

Inspection of Hethersett VC Primary School

22 Queen's Road, Hethersett, Norwich, Norfolk NR9 3DB

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. There are a variety of activities that help to give them a well-rounded and rich school experience. Pupils become very confident and independent. They have leadership responsibilities that they fulfil with pride and make a real difference to the school community. 'Playground Pals' and sports leaders organise activities. They help to look after younger pupils during playtimes. Pupils take part in a wide range of charity and other activities. These help them to become good citizens of the future.

The school is highly ambitious for what pupils can achieve, both academically and in their personal development. Pupils experience a high-quality education, particularly in areas such as early reading and mathematics. As a result, they progress well with their learning. They love visiting the well-stocked libraries and are enthusiastic about books.

Behaviour at both playtime and in class is calm and focused. Most pupils are very keen to learn and listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils love playing with the wide array of equipment at playtimes. They climb on the large equipment or show off their skills with juggling toys.

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

The school has ensured that, as it expanded to have all primary year groups, there are appropriate curriculums in place. In most cases, the knowledge that pupils will learn is well sequenced from the early years through to Year 6.

The school has developed staff knowledge of how to support younger pupils' development, for example, in areas such as phonics and communication. Teachers present new learning to pupils clearly and effectively in these areas. Lessons regularly revisit what has come before to make sure that pupils remember and understand. As a result, many pupils achieve well.

Early reading is taught well. Pupils read regularly and practise phonics, unfamiliar vocabulary and tricky words frequently. As a result, most pupils quickly become fluent readers. As they become more confident, pupils access a wide range of different books, with teachers recommending ones to widen their diet still further.

Pupils are enthused by teachers' 'hooks' for learning. For example, a 'mythical monster' wrecked part of a classroom, and 'a cookie thief' left crumbs all down the corridor. Pupils excitedly considered who these might be and what clues have been left. Teachers use these types of activities well to inspire pupils' writing.

Most of the curriculum beyond English and mathematics is very well planned and taught in a logical order. Where this is the case, pupils build up knowledge well over time. There are a small number of subjects where this is less so. In these subjects, the school has not as clearly thought through what pupils will learn in terms of the

detail and order. As a result, teachers do not build on what has come before as effectively in these subjects.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well to access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff make use of the clear support plans effectively. These show teachers how to support pupils with SEND so that they learn well.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Most pupils follow the rules sensibly. They work hard and attend regularly.

The school goes above and beyond in other experiences and activities that it provides for pupils. The school makes every effort to enable all pupils to participate in these activities. Clubs, such as kayaking, chess, cipher, dodgeball and more, are well attended. Pupils visit theatres and historical sites and take part in community action projects. The school's curriculum is enhanced so that even if pupils are unable to attend after-school provision, they all have opportunities such as learning a musical instrument or archery.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of diversity and difference within our society. They are highly respectful and supportive of each other. This is because of the high-quality teaching they receive about this and the world around them.

The school is well led. Staff are appreciative of how they are supported and trained. Governors have a strong understanding of how the school is performing in core areas. They are building links with subject leaders as some aspects of the curriculum continue to develop.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school holds safeguarding in the highest regard. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff have an excellent understanding of the signs that pupils might be at risk. Where there are concerns about pupils, leaders follow up on these promptly and appropriately. This means that pupils get the help they need and are kept safe. However, some of the record keeping does not fully reflect that these actions have taken place or have been timely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few areas of the curriculum, either schemes are new or not laid out in as much detail as others. Where this is the case, new learning does not build effectively on previous lessons. As a result, pupils do not build up a deep understanding of what is taught in those subjects. The school needs to ensure that teaching of all subjects builds new learning clearly on what has come before.
- The records of how the school deals with some safeguarding concerns do not always reflect fully the actions taken or that concerns were addressed on the same day when needed. The school needs to ensure that actions taken are always recorded precisely and in a timely manner.

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	121042
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10294999
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amy Hanton
Headteacher	Matthew Parslow-Williams
Website	www.hethersettvcprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school converted from a junior school to a primary school in September 2019.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Norwich. The last statutory inspection of the school's denominational education and worship took place in May 2023, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The next section 48 inspection will be due five school years from the previous one.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school has its own breakfast- and after-school clubs.
- There is a separately run and registered nursery on the school site.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, religious education, and physical education. For each subject, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors visited a range of other subject lessons and looked at a wide range of curriculum plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 the Ofsted parent, pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Davies

Ofsted Inspector

Ryan Freeman

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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