Inspection of a good school: The Holbeach St Mark's Church of England Primary School

St Marks Road, Holbeach St Mark's, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 8DZ

Inspection date: 8 May 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Holbeach St Mark's Church of England Primary School is an inclusive and welcoming school. Pupils enjoy attending school. One pupil echoed the views of many when they stated that 'people are so kind here'. Older pupils include younger pupils in the games that they play during social times.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Most pupils live up to these expectations. Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to their learning. At times, some pupils are not always given the opportunity to deepen their learning and achieve the ambitious aims of the school's curriculum.

Pupils feel safe. They are able to talk about who they would speak to if they had any worries or concerns. Most pupils behave well. Some pupils require additional guidance to manage their behaviour and this support is effective. On the very rare occasions that bullying occurs, it is dealt with effectively.

Pupils access a range of clubs and opportunities beyond the classroom. They talk positively about their involvement in the forest school, netball club and art club. Pupils value the 'family feel' of the school and are proud to be members of the school community.

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

The school has recently developed the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The important knowledge that pupils need to learn in order to achieve the ambitious goals of

the curriculum has been precisely identified. For example, in science there are regular opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning and connect this with new learning. Pupils are able to recall their knowledge of how to work scientifically and conduct fair tests. In some subjects, such as mathematics, older pupils in mixed-age classes are provided with activities that enable them to develop their knowledge so they are prepared for the next stage of their education. This is not yet the case for all classes and in all subjects. Some pupils do not access work that will allow them to achieve the aims of the well-planned curriculum. Younger pupils and children in the early years do not always have the opportunity to extend their learning. Children do not routinely benefit from opportunities to apply what they have learned independently.

The school has prioritised reading. The phonics programme sets out the sounds that pupils should learn and when. Teachers provide pupils with helpful advice about how to select appropriate books, based on their interests and reading ability. The books that pupils take home are matched to the sounds they know. Older pupils can talk about the books they have read and their favourite authors. However, pupils at the earliest stages of reading do not always benefit from opportunities to practise reading the sounds they know to improve the fluency of their reading. Staff do not consistently use the strategies outlined in the training they have received about how to teach pupils to read. Some older pupils do not read in school as regularly as the curriculum intends. They miss out on opportunities to hear their teachers share a range of texts during the school day.

Pupils with SEND have their needs accurately identified. They take part in all aspects of school life alongside their peers. In lessons, most staff provide pupils with SEND work that is tailored to their needs. This helps them to build their knowledge over time.

Pupils enjoy attending school. Support is given to families, when necessary, to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and are on time. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Some pupils who need additional support with their learning or behaviour receive guidance which helps them to be successful.

Pupils' personal development has been well considered. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles. They recall their learning about online safety and what it means to be a good friend. Pupils talk confidently about treating others with care and respect. They develop their leadership skills by taking part in the school council. They enjoy being able to represent the school at different events, such as the church schools festival.

Governors hold leaders to account. They help the school to identify strengths and areas for development so further improvements can be made. They challenge leaders to ensure that the school is meeting the needs of all pupils. Staff are proud to be part of the school. They value being part of the federation and appreciate the consideration that is given to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The work given to pupils in some mixed-age classes is not suitably demanding. Consequently, not all pupils achieve as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that the tasks given to pupils allow them to consolidate and master the ambitious curriculum content that has been planned.
- The phonics and reading curriculums are not consistently taught effectively. This means that some pupils are not learning to read as accurately and as quickly as they could. The school must ensure that the phonics and reading curriculums are consistently taught as designed and in line with the training that staff have received.
- In the early years and key stage 1, the school does not ensure that the environment and free-flow activities enable children to deepen their learning. This means that not all children are fully prepared for the next stage of their education. The school must ensure that the provision for younger children is appropriate for their age and stage of learning.

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 January 2015.

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	120549
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10324101
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Justine Sands
Executive Headteacher	Karyn Herd
Website	www.griffinfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Griffin Federation. This a group of three schools that share the same executive headteacher.
- The school does not use any alternative provision providers.
- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2017. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and science. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum planning and pupils' work for computer science and history.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, assistant executive headteacher, curriculum leaders and other teaching and support staff. Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND, behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance and documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and diocese.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the results from the staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Roxanne Fearns-Davies, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Shaun Carter	His Majesty's Inspector

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