

Inspection of a good school: Christopher Reeves CofE VA Primary School

Hinwick Road, Podington, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN29 7HU

Inspection date: 11 June 2024

Outcome

Christopher Reeves CofE VA Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that this school is a good place to make new friends. Pupils appreciate the way that adults always listen to and help them. The school has a 'family feel' because everyone, including pupils, looks out for each other. Lessons are calm and pupils generally behave well. Pupils work hard so that their efforts can be recorded in the headteacher's 'Golden Book'. This is then shared proudly in the weekly celebration assemblies.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They like the way that teachers choose interesting activities in subjects, such as science. Teachers focus on the most important knowledge and help pupils to practise key skills, such as reading and calculation. Pupils feel and are successful. They tend to do well in their end of key stage tests. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school's musical and sporting offer. For example, taking part in a multi-school singing event or attending the guitar club. Pupils learn about and appreciate nature in the school's forest school and on educational trips. Pupils of all ages happily take on responsibilities. For example, being a play leader or an assembly monitor.

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

The science of learning has rightly influenced leaders' curriculum thinking. The school's curriculum sets out key knowledge and vocabulary in a logical order. Leaders know that pupils need to repeatedly encounter new concepts to have the best chance of remembering them. For example, every mathematics lesson starts with opportunities to recall facts and methods learned in previous lessons. Pupils typically learn well in all subjects. For example, in music, pupils become confident in using tuned instruments, learn how to read music and about a range of musical styles and composers.

Teachers use questioning well to gauge pupil's understanding. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. In some subjects, staff are still getting to grips with new approaches to teaching. For example, using physical resources to explain concepts in mathematics lessons. As a result, pupils occasionally do not understand concepts when they are first taught. Leaders' plans include providing training for staff in these new teaching approaches.

Reading lessons start as soon as children join the Reception Year. Leaders ensure that reading effective instruction happens in small groups in the most calm and quiet places of the school. Staff are experts in teaching reading. Reading lessons include familiar practice routines, such as paired reading. This ensures that every pupil learns and remembers the sounds that letters make. Pupils quickly become confident readers. They enjoy reading and being read to.

The school provides bespoke support and additional, small-group instruction for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes help with understanding emotions and social situations. Staff adapt lessons so that pupils with SEND can access all subjects. This support helps pupils with SEND to become more independent and progress well over time.

Staff in the early years ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to talk, listen to stories and sing songs. This helps children to develop their language and communication skills. Children enjoy joining in with songs and stories. Staff teach children important routines. This helps children in the early years to respect the school environment.

The school rewards and celebrates pupils' successes. This includes when pupils demonstrate the school's values, such as 'trust' and 'courage'. Lessons are calm and pupils want to do well. However, staff are sometimes inconsistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils sometimes do not focus and concentrate on what the teacher is saying or the work they are doing. Leaders regularly monitor pupils' attendance. They work effectively with families to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

The school's personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is well sequenced. Pupils learn how to stay safe online, look after their health and have healthy relationships. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures, beliefs and faiths. Pupils recognise that families are made up in different ways and they respect and value difference.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel supported by leaders, including governors. Leaders take staff workload into account when making decisions. Leaders also provide plenty of training opportunities for staff. These are well received.

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 subjects, teachers are still getting to grips with new, school-wide approaches to teaching. This means that occasionally, pupils do not fully understand new concepts when they are initially taught. Leaders should continue with their plans to ensure that staff use these school-wide approaches effectively, teach subjects well and raise standards higher.
- Staff are not always consistent with their expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils do not always follow instructions or focus when expected to do so. Leaders should ensure that staff enact consistent expectations and routines, so that pupils are more likely to focus and concentrate when expected to do so.

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 2014.

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	109622
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10323598
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pauline Cameron
Headteacher	Sarah Bush (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.christopher-reeves-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is federated with St Lawrence CofE VA Primary School in Wymington.
- The school is part of the Diocese of St Albans. Its last inspection of its denominational education, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in December 2019. The next section 48 inspection should occur within five years of this date.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and with members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke, via telephone, with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead 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 inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- The lead inspector considered 22 responses to Ofsted Parent View, of which 18 responses included free-text comments. The lead inspector also considered 9 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 13 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. Inspectors gathered the views of parents, pupils and staff through various discussions during the inspection.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Roberts

Ofsted Inspector

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