

Inspection of a good school: Hickling C of E VC Infant School

The Street, Hickling, Norwich, Norfolk NR12 0XX

Inspection date: 14 March 2023

Outcome

Hickling C of E VC Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hickling C of E VC Infant School is a small, friendly school. Staff know pupils and their families well. The school is an important part of the local community and lessons often make meaningful links to it. This helps pupils to develop a good understanding of what they are learning. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across all areas of the curriculum and get the support that they need.

Pupils behave well, which helps their learning. If bullying occurs, adults deal with it quickly. This means that the school is a calm place to learn. Pupils are confident and enjoy talking about their learning.

Pupils know that teachers always expect them to do their best. They take pride in their work and it is usually neat and tidy. Pupils achieve well and enjoy school.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to be part of the local community, for example by singing for the residents of the local care home or visiting the chapel to enjoy eating pancakes. Parents are positive about the school and how it helps their children to develop academically and personally.

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

Leaders have designed and introduced a new curriculum. They have considered the order of pupils' learning, so that pupils build on what they already know from early years to Year 2. This allows pupils learning in mixed-age classes or whole key stage classes to achieve well.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They are skilled in providing support to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those with SEND. Teachers use assessment strategies effectively in order to check pupils' learning. This helps identify and address pupils'

misconceptions. Teachers continue to develop their teaching through participating in a range of training opportunities.

Leaders have ensured that reading has a high profile across the school. Children start to learn about books and reading from the very start in early years. Staff teach phonics consistently well. Skilled staff help pupils to practise reading from books that match the sounds they are learning in lessons. This helps pupils become better readers. Teachers identify and support any pupils who may need extra help to build their phonics knowledge. Teachers use various texts to support learning, but they do not always have high-quality books to read to pupils. This limits opportunities to foster a love of reading or prepare pupils for key stage two.

Staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest possible stage. They enable pupils with SEND to study the same curriculum as their peers. This means that pupils, including those with SEND, succeed and are ready for the next stage of their education.

Pupils are keen to behave well. Classrooms are calm and well organised. Pupils learn about positive learning behaviours, from the very start of their time in school. They have a good understanding of why they are important. The early years environment encourages children to explore and take appropriate risks. Children develop confidence and resilience, which sets them up well for their transition into Year 1. Pupils who struggle to manage their emotions are well supported. Pupils learn to make the right choices about how to behave. As a result, there is little disruption to learning.

Pupils feel valued and listened to. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibilities within school. Pupils lack opportunities to have roles that help them learn what it is to have responsibilities and to further the development of their character. Some pupils do not learn enough about equality or diverse family types.

There are strong links between the school and the village community. Pupils visit the community garden and spend time helping to maintain it. Leaders have planned a wide range of trips for all pupils. These include trips to the beach, the city of Norwich, the Norfolk Broads and the Norfolk Show. These trips support pupils' wider development and provide new experiences for some pupils.

Leaders and governors know the school well. They want the best for pupils. When making changes, they consider advice and guidance and always consider the workload and well-being of staff. Staff enjoy coming to work and are proud to do so.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all adults are well trained to identify when pupils may be at risk of harm. All staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe and know what to do if they have concerns.

Leaders work effectively with external agencies to make sure vulnerable pupils and families get the support they need. They follow up and action all concerns quickly.

Pupils learn about keeping safe and recognising risk. They know who to speak to if they have any worries about themselves or others.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are not promoting a love of reading effectively for some pupils. Pupils do not read a range of high-quality texts, individually or in class. The books in school do not introduce pupils to diversity or the wider world. Leaders should ensure that there is a wide range of high-quality texts of different types available for pupils to read or have read to them.
- Opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities are limited. Pupils lack opportunities to develop an understanding of responsibility. Leaders should ensure that they provide more opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of being responsible so as to promote further pupils' wider development.

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 May 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

Unique reference number	121043
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10255174
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sheila Watts
Headteacher	Natalie Butcher
Website	www.swallowtailfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hickling C of E VC Infant School is part of the Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools.
- There is one governing body responsible for the governance of all three schools in the federation.
- The school is a Church of England school. The school's most recent inspection of its religious character under section 48 of the Education Act was in 2020. The school will receive its next section 48 inspection within eight years of that date.
- This school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, including the headteacher, the chair of governors and a representative from the Diocese of Norwich. Inspectors also spoke to other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, staff, pupils and parents.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. In early reading, this took the form of listening to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects and reviewed curriculum plans.
- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, inspectors reviewed the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school development plan and school policies.
- Inspectors reviewed the 15 responses and free-text comments that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors also considered 8 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and 11 responses to the pupil survey. To gather their views on the school, inspectors spoke to pupils in the lunch hall and on the playground.

Inspection team

Bridget Harrison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ashley Best-White

Ofsted Inspector

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