

Inspection of a good school: Old Buckenham Primary School and Nursery

Abbey Road, Old Buckenham, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 1RH

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 May 2024

Outcome

Old Buckenham Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Helen Mitchell. This school is part of Sapientia Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jonathan Taylor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Rout.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Old Buckenham Primary School are polite and courteous. They are proud of their school and their achievements. They say everyone makes them feel part of the school and that it is easy to make friends.

Pupils behave well. They are ready, respectful and safe. Classrooms are calm and orderly because staff have high expectations. There are a wide range of activities to participate in at lunchtimes. Pupils know and understand the school's values of respect, resilience, teamwork, honesty and communication. Pupils describe their school as 'inclusive' and say everyone can play if they want to.

Pupils enjoy a rich and ambitious curriculum. Older pupils talk positively about the changes at the school. They like the new curriculum and the changes to the behaviour policy. There is a focus on developing pupils' knowledge and use of subject-specific vocabulary. Staff encourage pupils to challenge themselves in lessons. This helps pupils to aim high and achieve well.

Educational visits and various clubs enhance the curriculum. Pupils can represent the school at various events, including sports competitions, the school choir and trust events. Pupils take on leadership roles such as school prefects and playleaders. Pupils appreciate opportunities to suggest improvements for the school, for example decorative themes for their school library.

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

There have been many positive changes at the school since the last inspection. The new leadership team has thoroughly reviewed and improved the curriculum. It is ambitious and progressive. Leaders have carefully selected the knowledge and vocabulary they want pupils to learn. In most subjects, tasks help children to recall and remember new learning because staff have agreed on the best way to deliver the content. They have considered how to adapt the curriculum if pupils need extra help. In some other subjects, staff are still getting to grips with teaching the new curriculum. This means that occasionally, the quality of pupils' work varies and lessons do not sufficiently help pupils to learn and remember more.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in the life of the school. Leaders regularly check that pupils' individual plans are effective. The plans include appropriate and achievable steps and targets. Pupils with SEND confidently talk about what makes them unique and when they may need more support.

Pupils love reading. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff are experts in teaching early reading. They receive high-quality training, support from leaders and opportunities to learn from each other. Pupils thrive because of the clearly established routines and consistent expectations. This helps pupils to concentrate. The school ensures that those pupils who do not practise reading regularly have additional support in school. Pupils who have mastered phonics participate in whole-class fluency and comprehension lessons. Pupils who fall behind have the support they need to catch up quickly. Pupils have read a wide range of modern and classic texts by the end of Year 6.

Children in the early years get off to a fantastic start. Staff teach children important school routines. This helps children to feel and be successful. Children experience moments of awe and wonder because the new curriculum content is presented in exciting ways. They are encouraged to make links and learn from their mistakes. Children learn to reflect and take risks. They are encouraged to explore, ask questions and try out their ideas. The school prepares children well for Year 1 by ensuring that their learning experiences are memorable and meaningful.

Relationships between pupils and staff are built on mutual respect. Pupils know, understand and value the school's rules and expectations. Staff focus on noticing and praising pupils for doing the right thing and challenging themselves. Pupils attend well because the school works closely with families to overcome barriers to attendance.

The school has enriched the curriculum offer beyond the classroom. The school provides musical instrument lessons, a range of clubs and after-school activities. This means pupils can develop new talents and interests. Pupils learn about discrimination, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe online.

Staff are proud of the school. They feel valued and appreciated. Staff appreciate the support they receive from the school and trust. The school is mindful of staff workload and well-being. Staff value the opportunity to work with other schools in the trust. They

have the training, time and support to embed changes to the curriculum and agree on how to deliver the content of the curriculum in memorable ways.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few subjects are at an earlier stage of implementation than others. The school is still refining and deciding the best way to deliver the content in these subjects. This means that pupils' subject knowledge is less secure than it should be. The school should review the implementation of the curriculum and agree on the best approach to deliver and monitor these subjects effectively so that pupils learn, remember and recall the important content.

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 February 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

Unique reference number	143135
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10323773
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Rout
CEO of the trust	Jonathan Taylor
Headteacher	Helen Mitchell
Website	www.oldbuckprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Sapientia Education Trust
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school uses the services of one registered alternative provision.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with school leaders, the chief executive officer of Sapientia Educational Trust, the director of education, the director of learning and trustees.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited

a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of work. The inspector also listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.
- The inspector observed behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and met with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector considered the 73 responses and free-text comments made by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. The inspector also gathered the views of staff, pupils and parents by speaking with them during the inspection.

Inspection team

Oriana Dalton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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