

Inspection of a good school: Whittlebury Church of England Primary School

High Street, Whittlebury, Towcester, Northamptonshire NN12 8XH

Inspection date:

15 December 2022

Outcome

Whittlebury Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school where pupils are well looked after and cared for. Pupils enjoy attending. They say that everyone knows each other and gets on well. They work hard. As one pupil said: 'It's like being part of one big family. Teachers make learning fun and give us freedom to learn.'

Leaders aim for the school to be 'small enough to care, large enough to inspire'. They expect pupils to be curious, confident and creative, to be part of the community and to demonstrate Christian values. Pupils try hard to live up to these expectations. They describe the school as inclusive. They enjoy learning about people from different backgrounds and with different views and beliefs.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite and courteous. They are respectful to adults and to one another. They are motivated by the rewards on offer, including verbal praise, star awards and earning points for positive behaviour that they can cash in for prizes. Being selected as a monthly VIP, including walking the red carpet, is highly prized. Pupils understand the school's sanctions. They know how 'school service' can be used to put right poor behaviour. However, they say that this is very rarely required.

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

Leaders have prioritised reading. Phonics is taught as soon as pupils begin school. The phonics programme is thoroughly planned. It makes clear which sounds pupils should know and when. Sounds are taught in a logical sequence. The books that pupils read are closely matched to the sounds that they have learned. This helps pupils to become fluent readers early in their school career.

Over time, pupils develop a love of reading. They read widely and often. Pupils told inspectors, 'We love to get lost in a good book.' The curriculum sets out the books that pupils will study as they progress through school. This ensures that pupils read a diverse range of authors and genres. The reading curriculum sets out the end points that pupils

are expected to achieve. It does not, however, build incrementally on what pupils know at each stage of their education. This means that leaders do not have the milestones they need to check on how well pupils are acquiring the reading curriculum.

The majority of the school's curriculum in other subjects is well planned and sequenced. It makes clear what pupils are expected to know and remember at each point of their education. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. They develop the ability to work autonomously. They enjoy their 'cool jobs' and understand how these help them to consolidate what they have learned previously. However, a small number of subjects are not yet fully planned and sequenced. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not remember curriculum content as consistently as they could.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. They work and play cooperatively. They make good use of the outdoor area. Adults help children to improve their language and communication skills. The early years curriculum sets out the milestones that children are expected to achieve at each point through the Reception Year. Teachers carry out regular checks to see how children are getting on. However, these checks are based on what children are expected to achieve by the end of the year. They do not check closely enough on how well children acquire the termly milestones that are set out in the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well catered for. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that these pupils' needs are accurately identified and planned for. Personalised plans accurately set out the provision that needs to be in place. Pupils' targets are specific, measurable and well communicated.

The school's programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils know that everyone should be treated equally and with respect. They do not tolerate any form of discrimination. Older pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships.

Leaders are ambitious. They have ensured that the school has effective leadership at all levels. There is good capacity for continued improvement. The school's work with others in the federation is a strength. Leaders know their pupils and families well. Staff, pupils and parents are unanimously positive about the school. One parent summed up the views of many, when they said: 'Whittlebury is a wonderful school with kind and caring staff. Children feel cared for and are nurtured. As parents, we always know our children are in safe hands.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. All concerns are recorded and acted on quickly. Records are detailed and well communicated. The school provides a broad range of early help and support. The school's social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) worker provides well-tailored support. The impact of her work is carefully measured.

Pupils know how to stay safe online, in the community and on roads. They know whom to talk to in school should they need help or support. They know that all adults in school are trusted adults. They know that they can get help via Childline should they need to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of subjects are not yet fully planned and sequenced. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not remember curriculum content as consistently as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum, across all subjects, is well planned and sequenced.
- Beyond phonics, the school's reading curriculum sets out end points. It does not build incrementally on what pupils should know and be able to do at each stage of their education. Leaders do not have the milestones they need to check on how well pupils are acquiring the reading curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the reading curriculum builds incrementally and makes clear what pupils are expected to know at each stage of their education.
- Assessments in the early years are based on what children are expected to achieve by the end of the year. They do not check closely enough on how well children acquire the termly milestones of the curriculum. This means that leaders do not have a precise view of how children are acquiring curriculum content. Leaders should ensure that assessment in the early years checks on how well children acquire the termly milestones, across each of the areas of learning. This is in pursuit of children achieving even better.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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	122003
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254919
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Daniel Lister
Headteacher	Eliza Hollis
Website	https://www.forestfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Forest Church of England Federation of schools. This is made up of four small primary schools. The schools share the same executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, school business manager and governing body.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Peterborough. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place on 23 June 2015.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.

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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the school lead teacher, curriculum leaders, the early years leaders, the SENCo and the SEMH worker.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in three subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. An inspector listened to pupils read. Inspectors also looked at curriculum documentation for modern foreign languages, art and PSHE.
- The lead inspector met with three representatives of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. They considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The lead inspector met with safeguarding leads. He reviewed school documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and governance. He held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector visited the playground during breaktimes and spoke informally to parents outside the school. They briefly visited the hall during pupils' Christmas dinner.

Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Luella Manssen

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022