

Inspection of Radwinter Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Water Lane, Radwinter, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2TX

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a lovely place to go to school. Pupils are happy and enjoy their education. They benefit from an extraordinary range of experiences beyond the academic curriculum. This is all planned meticulously to ensure that all pupils, regardless of need or background, learn about life beyond school. Pupils are effusive about this. They know how good the school is for them.

Pupils learn well from a thorough programme of personal, social, health and relationships education. They treat each other with dignity and respect. They care about and look after each other. One pupil summed up the culture of the school succinctly when he said: 'You'll never be lonely here. It doesn't matter what you look like. You can believe in anything you want. Everyone is accepted.'

Pupils experience a consistently positive education because leaders take every opportunity they can to improve the school. Pupils know this and value it.

Pupils enjoy attending school, and a large proportion of parents took time to share their highly positive views of the school. This comment captures the flavour of the overwhelming majority: 'Radwinter is a treasure hidden in the countryside.'

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

The school is highly ambitious for pupils. Staff and leaders care deeply about supporting every individual pupil.

Teachers make good use of the clearly set out curriculum documents to inform what they teach. Pupils usually learn the intended curriculum well. Some have a particularly impressive range of knowledge. For instance, most pupils learn history well, with many showing a deep level of understanding. However, there is a small amount of variability in how well the curriculum is taught, leading to pupils not always learning as deeply as leaders intend.

There are many strengths in early years provision. The curriculum is skilfully constructed and taught to ensure children gain the knowledge and skills they need. Adults work well with children, introducing and teaching important knowledge and skills. They steer children's activities carefully to make sure children build on what they have been taught.

The school makes sure reading is front and centre of pupils' experiences. It has a clear focus on helping younger pupils learn to read with increasing fluency. Its work to help older pupils understand the meaning of the texts they read is already bearing fruit. Pupils understand what they read and enjoy reading.

The school recognised that some younger children had not kept up with the pace of the phonics programme. It acted effectively to rectify this, and those who fell behind are catching up well and becoming successful readers. However, the books pupils

are given to practise reading are sometimes introduced slightly too soon. This means they are not as helpful for pupils to practise letters and sounds as they could be.

The way the school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is impressive. Staff routinely adapt what they do to meet the needs of pupils. This means that, regardless of their need, pupils successfully learn alongside their peers in the classroom. Pupils know that sometimes their peers will need different help so they can succeed. Consequently, pupils with SEND experience no stigma if they work or behave in different ways.

The school offers a vast array of activities at lunch and after school. These cater for all interests. Actors, musicians, sports people, chess players, knitters – all have something to interest and enthuse them. Every pupil joins in with the '65 essential experiences'. These carefully mapped out opportunities run in and beyond taught time. They cover the things that parents, staff and pupils told leaders every child should experience at primary school. This contributes towards the school's rich and nurturing environment.

Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Pupils largely learn in an environment free from disruption. When pupils do make mistakes with their behaviour, the school's shared, positive approach to helping them learn more positive behaviours works well.

The school has secured a strongly positive collective ethos. Staff are fully committed and feel valued and supported by leaders.

Leaders have been hugely successful in engaging with parents, thereby securing significant support from parents in implementing their vision. Where there has been some change in staffing, leaders have quickly ensured new staff understand and promote the school's ethos. Governors understand the school well. They work closely with leaders to ensure leaders' actions are impactful.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes the curriculum is not delivered with as much precision as it often is. This includes some aspects of early reading. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure all aspects of the curriculum are taught as well as most are.

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	115191
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10323623
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr John Reynolds and Mrs Helen O'Brien (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Emily Bartram
Website	www.radwinter.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a religious character: Church of England. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place on 25 April 2018. The next inspection is due within eight school years.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 inclusion leader, other leaders and staff, the chair of governors and other governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative from the diocese and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. 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, inspectors: reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks; took account of the views of leaders, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors also considered responses from parents, pupils and staff to Ofsted's surveys of their views, including free-text comments. They considered the one email received from a parent.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Wade	Ofsted Inspector

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