

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Wetheringsett Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Wetheringsett, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5PJ

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

Wetheringsett Church of England Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Imogen Wallis. This school is part of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tracy Caffull, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Blit. The headteacher is the executive headteacher of this school and one other school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love being part of this small, welcoming school. As one pupil accurately noted, this is a 'small school that does big things'. Pupils access a range of exciting trips, clubs and sporting activities. Pupils' faces light up when they talk about their outdoor learning in the forest school. Whether baking bread on the fire, exploring nature or weaving traditional fences, pupils build on their classroom learning or do something different. A well-planned personal, social, health and economic education programme supports pupils to learn about important topics such as e-safety and healthy eating effectively.

Pupils meet a range of appropriate subjects through the school's interesting and well-thought-out curriculum. Pupils work hard in class and want to do their best. They behave exceptionally well, living up to the school's values and high expectations. Pupils are happy and rarely miss school. They proudly talk about their school council and how staff listen to their views. On the playground, all pupils, including the youngest children, play well together. Staff are there for pupils if they need any help or support. This is a caring and nurturing community where everyone gets along well with one another.

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

The school has continued to reflect on and improve its curriculum. Working closely with the trust and sharing expertise with another small partner school means that pupils

experience a broad and knowledge rich curriculum.

Nearly all subjects highlight the most important things the school wants pupils to learn. This knowledge is ordered logically from the early years upwards considering the small, mixed-age classes. The small class sizes help staff to know pupils' gaps in learning well. Staff quickly spot if a pupil is finding something tricky. Lessons are carefully crafted around pupils' varying needs. Where necessary, pupils get extra practice to help them remember and build their knowledge. Overall, pupils achieve well from their different starting points.

The school knows what further work is needed to make the curriculum work consistently across all subjects. It has identified a very small number of areas where curriculum documentation needs to be strengthened. Previously, the key knowledge was not always identified clearly. The recent school flooding significantly set back the pace of this work. Pupils are yet to benefit from the new, positive changes that the staff have already made.

The well-resourced early years space, combined with high-quality teaching of the curriculum, ensures that children know and practise important knowledge such as counting and phonics. Children enjoy books and stories with adults. The early years curriculum sets children up with secure foundations for their learning. Children in the early years are well prepared for the next steps of their education in Year 1.

Staff give pupils who struggle to read effective help to catch up with their peers. The reading curriculum is regularly evaluated and refined so that it continues to help pupils become confident readers. For instance, the school has broadened its range of books. This supports pupils to further build and improve their reading fluency and vocabulary. These changes are working well.

A further strength of the school is the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school identifies pupils' needs promptly and accurately. Staff get detailed information about 'what works' for each pupil with SEND. This information is used to adapt lessons or give high-quality pastoral support to ensure that pupils learn well. Pupils with SEND are fully included in school life.

Clear expectations of behaviour and an engaging curriculum mean that lessons are not disturbed by any poor behaviour. Staff take great pride in the high-quality care that they give pupils to support them with their different needs. As a result, pupils' behaviour is very well managed. Pupils' attendance is consistently high.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. It considers carefully how to enhance pupils' experiences outside of this very small school. The school teaches pupils effectively about how other people and communities may be different to their own. Great thought goes into trips and other experiences so they enhance pupils' learning and expand pupils' horizons beyond their day-to-day lives.

Parents and carers and pupils are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The recent flood presented additional challenges. Through partnership with the local community and

the trust, the full benefits of school life for its pupils are back on track. Staff value the professional training and guidance they receive to help them to develop and teach the curriculum. Leaders ensure the small nature of the school is an asset and not a barrier to pupils receiving a high-quality curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A very small number of curriculum subjects need further refinement to ensure that the key knowledge pupils need to learn is highlighted and thought out in a logical order. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well in these subjects as they do in the rest of the curriculum. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, the curriculum is carefully considered and implemented effectively.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 predecessor school, Wetheringsett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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	147575
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10345518
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Blit
CEO of the trust	Tracey Caffull
Headteacher	Imogen Wallis (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.wetheringsett.suffolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has only recently returned to its premises after a significant flood disrupted school life.
- Wetheringsett Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy in November 2019. When its predecessor school, Wetheringsett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The school shares its governing body and executive headteacher with another local school.
- The school is part of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust within the diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school received its last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character in September 2024. The next inspection is due within eight years of this date.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with a range of leaders, including the executive headteacher, the head of school, the school's special educational needs coordinator and a representative of the trust.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to pupils read.
- The inspector spoke with a range of pupils on both days of inspection. The inspector spent time with pupils at lunchtimes and breaktimes to observe their behaviour and speak to pupils about school life.
- The inspector held a meeting with those responsible for governance, including the chair of governors.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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 inspector spoke to a range of staff and considered their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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