

Inspection of Carlton CofE Primary School

The Moor, Carlton, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 7JR

Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since January 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are confident and self-assured. For instance, they share their ideas and opinions enthusiastically with staff. Moreover, pupils and staff show kindness and respect towards each other. This fosters a positive environment and helps pupils to feel valued.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and pupils meet these well. For instance, the transition from playtime to the classroom is calm. This is because pupils know how to walk in an orderly fashion. This means that lessons can start on time, and there are fewer disruptions. In lessons, pupils listen well and try hard to achieve their best.

Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities. This begins with the youngest children, who help to keep their classroom tidy. Older pupils help the school to run smoothly, for example by setting up for assemblies. Pupils who sit on the school council make decisions that help staff improve the school. These activities help pupils become vital members of the school community. They build essential skills for independence.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning. Pupils learn well in many subjects. They benefit from the broad and interesting curriculum, which helps them develop their interests and prepares them well for their next stage of education.

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

The school has set out a well-organised curriculum. This means staff are clear about the knowledge and skills pupils should learn at each stage. In most subjects, this begins in the early years and builds up gradually as pupils get older. However, in a few subjects, this is not the case. This means pupils sometimes miss some essential knowledge in these subjects because staff are not aware of what pupils have learned previously.

In many subjects, including the core subjects of English and mathematics, staff are well trained. They know how and why to teach knowledge in a particular order and how to help pupils retain it. Furthermore, in the early years, children gain essential mathematical knowledge and learn to recognise and write letters and words. In these subjects, pupils achieve well. However, in a few subjects, staff lack the specific knowledge they need to design effective learning tasks. This means that, at times, learning activities only partially develop pupils' skills and knowledge. Additionally, staff need to check pupils' understanding effectively. As a result, some pupils' progress through the curriculum is slower, and the school does not know how much progress pupils are making and any gaps in knowledge they have.

The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. Children in the Nursery learn vital language skills from skilled staff. This prepares them well when they are ready to learn to read. Children in Reception learn phonics in daily sessions. Staff help pupils to develop their knowledge in small manageable chunks. They check pupils' reading knowledge often. This means they can address misconceptions straight away, so pupils make strong

progress with their reading. For those who need additional support, the school provides catch-up sessions. Additionally, pupils read books that match their phonics knowledge. This lets pupils use their reading skills independently, boosts their self-confidence and means they want to read more often.

Teachers accurately identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures pupils with SEND have the correct support that matches their needs. The school has made sure staff have the training they need to provide this. Staff help pupils when needed. They also make sure pupils can complete tasks independently. This means pupils with SEND are not over-reliant on adult support.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous and listen well to each other's ideas. This shows they have learned to be respectful. Routines for pupils are clear, and they understand them. Even the youngest children show good learning behaviours and can get along with each other.

The school teaches pupils to value different cultures and religions. This helps them to understand others and to celebrate diversity. The school is a caring environment. For example, older pupils create engaging clubs for the younger ones.

Leaders work effectively with local authority advisers and school governors. They identify and take action on key proprieties, for example to improve teaching in some subjects. At times, progress has slowed due to staff absence. Governors complete all statutory checks. Additionally, staff feel that school leaders support their well-being and try to reduce workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, staff do not have sufficient knowledge of the subject-specific curriculum content. As a result, they cannot design learning effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. Also, they do not routinely check what pupils know and can do in these subjects. This means some pupils do not learn important knowledge, and gaps in their knowledge are not identified. The school should ensure staff receive guidance and support to understand and teach the curriculum content as the school intends, complete checks on how well pupils learn and use these checks to adapt teaching accordingly.
- In a few subjects, the school has not coherently organised the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn from the early years up. This creates a gap between the early years and key stage 1. Pupils sometimes miss out on learning essential knowledge. The school should ensure that knowledge and skills development in all subjects is organised

logically from the early years so children are suitably well prepared for their learning in Year 1 and beyond.

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	109610
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10323597
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katherine Wilkinson
Headteacher	Jo Bevis
Website	www.carltoncofeprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- This is an Anglican school in the Diocese of St Albans. The school's most recent inspection of its religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection is due this year.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair. She also met with representatives from the local authority and from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions with leaders about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils in class, in small groups and on the playground.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Carley Holliman

Ofsted Inspector

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