtured by the school and develop well personally. However, despite the school wanting them to do well, pupils do not learn as much as they should. Their progress in reading and a range of other subjects is limited by some aspects of curriculum design and teaching.

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

In some subjects, the school sets out the detail of what teachers should teach and when. In others, there is insufficient detail for teachers to work from. Pupils learn what teachers decide they should learn, not what the school has decided is most important.

In many subjects, the school does not make sure pupils revisit the most important parts of what they have been taught. Nor does the school check whether pupils have remembered these. Leaders and teachers do not know if, or make sure that, pupils have learned what was intended. Pupils do learn, but not as well as they should.

These weaker aspects of provision are evident from Reception to Year 6. Provision in the pre-school is a strength. Children quickly settle and learn the considered pre-school curriculum. Adults have a strong understanding of children's starting points and know the curriculum well. Adults are expert listeners, engaging in meaningful talk with children. Children are prepared well for the transition to Reception.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well in some ways. For example, those pupils whose needs make it difficult for them to concentrate are helped to listen and learn. However, the school does not adapt what pupils are taught well enough. Some pupils with SEND struggle to understand the work they are given. They do not make consistently strong progress.

The school's approach to teaching phonics is not working as well as it should. Adults do not adhere closely to the approach that accompanies the school's chosen scheme. They teach pupils incorrect facts about sounds and how to pronounce them. Adults do not ensure pupils learn to practise sounds well. Pupils do not learn

to read as quickly and well as they should. While some pupils learn to enjoy reading, others do not.

The school's approach to pupils' personal development is successful. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is enhanced by thoughtful outdoor learning and opportunities to work with other organisations such as the Environment Agency. There are many visits that support what pupils learn and help them to gain a broad understanding of the world. A wide range of clubs, such as baking and crochet, are on offer and popular with pupils. Leaders work well to make sure all pupils, including those with SEND, take part in these aspects of school life.

The school helps pupils learn how to stay safe and how to treat others. This is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes and behaviours around the school. At lunchtime, they participate in a variety of activities, getting on well together. Pupils also usually behave well in lessons.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. Parents value the school's work and the uniqueness it brings. Working with the local authority, leaders and governors have strengthened leadership. The school now works in a broader partnership than it did in the past. This brings opportunities to share expertise and allows leaders to focus more on their core work. However, this very recent development has, at this early stage, had limited impact.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school has not set out well the content pupils need to learn in some subjects. As a result, what pupils learn is left too much to chance. The school should set out clearly which knowledge pupils need to learn in order to develop a cohesive body of knowledge in all subjects.
- The school does not adapt teaching to ensure pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum content as their peers. This means that pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they should. The school should ensure that the way the curriculum is taught meets the needs of all pupils.
- Phonics is taught inaccurately and with a lack of adherence to the phonics scheme. Pupils do not learn to read as quickly and well as they should. The school should ensure all staff who teach phonics have the expertise to do so and teach it in accordance with the school's chosen scheme.
- The school does not go back to previously taught knowledge often enough. Adults do not know, or ensure pupils have learned, key knowledge in the long term. The school should ensure there are opportunities for pupils to revisit important knowledge and for teachers to check pupils have remembered it.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121036
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10287106
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	77
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Thomas Abbott
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Neenan (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.blueskyfederation.co.uk">www.blueskyfederation.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Blue Sky Federation with Nortrepps Primary School. The schools share the same governing body.
- Both schools have recently begun to work in partnership with St Michael's Church of England VA Primary and Nursery School. Since 5 June 2023, the headteacher of St Michael's has led all three schools.
- The school provides education for pupils from the age of two.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- Erpingham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School has a Christian character. The religious aspects of the school's provision were last inspected in July 2017 under section 48 of the Education Act, 2005. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school runs before- and after-school clubs for its pupils.

## 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders and considered curriculum documentation for geography, modern foreign languages, physical education and PSHE.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders.
- The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks; 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 met with pupils and staff, as well as reviewed their responses to Ofsted's surveys of their views.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as the free-text comments parents made and the one communication sent directly to Ofsted from a parent.

## Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynsey Holzer	Ofsted Inspector

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