

Inspection of a good school: The North Cotes Church of England Primary School

Sea Lane, North Cotes, Lincolnshire DN36 5UZ

Inspection date:

2 November 2023

Outcome

The North Cotes Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

One parent captured the sentiments of many parents and carers when they wrote: 'This is a little gem of a school.' Relationships are warm and trusting. Pupils feel safe in this small, inclusive school. They say they enjoy coming to school, describing it as a happy and kind place to be. Pupils know they are well cared for. One said: 'You can talk to staff about anything here, it's like a home from home.' Pupils appreciate that staff listen to any ideas, worries or concerns they may have.

Expectations are high. Pupils respond well to them. They know the routines of the school well and promptly follow instructions from staff. Almost all pupils behave and attend well. Moreover, they display positive attitudes towards learning and treating everyone equally. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They embrace the British values, as well as upholding the school's Christian values, including respect, truth and forgiveness. Pupils are a credit to the school.

The school is calm and orderly. Classrooms are inviting, with many purposeful displays that support learning, including in Reception. Most pupils achieve well by the end of each key stage. However, sometimes pupils are not moved on to more challenging learning quickly enough.

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

The leadership of the school is strong and stable. All pupils follow an ambitious, broad and inclusive curriculum. The school has ensured that this starts in the early years and builds towards the end of Year 6. Across most subjects, staff know exactly what is taught and when. Leaders know that this work is not yet complete, but the school is well on the way. All staff contribute well to the school's new vision for the curriculum. Staff value the opportunities for professional learning. These include attending local staff networks and other training opportunities. Staff morale is positive. Staff are proud to work at the school and speak warmly of the school's 'team spirit'.

The school has effective oversight of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils' needs are well understood. The right amount of information is shared with staff so that all adults can support pupils with SEND effectively. The school ensures that staff communicate with parents about their children's education.

Pupils enjoy reading at school. They relish opportunities to discuss whole-class reading and meeting established authors. The school has invested in a wide range of texts to ensure that pupils read from different authors and genres which reflect social diversity. The school has developed a 'reading spine' which enables pupils to select reading books that are at the right level for them.

Children learn to read as soon as they start Reception. The teaching of phonics and early reading is typically effective. Most pupils achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 1. Children in Reception identify letter sounds quickly. Most pupils segment and blend words confidently. Regular checks mean that staff know precisely how well pupils are doing. Pupils who need extra help receive this daily. However, sometimes pupils in Year 2 repeat phonics knowledge that they have already achieved in Year 1. When this happens, pupils are prevented from applying their understanding to new and more challenging texts.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this to plan interesting learning activities, which most pupils enjoy. Pupils say that lessons are well organised. Teachers and supporting adults question pupils well. They typically identify, and swiftly remedy, any misconceptions that pupils develop. However, sometimes pupils can wait for too long before being moved on to more challenging learning. When this happens, and over time, pupils do not all achieve as well as they might across different subjects, including mathematics at key stage 2.

Children in Reception are well prepared for Year 1. They enjoy high-quality interactions with adults. Routines are well established. Children benefit from a stimulating and well-organised learning environment.

The school takes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning seriously. The school arranges special events to enrich pupils' wider learning experiences. These include science days at a local secondary school and local opportunities for music performance. Leaders are developing opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge of different cultures further. Most pupils enjoy taking part in clubs and activities, including gardening, morning kickstart and 'Artizan' crafts.

Governance at this school is strong. Governors have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They have developed innovative ways of ensuring that they have the necessary information to hold school leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, despite the planned ambitious curriculum, teachers do not always ensure that learning activities are appropriately matched to pupils' current level of knowledge and understanding. On occasions, teachers do not move pupils on to more challenging work when they are ready. As a result, some pupils do not develop their knowledge and understanding as fully as they might. The school should ensure that teachers know how best to help pupils build and develop their knowledge and understanding, so that all pupils can achieve as well as they can.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2018.

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	120579
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10313237
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matthew Petley
Headteacher	Jonathan Grant (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.northcotes.lincs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the North Cotes Church of England Primary and Fulstow Primary Federation. The executive headteacher oversees both schools.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Lincoln. The most recent Section 48 inspection of this Church of England school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in January 2016.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other members of staff, including the school’s coordinator for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with six members of the school’s governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. He also spoke by telephone with representatives from the local authority and from the Diocese of Lincoln.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also reviewed curriculum documentation and samples of pupils’ work for a range of other subjects, including personal, social and health education, science and computing.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from key stage 1 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around the school site during playtime. They spoke with several groups of pupils, both formally and informally.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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 considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted’s survey for pupils and staff. They also took account of the school’s own survey of parents’ views.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Kate Rouse

Ofsted Inspector

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