

Inspection of a good school: St Botolph's C of E Primary School

Rookery Avenue, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 7FE

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 March 2023

Outcome

St Botolph's C of E Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have created an ethos where the school's Christian values are at the heart of everything. The language of these values is evident in the environment and in all conversations between adults and pupils. In the weekly celebration assembly, 'Christian values' awards are presented for 'living out' a particular value.

Leaders are ambitious and have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum provides pupils with a range of experiences and trips to enhance their learning experiences. These often involve visits within the local community.

Pupils behave well in lessons and show positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils understand what bullying is, including cyber-bullying. Pupils feel that bullying happens rarely but share that if it does happen, it is dealt with effectively by staff.

Pupils show great pride in the extra responsibilities they are given. 'History ambassadors', 'collective worship doves' and 'reading ambassadors' have a voice in whole school matters.

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

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. They access a well-resourced and vibrant learning environment which provides opportunities to learn through play. The early years staff have high expectations. Routines are well established. Adults model language and communication. They focus on building children's vocabulary across all areas of learning. One child in a mathematics session used the term 'subitise' accurately and confidently.

Pupils enjoy reading and there is a strong reading culture across the school. The pupil 'reading ambassadors' take pride in their role. Leaders have prioritised the development of early reading. All staff have received phonics training. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are reading. Reading books are matched to the sounds that pupils know. This allows pupils to develop well as fluent readers.

In mathematics, teachers focus on developing pupils' fluency and reasoning skills. Pupils have access to a range of practical resources to support them with their learning. Teachers clearly demonstrate the steps that pupils should follow for calculations. Pupils develop well as confident mathematicians.

Subject leaders have identified the important key concepts that pupils should know and remember, from the early years to Year 6. Leaders have developed a question-based approach to the curriculum. This approach helps pupils to revisit and embed what they have been taught. Teachers ensure that pupils expand their knowledge of vocabulary. This was used to good effect in a key stage one history lesson, where pupils used ambitious language to describe the Great Fire of London.

Pupils can recall facts about some topics well. For example, one pupil shared, 'Auxiliary soldiers were not from Rome - they were from countries that had been conquered.' Teachers use a range of ways to check what pupils know and remember. However, this is not consistent across all subjects. In some subjects, teachers do not always check precisely on the knowledge and skills that pupils remember.

Pupils with SEND receive skilled support to access the curriculum. Leaders have established clear systems for identifying pupils' needs. Staff use effective questioning and other strategies to support pupils and extend their learning. Staff care about pupils' well-being. They provide strong pastoral support for pupils with SEND.

Leaders promote pupils' wider development well, for example through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils understand the meaning of important British values such as democracy. Pupils understand and respect differences. They are developing informed respect for a range of faiths and cultures. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Staff feel very well supported by leaders, both professionally and personally. One member of staff commented, 'Leaders operate an open-door policy and remind us that family comes first.' Staff feel that curriculum development has been staggered so that their workload has not become overwhelming. Staff value opportunities to access training and support, including advice on career progression.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a safeguarding culture of high vigilance. All staff receive regular training and updates. Staff know how to share concerns and feel well supported by the school's safeguarding leaders.

Safeguarding records are robust. Leaders are not afraid to escalate concerns with appropriate external services to ensure that pupils and families receive the help they need. Governors are aware of their safeguarding statutory duties and fulfil them.

Pupils feel safe at school. Pupils say that they have 'trusted adults' with whom they can share any worries or concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that assessment strategies are consistent across all subjects. Sometimes, teachers do not check pupils' knowledge and skills precisely and systematically enough. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment well to check what pupils know and remember, to inform their teaching and ensure that pupils embed secure knowledge and skills over time.

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 October 2017.

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

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| Unique reference number | 132251 |
| Local authority | Lincolnshire |
| Inspection number | 10254899 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 406 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Denzil Shepheard |
| Headteacher | Debbie Wilson |
| Website | www.stbotolphsquarrington.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 3 and 4 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to some children read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector looked at curriculum plans and spoke with subject leaders in some other subjects.

- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders and spoke to pupils and staff to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's record of pre-employment checks.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

Luella Manssen, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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