

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

Palgrave, Nr Diss, Suffolk IP22 1AG

Inspection date:

4 March 2025

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Julia Waters. The school is part of The Tilian Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Andrew Berry, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Yapp.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this welcoming and inclusive school. They live out the four school values, including 'perseverance' and 'honesty'. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. Pupils are rightly proud of their school, which they describe as 'small but mighty'. The school forms strong relationships with pupils and their families. As a result, pupils feel safe.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations that are set out for their achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are proud of their school. Pupils achieve well. They demonstrate a willingness to work hard and succeed and do so across the curriculum subject areas.

Pupils behave extremely well. Older pupils foster close connections with their younger peers. They act as positive role models and ensure that everyone feels welcome. Teachers notice and reward pupils' efforts and achievements.

The school's focus on enrichment and personal development ensures that pupils grow not only in knowledge, but also in character. Despite the school's small size, pupils are offered many leadership opportunities, such as school council and team captains. These encourage and develop responsibility. Pupils leave well prepared for their next steps.

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

The school provides an ambitious curriculum. It is reviewed and adapted to ensure it meets the needs of the mixed-age classes. In all subjects, the school has identified what it expects pupils to learn. In doing so, teachers have a clear understanding of the key knowledge and skills that they should teach. Staff check what pupils know and remember. They typically use this information effectively to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Consequently, most pupils achieve well.

The school has recently adopted a new phonics programme. Children in the early years learn the sounds that letters make and blend these to read simple words. This prepares them well as they build upon their knowledge, reading words and sentences with increasing complexity in Year 1 and beyond. Pupils are given books that match the sounds they know. The school arranges swift and effective support for pupils who struggle to keep up with the pace of the phonics programme. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors.

Some aspects of the new phonics programme are still being developed and are not consistently in place. For some children in early years and pupils in key stage 1, their writing of the letters they have been taught in phonics is not closely checked and corrected when errors happen. This means that mistakes in pupils' letter formation increase over time and continue when pupils use what they have learned in their writing. This impacts upon how successful pupils are in their writing.

Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum as well as the school's enrichment offer. The school has effective systems in place to swiftly identify pupils with SEND. The school makes appropriate adaptations such as additional adult support and physical resources, where needed. Consequently, pupils with SEND successfully access the same curriculum as their peers and achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is extremely positive. This is reflected in their calm and purposeful behaviour in lessons and during social times. This includes in the early years where, for example, children demonstrate kindness in caring for Thumper, the school rabbit. The school works with families to make sure that pupils attend regularly. This means that pupils do not miss out on their education.

Pupils' personal development is promoted well. They benefit from enrichment activities, such as the trips on offer. These include the Year 6 residential, taking part in a large choral event and visiting 10 Downing Street. These increase their awareness of the world around them. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum prepares pupils well for life beyond school. It teaches them about healthy relationships, internet safety and respect for diversity.

The trust and local governing body have an accurate oversight of the school's work. The trust uses its knowledge effectively to provide appropriate support and challenge. Staff

feel well supported by manageable workloads and clear priorities. Parents and carers are unanimously positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Inconsistencies in the delivery of the recently adopted phonics programme mean that some pupils' writing formation is not corrected and, consequently, errors occur. This hinders pupils' writing skills as they move through the school, meaning pupils do not always write as fluently as they could. The school should ensure that systems to correct younger pupils' errors in handwriting are consistently applied, so that pupils are effectively supported to improve these key skills.

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 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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 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

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| Unique reference number | 143071 |
| Local authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 10345439 |
| 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 | 82 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Stephen Yapp |
| CEO of the trust | Andrew Berry |
| Headteacher | Julia Waters |
| Website | www.palgrave.suffolk.sch.uk/ |
| Dates of previous inspection | 8 and 9 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Palgrave Church of England Primary School is part of The Tilian Partnership Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school provides before- and after-school care.
- The school has a religious character. It is part of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. It received its last section 48 inspection under statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in November 2024.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, the trust head of school improvement and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the school's 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 pupil's interests first.
- The inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and breaktimes.
- The lead inspector met with staff in school and some parents on the playground. They also considered responses made by parents and carers to Ofsted's Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Stephen Cloke, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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