

# Inspection of a good school: St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Pebmarsh

The Street, Pebmarsh, Halstead, Essex CO9 2NH

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Inspection date:

6 July 2023

## Outcome

St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Pebmarsh continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to attend St John the Baptist School. They enjoy learning. Teachers think carefully about how to make lessons build their knowledge in engaging ways. Well-chosen visits and visitors complement what they learn in the curriculum, for example about local geography. As a result, pupils are excited to learn. They are curious to find out more about social issues, such as refugees, and are keen to learn about the experiences of people whose lives may be different to their own.

There are many opportunities for pupils to become more confident and develop their interests and skills. This is in line with the school's motto: 'let your light shine'. Pupils learn about democracy as part of elections to the school council. There are a range of clubs including art and musical theatre. Pupils are kind and tolerant. They treat adults and each other with respect. They behave very well in and out of lessons. Bullying is very uncommon. Pupils know that if pupils do misbehave or bully, teachers will make it stop.

Pupils enjoy the support of a close-knit community in this small school. They feel safe and know that, if they have concerns, adults will help them.

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

Leaders have made major changes to the curriculum this year, introducing new reading schemes in Reception, Year 1 and 2, and new programmes of learning in many subjects. Important knowledge has been clearly identified and broken down into smaller chunks. The order in which topics are taught has been carefully considered so that new knowledge builds upon what has already been learned. As a result, pupils move confidently and securely onto the next topic.

Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly. In lessons, they often question pupils skilfully and activities are adjusted in light of what they know. Where it is strongest, in mathematics, for example, teachers use consistent approaches to introducing, practising, and checking knowledge. Work is closely matched to pupils' needs. However, on occasion, teachers do not have high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve. Teachers do not take the opportunity to extend pupils' knowledge to deepen their understanding. As a result, in these cases, pupils do not do as well as they could.

Children in Reception make strong progress. They gain a good foundation in mathematics and phonics. They pick up spoken language and good learning habits from older pupils and staff. They become increasingly independent.

Pupils read widely and often. Reading is celebrated and promoted by rewards. In Reception, Years 1 and 2, staff use the new phonics scheme. They rigorously check how well pupils read. Books are precisely matched to pupils' needs. Weaker readers are given the support they need to become more accurate and fluent readers. Leaders have further plans to develop the reading curriculum for older pupils. Checks do not always swiftly identify older pupils who struggle to read, and books and teaching for older pupils do not always precisely match their needs.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are increasingly well provided with the support they need to access the curriculum. Staff expect them to do well. They know their needs and usually adapt their teaching skilfully so that they make progress. Pupils with SEND take part in lessons and clubs. They enjoy learning, and consequently achieve well.

Pupils understand and usually follow the school rules. On the rare occasions they do not do so, teachers deal with this effectively. Leaders expect pupils to behave well. Their good behaviour and effort are persistently rewarded. Visitors can give out postcards for good conduct and support staff give out 'golden tickets' to pupils for being a good citizen or for effort. Pupils therefore enjoy coming to school. They attend very well.

Leaders understand the importance of developing pupils' interests and preparing them for the wider world. Teachers bring their own experiences of other cultures to assemblies and lessons to broaden pupils' knowledge while ensuring that pupils are actively part of the local community, for instance planting trees in the village.

Leaders, with the support of governors, have made significant improvements to the school, especially in the curriculum. They identified where the school was less effective and have made changes to improve matters. Governors robustly challenge leaders and hold them to account.

Staff say that they are well supported with their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out the required checks on adults who wish to work with pupils. Staff know pupils well. They quickly spot signs that pupils may be unsafe. All staff are well trained. They know how to report concerns.

Leaders provide effective support, in partnership with local services, for pupils at risk of harm. They act quickly and appropriately to manage their needs.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in school and outside, such as when they learn about fire and water safety, and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet, or gaming.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- While leaders have made significant improvements to the reading curriculum in Reception, Year 1 and 2, the assessment of older pupils' reading is not sufficiently precise. As a result, texts are not always precisely matched to their needs. This means they do not always get the support they need to become accurate and confident readers. Leaders should ensure that staff in all key stages are trained to assess all readers rigorously and that texts are precisely matched to pupils' needs.
- On occasion, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. As a result, the curriculum is not always sufficiently ambitious to push learners to acquire knowledge as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge and deepen their understanding are identified throughout the curriculum and that teachers are trained to adapt their teaching accordingly.

## **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 September 2011.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115137
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241539
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	73
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jo Clayman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susie Price
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://school.pebmarsh.com/">http://school.pebmarsh.com/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is currently led by an interim headteacher, who was appointed in November 2022.
- All members of the teaching staff, including the interim deputy headteacher, were appointed in September 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision for pupils.
- Pupils are taught in mixed year group classes.

## 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the interim headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Deep dives were carried out in three subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector heard pupils read.

- The local authority school effectiveness partner spoke to the lead inspector.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors held a series of meetings with leaders and pupils to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised a range of records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 47 responses and 36 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The 15 responses to the staff survey and the 58 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey were also taken into account. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gate.

### **Inspection team**

Steve Woodley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Shadbolt

Ofsted Inspector

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