

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Sible Hedingham

School Road, Sible Hedingham, Halstead, Essex CO9 3NR

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in the welcoming, family atmosphere at this village school. The carefully constructed curriculum supports them to learn effectively. Adults have high expectations of pupils. The school's mantra of 'Aspire, Persevere, Achieve' encourages pupils to aim high and achieve well. Pupils come to school happily, knowing that every day counts. They love learning and are proud of their school.

There are respectful relationships throughout the school, between pupils of all ages and between pupils and adults. Older pupils are excellent role models. For example, play leaders take their responsibilities seriously. They support other pupils at lunchtime, on the playground and in the dining hall.

The school is very outward-looking. Visits to the Houses of Parliament, a West End musical and various museums help bring learning to life. They take pupils well beyond the familiarity of their rural setting. Residential trips build pupils' independence and resilience. Leadership roles increase their confidence.

There are many high-quality, extra-curricular activities for pupils. In democracy week pupils experience an election process, voting for their pupil leaders. In aspirations week they reflect on possible future careers. The St Peter's challenge award teaches pupils about service to others and making a difference. It lays the foundations for responsible citizenship.

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

The school has constructed a well-sequenced, aspirational curriculum. It is carefully crafted to ensure that children gain the knowledge and skills they need in each subject, at each stage of their education. In the Reception Year, for example, children take part in a range of activities that prepare them for later learning in all subjects. For example, children sing songs and experiment with sounds. They play un-tuned percussion instruments and learn to follow a beat. This prepares them for music lessons in key stage 1.

Teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils build their learning over time. Lessons start with a recap to aid pupils' recall of prior learning. Teachers explain new learning well. They give pupils time to practise and apply what they have learned. As a result, pupils' work is generally of a high quality. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned, often correctly using subject-specific vocabulary.

The school is ambitious for pupils. In some lessons, however, teachers do not provide opportunities for pupils to extend their learning. The questions teachers ask, or the activities they design, do not always promote deeper learning. This means some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

High-quality books are a feature of every classroom. In the Reception Year, children learn through listening to stories. They develop a love of reading from the moment they start

school. Daily story time takes place in key stages 1 and 2. Teachers model fluency, expression and an enthusiasm for reading that inspires pupils. In the Reception Year and key stage 1, phonics lessons teach pupils the letters and sounds they need for reading and writing. If pupils need extra support, skilled adults work with them in small groups or one to one. Most pupils are competent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. It achieves this through a combination of high-quality teaching and skilful adult support. Where necessary, the school liaises with outside agencies, for example, to provide speech and language therapy. Pupils with SEND are fully included in school life and supported to succeed.

Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They establish clear routines that support pupils to meet these expectations. Pupils get ready to learn quickly at the start of each session. They listen attentively to the adults and to each other during lessons. No learning time is lost through poor behaviour.

The offer for personal development is exceptional. It is meticulously designed to build pupils' character, expose them to new experiences and equip them for their future lives. For example, pupil leaders participate in school improvement. They carry out pupil conferences and feed back their findings to leaders. Opportunities for pupils to explore their creative interests are plentiful. The annual summer performing arts festival is a highlight of the school calendar.

There is a strong team spirit at the school. Parents, staff and governors are highly supportive of school leaders. Staff value the training they receive and the opportunities to network with other schools. The leadership team has made effective changes to the school in recent years. This reflects their drive for continuous improvement. Governors hold leaders to account, while supporting them to achieve their ambitious goals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, teachers do not routinely provide pupils with opportunities to extend and deepen their learning. Consequently, pupils do not always achieve as highly as they could. The school should ensure the good practice that exists is consistent across the school and that all staff use a range of pedagogies, so that all pupils can achieve the ambitious aims of the curriculum.

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	115070
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345146
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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nicola Adams
Headteacher	Nick Hancock
Website	www.stpetersch.schooljotter2.com
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The leadership team has changed since the last inspection. The headteacher took up his post in September 2020, the deputy headteacher took up his post in September 2021 and the special educational needs co-ordinator took up her post in September 2017.
- There is a daily breakfast club for pupils, run by the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a religious character. Its last inspection under section 48 of the education act was in February 2017 and the next section 48 inspection is due this school year.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- Inspectors met with a range of senior leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors. Inspectors spoke with representatives from the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, and spoke with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to several pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work and curriculum plans in science.
- 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 reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ceri Jones

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 2024