

Inspection of St Mary and St John CofE VA Primary School

Church Street, North Luffenham, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8JR

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto, 'Let your light shine', is lived out by pupils and staff at the school. Staff, and parents and carers, say that the school has a 'real family feel', where everyone is warmly welcomed. Pupils say they are happy to be part of such a special place. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

The school's '6R' learning values are lived in all aspects of school life. Pupils are encouraged to be reasoning, reflective, ready, responsible, resilient and resourceful. They know that they 'are giants taking giant footsteps' to prepare them for the wider world. Pupils love to earn 'dojo points' and gain certificates in awards assembly. They are eager to take on responsibilities in school, such as house captain, librarian and science ambassador. One pupil summed up the views of many when they said, 'We get lots of opportunities at school, it's really fun.'

Pupils are keen to attend school. They get on well with one another. Staff know pupils well and pupils say that they know who to go to if they are worried about anything. Pupils behave well. Pupils say that teachers help them to 'push through even when learning is hard.'

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

Everyone in the staff team has worked together to devise a rich and engaging curriculum. This begins in the early years. In some areas of learning, staff have identified exactly what children need to know and be able to do to be ready for the next stage of their learning. For example, children in Nursery and Reception learn how to hold a paintbrush correctly. They begin to learn how to mix colours and practise this again in key stage 1. However, in a few subjects, the curriculum does not set out clearly the precise knowledge that pupils should learn.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain clearly to pupils what they need to learn. They use a variety of strategies to check that pupils have remembered the most important information in lessons. If pupils need help during lessons, they get it. Pupils say that there is always someone to ask if they are unsure. They appreciate working in small groups if they need help. However, pupils do not always get the chance to revisit parts of the curriculum that they found tricky. Checks of what pupils know and remember or how they are helped to remember important knowledge over time are not yet in place in some subjects.

Children in the early years make a positive start to school. Children enjoy well-planned activities. Staff use their interactions with children to help children develop the knowledge and skills they need.

Phonics is taught consistently through the school. Children begin to learn the sounds that letters make as soon as they start school. Support is in place to ensure that pupils catch up if they fall behind. Pupils continue to learn comprehension skills as they become confident readers. They talk enthusiastically about the choice of books

they have in the school library, tailored to suit their ability. Pupils develop a love of reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well catered for. Children who may need extra support in Nursery and early years are quickly identified. Staff get the information they need to help pupils with SEND. Additional adults play an important role in ensuring that pupils with SEND successfully learn the same curriculum as the other pupils. Checks made do not always help the school to know that the support these pupils receive is making the difference it should.

Pupils behave extremely well. They are respectful and supportive of one another. Older pupils gently remind younger pupils how to sit and listen. They play collaboratively on the playground. In the early years, children share resources and learn together in a calm and purposeful way.

Pupils are involved in a variety of activities beyond the classroom. They are proud to be sports captains and represent the school when they sing in public. Pupils enjoy the many clubs on offer. They benefit from visitors to the school, teaching them how to keep safe. Through sensitive teaching, pupils understand that everyone is different but should be treated equally. They deepen their knowledge of a range of faiths and cultures. They appreciate the nurture room, where they can go if they need time to reflect.

Staff enjoy working as a team. They complete training to develop their subject knowledge. The vast majority appreciate the consideration given by leaders to support their workload. Governors know the school well and undertake their roles effectively.

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, the important knowledge and skills pupils need to know and remember are not clearly defined. In these subjects, it is unclear what the pupils have remembered and what needs to be revisited. This means that pupils' recall of curriculum content over the longer term is inconsistent. The school should make sure that the curriculums in these subjects clearly lay out the knowledge and skills pupils need to know and remember and that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are built into future teaching.
- In some subjects, the school has not ensured that there have been consistent and effective opportunities to check how well the curriculum is being implemented, including adaptations and support for pupils with SEND. As a result, in these subjects, the school is not consistently clear about what is working well to

support pupils to learn and what could be improved. The school should ensure that there is a clear understanding of how well the curriculum is delivered across all subjects, so that areas for development can be identified and addressed.

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	120229
Local authority	Rutland Council
Inspection number	10298414
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Lemon
Headteacher	Fiona Wilce
Website	www.northluffenham.org
Date of previous inspection	18 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school within the Diocese of Peterborough. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club on the premises.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005
- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the senior leadership team and a range of staff.

- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the vice chair.
- Inspectors met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans for science, design technology, modern foreign languages and physical education.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for pupils' personal development, behaviour and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the results of the Ofsted surveys for school staff and pupils. They met with groups of staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Ann Davey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Slater

Ofsted Inspector

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