

Inspection of a good school: Ellingham VC Primary School

Church Road, Ellingham, Ellingham VC Primary School, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 2PZ

Inspection dates:

6 July 2023

Outcome

Ellingham VC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly school where pupils are polite and supportive of one another. Pupils appreciate the kindness shown to them by school staff. They say that teachers always help them with their schoolwork or if they need an extra explanation. Bullying is rare. If pupils have a worry, they know that an adult will listen to them and help them.

Pupils are keen to learn. Most listen carefully to teachers' instructions and steadfastly complete the work that is set for them. Occasionally, some pupils prevent others from being able to concentrate. Staff quickly respond. However, pupils would like lessons to be even better, so that disruption is less likely to happen.

A flourishing eco-council and multiple opportunities to learn outdoors connect pupils to nature. Pupils are proud of their charity work and their school-wide responsibilities. For example, play buddies look out for their younger friends in the playground. This helps new pupils to settle in and feel included. A range of trips and visits helps pupils to learn more about the curriculum. These trips and visits also create lasting, happy memories for pupils to take with them.

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

Leaders are revising the curriculum. It is a project that is almost complete. In most subjects, the curriculum sets out logically the knowledge that pupils will learn. In some subjects, leaders are in the latter stages of putting some aspects of knowledge in the right order.

Typically, teaching has clarity and precision. This helps pupils to understand. Teachers have high expectations about the work that pupils will complete. The work that they set provides plenty of wide-ranging practice. As a result, pupils remember a lot of what they have learned. In some subjects, teachers are still getting to grips with recently introduced approaches, such as how to best help pupils recall previously learned knowledge at the start of a lesson.

Leaders have quickly improved the way that pupils learn how to read. Previous assessments had suggested that pupils were not making enough progress. A new, well-resourced reading scheme, combined with intensive staff training, is proving effective. Pupils learn how to read in a step-by-step way. Leaders check that phonics lessons proceed smoothly. Teachers use questioning to help pupils remember their sounds and letters. Teachers provide extra opportunities to learn, and practice for pupils who need the most help.

Caring and knowledgeable staff provide small group teaching for children in the Reception year. They also set out carefully chosen activities and resources for children to choose from. These activities help children to practise their new knowledge and skills. Whole class teaching provides Reception Year children with additional opportunities to learn new knowledge and vocabulary alongside older pupils.

Leaders provide ample training in how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps staff to strike a balance between focused support and providing pupils with the tools to become more independent. As pupils with SEND get older, they take responsibility for their own learning.

Around the school, pupils are polite and friendly. Pupils learn how to be patient and wait to ask and answer questions. This helps them focus on what the teacher is saying. Teachers have high expectations, and quickly notice if a pupil needs to improve their behaviour or focus. They give appropriate sanctions. They also give pupils opportunities to reflect on their own behaviour and how it may affect others. However, in some lessons, routines are not as rigorous as they could be. This means that occasional disruptive behaviour is managed but does not reduce enough over time.

The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about different kinds of families and relationships. Trips and visitors help pupils to learn about the past, different religions and different cultures. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of, and respect for, diversity.

Despite some recent challenges, governors and school leaders have stayed focused on pupils' education and wider experiences. They have worked with staff across the federation to implement improved curriculum and teaching approaches. Leaders are rightly proud of the positive impact of these new approaches.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Robust systems are in place for reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns. Appropriate checks are made to verify the suitability of adults to work with children.

Leaders regularly provide training for staff so that they know the signs of harm and what to do if concerns arise. Staff are clear that 'no concern is too small'. Leaders regularly meet to discuss safeguarding matters. They quickly respond to reports of concern. Their

tenacious work with external agencies helps to secure timely support for pupils and their families.

Pupils learn how to keep safe, including online. Warm relationships in school provide pupils with a 'safe space' to share their worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff are still getting to grips with some of the new teaching approaches. As a result, pupils occasionally move on to new learning too quickly. Leaders should continue to train staff in how to use these teaching approaches.
- Occasionally, the behaviour of a small number of pupils stops other pupils from being able to concentrate. Leaders should strengthen school-wide routines and expectations, communicate these to staff and help staff to be consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour.

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 June 2018.

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	121035
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10286265
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	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Charlotte Carter
Headteacher	Dawn Read
Website	www.ellingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation.

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 inspectors met with the headteacher, the SEND coordinator, and members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors spoke, via telephone, with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Norwich.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors heard some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors looked at the school's records of safeguarding concerns and spoke to leaders about safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to teachers and pupils about safeguarding. Inspectors looked at the school's single central record of staff recruitment checks.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, including 19 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered 18 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 56 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Marc White

His Majesty's Inspector

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