

Inspection of St Edmundsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Grove Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3BJ

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy attending this school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors, holding open doors and greeting adults enthusiastically. Younger children and pupils flourish. They are keen to ask questions and show their work. For example, pupils enjoyed sharing the modelling clay hot cross buns they made.

Most pupils understand what is expected of them and meet these expectations, but too many do not. Some pupils do not concentrate on what staff say during lessons or do what is asked of them. Children in Reception have very positive behaviour routines and show good manners. Generally, pupils attend school regularly. Systems to monitor and challenge poor attendance are becomingly increasingly effective.

Some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This is because they have not learned important knowledge and skills earlier in the school. This is not always identified quickly enough.

Pupils benefit from being able to attend a variety of clubs and activities. These range from cookery club to dodgeball. Pupils are also able to apply for a range of leadership opportunities. These provide the pupils with the chance to support others and to demonstrate the school's values, such as being ready and being respectful.

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

Arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe from harm are now robust. Accurate and comprehensive records are kept. Timely support is requested from external agencies when this is required.

The quality of education is not yet good because too many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. These gaps occur because the curriculum has not previously been delivered systematically and effectively. These inconsistencies have not yet been fully addressed. Teachers are not always aware of what pupils have learned previously. In some subjects, pupils are not able to use subject vocabulary well. Because many are still catching up, pupils do not typically achieve well in national tests.

However, in the early years, children benefit from a well-planned and established curriculum. As a result, younger children progress well across different areas of learning. The routines established in Reception mean younger children quickly develop independence, settle, and behave well. The school prioritises reading for younger children. These pupils focus well during their phonics sessions and learn to read well.

The reading programme to enable older pupils to catch up and keep up is not as precise as that in key stage 1. Older pupils do not always read regularly or frequently. As a result, too many of these pupils do not meet age-related expectations in reading.

The teaching of writing is inconsistent across the school. Pupils are not always well supported to understand the technical aspects of writing, such as grammar and spelling. This limits their progress across the curriculum.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is typically effective. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately. Pupils are generally supported well to make academic progress. Staff are appropriately trained and have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils and how to support them best.

The expectations of pupil behaviour are not always consistent. Sometimes, learning is disrupted by a small, but persistent, number of pupils. The level of suspensions is high. Pupils with SEND contribute significantly to these figures. The school is beginning to monitor and track behaviour more effectively to reduce instances of poor behaviour.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum at St Edmundsbury is well planned and provides a broad and appropriate range of topics. It enables pupils to stay safe online. They learn about how to keep healthy. Younger pupils learn about 'people who help us' and understand how to help each other. The school makes good use of outside speakers and experts to support the programme. Sessions covering online safety, for example, are delivered by the police. Pupils also experience a range of curriculum visits to help them build their knowledge. Visits to a cathedral and theatre broaden pupils' experiences. The youngest children benefit from visiting the local library and pantomime.

Leaders have brought about significant change after a period of turbulence. They have done so with energy and precision. Governors provide appropriate challenge to ensure the school continues to improve. However, the school acknowledges there is more work to do to ensure pupils receive a good quality of education. They have clear plans in place to achieve this. Leaders ensure staff are supported in their work, reducing their workload where this is possible.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not apply the behaviour policy consistently. This means that pupils do not always behave as expected. The school must ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented by all staff.

- The programme for reading at key stage 2 is not yet as precise as that for younger children. As a result, older pupils do not read as well, as frequently, or as broadly as they might. Pupil outcomes in reading at key stage 2 reflect this. The school must review their approach to ensure all children develop their reading skills more quickly and effectively.
- As a result of the inconsistency in the planning and delivery of the curriculum, some pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding. These gaps are not always identified effectively. The school must ensure that the new curriculum is robustly implemented to enable pupils to achieve more highly.
- Staff do not teach pupils to master the technical elements of the writing curriculum. This means pupils have gaps in their understanding and do not apply important spelling or grammatical features when they write. This reduces the progress pupils make across their subjects. The school should ensure the teaching of writing enables pupils to secure their understanding of important component knowledge, so this can be applied when writing for different purposes.

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	124762
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10313042
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Frances Parr
Headteacher	Victoria Cooper
Website	www.st-edmundsbury.suffolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 May 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The acting headteacher started in September 2023. A new headteacher has been appointed from April 2024.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school is part of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in May 2019.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the school’s senior leaders, governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, and design technology. 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.
- 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.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted’s pupil and staff surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Michael Williams	His Majesty’s Inspector
Charlie Fordham	His Majesty’s Inspector

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