

Inspection of a good school: Blakeney Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wiveton Road, Blakeney, Holt, Norfolk NR25 7NJ

Inspection date:

2 March 2023

Outcome

Blakeney Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school with a family feel. Pupils are warmly welcomed and supported by staff who give them expert care and attention. Older pupils look after their younger classmates in class and at playtimes. Pupils feel and are safe. They say that bullying is rare. Pupils know that if bullying does happen, the adults will sort it out.

Pupils respond well to teachers' instructions and high expectations. They listen carefully and take care to set out their work neatly. They know what to do because teachers explain well. Lessons are calm and happy experiences for pupils to learn in. Pupils emulate the kindness modelled by their teachers.

Pupils have plenty of chances to connect with the local community. Staff take them on a wide range of visits. They take boat trips to see the seals, join in with church activities and sing in the local nursing home. Pupils also learn about local people, culture, history and the natural environment. Pupils take time to reflect in regular collective worship. Pupils can spread their wings, meet new friends and develop their independence at federation-wide sports events and residential trips.

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

Leaders have recently revamped the curriculum. It embodies leaders' ambitions for pupils to learn deep and meaningful knowledge about the world. They have carefully adapted this curriculum so that it works well for mixed age-group classes, including for children in the early years.

Teachers work closely with leaders to translate the curriculum into enriching lessons. Teachers teach new knowledge in a way that helps pupils to understand. They regularly check whether pupils, and children in the early years, have learned the curriculum. Pupils

of all ages learn well and have fruitful discussions and debates about what they have learned.

Leaders' work to refine the curriculum is not yet complete in a small number of subjects. For example, in geography, pupils do not have the chance to develop a depth of understanding of mapwork.

Leaders have used their knowledge of high-quality reading programmes to make significant, secure improvements to the early reading curriculum. Leaders and teachers have jointly implemented a more rigorous approach to teaching phonics. These changes have had a positive impact on pupils' early reading experiences. Pupils who were behind have quickly caught up. The books they read match the sounds they learn. Teachers' checks of pupils' learning accurately pinpoint the next steps pupils need to be successful. Older pupils enthusiastically talk about the books that teachers read to them.

Leaders and teachers know all pupils well. Leaders see this as being one of the benefits of a small school, particularly for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers are quick to identify each pupil's needs. Skilled staff provide pupils with SEND with precise, impactful support. Leaders are knowledgeable about SEND and regularly check how well pupils' needs are being met.

Leaders have set out clear routines and expectations for pupils' behaviour. Leaders and teachers carefully explain the reasons behind school rules. Pupils respond admirably. Lessons are calm and orderly. Leaders give pupils time to reflect on their actions and how they might affect others. Older pupils help younger pupils learn how to be good friends with one another.

Pupils learn about a wide range of cultures and religions through the religious education curriculum, in assemblies and in their personal, social and health education lessons. They also learn about how society works, the nature of democracy and the law through, for example, visits from members of the local community such as the local police officer. Regular music lessons, taught by experts, help pupils to develop their creativity and knowledge of, and expertise in, music.

Leaders and governors are committed to nurturing the talents and expertise of staff. Leaders see this as integral to the continued success of the school and the federation. They have set up strong networks of support. This enables staff across the federation to collaborate on the curriculum and how best to teach it. Leaders carefully consider new initiatives, to ensure that change is manageable. They regularly reflect on ways to support staff workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are thorough. Through regular training and meetings, leaders keep safeguarding high on the agenda. Staff know the signs of harm. If they have a concern, they report it quickly. Leaders work closely with

parents and external agencies to secure additional support for pupils and their families.

Pupils learn how to keep safe, including online. They know what to do and who to go to if they have a worry.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not sequenced disciplinary knowledge, such as map work in geography, precisely enough so that pupils build on prior knowledge. As a result, pupils do not always develop some aspects of subject-specific disciplinary knowledge well. Leaders need to refine the curriculum so that pupils achieve well in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in September 2016.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	121108
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10200096
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Burrows
Headteacher	Tom Snowdon
Website	www.blakeney.norfolk.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-size school.
- The school is part of the Pilgrim Federation.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2021.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is required to be inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of this school was in March 2017. The school was rated good.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and governors.
- The lead inspector had telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Norwich.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the curriculum leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans for other subjects.
- To evaluate the school's safeguarding procedures, the lead inspector spoke with the headteacher and governors. The lead inspector reviewed the school's records of safeguarding concerns and the school's single central record of staff employment checks. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector considered responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered the responses to the pupil survey and the responses to the staff survey. Inspectors also spoke with pupil groups, met with parents at the school gates and met with teachers and support staff.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ashley Best-White

Ofsted Inspector

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