

St Nicholas Priory CofE VA Primary School

St Nicholas Road, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 1NL

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are ambitious for the school and are determined that it provides the best possible education. Key stage 2 outcomes are improving because of strong and inspirational leadership.
- The quality of the school's self-evaluation is strong. Leaders know where the strengths of the school lie and where continuing improvements need to be made.
- Governors are well informed, have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and challenge leaders to make it even better.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make learning interesting and enjoyable for pupils. They know how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to make it even better.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported and achieve well across the school. They have done particularly well in mathematics where they receive a good level of support.
- The curriculum, including additional activities, provides pupils with a broad range of learning experiences that enable them to enjoy school. This prepares them well for life in 21st century modern Britain and for the next stage in their education.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well because they raise expectations.
- The quality of education in the early years is good. Effective leadership and teaching ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and friendly. They welcome visitors and they support each other well around the school.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work well together in classrooms.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. The school's effective procedures ensure that pupils are safe.
- The partnership with parents and carers is developing well with a range of opportunities to involve them with their child's learning.
- Not all pupils attained the expected standards at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. However, current pupils are making good progress.
- Not enough pupils in Year 6 attain the higher standards.
- The recently introduced curriculum has yet to be fully designed and implemented.
- A small proportion of pupils do not attend school often enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all pupils make at least good progress from their starting points, including those who can reach the higher standards.
- Review the design of the new curriculum so that it is fit for purpose and ensure that it is implemented well.
- Improve attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism so that all pupils attend school in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Over the previous two years, the headteacher and her new senior leadership team have swiftly brought about transformational improvements. Since the previous inspection of the junior school, they have successfully managed the transition to an all-through primary school. Pupils' outcomes have improved and leaders have also ensured that pupils' behaviour has improved.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school, which is shared and embraced by staff. This vision sets clear and high expectations of staff and pupils. There is a positive, reflective, forward-looking culture in the school. Leaders at all levels are enthusiastic and passionate about pupils doing well.
- The leadership team is aspirational, determined and has a relentless focus on achieving high standards. Improving the quality of teaching is a core function for senior leaders. This approach has developed rapidly since the expansion of St Nicholas Priory Primary School in September 2017.
- The confidence of the community in the leadership of the school is reflected in the high numbers of parents seeking places at the school.
- The leadership team knows the school's strengths and areas for development well. Leaders have rigorous systems to check on the quality of teaching and monitor the progress that pupils make. They report the information from these checks accurately to governors and use it to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.
- External evaluations are studied carefully, which adds to the school's accurate understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- The programme of staff development is effective. Staff value partnership working with the local teaching school, school cluster and other national schools, including the sharing of effective practice and action research. Training plans and regular coaching support the development of new teachers and those who need to improve their performance further.
- Leaders deal with any underperformance rigorously; staff respond well to this challenge and support. Teachers welcome the training and support offered by the school. Several talked about where this has improved their teaching, particularly the teaching of mathematics where they have been supported by the local mathematics hub.
- Teachers' performance management is robust. Current leaders have linked challenging targets for individual teachers to school improvement objectives and provided appropriate training and support to help all teachers reach their targets. Governors understand the system well.
- Learning ambassadors and prefects contribute to the decision-making process and are an important and valued part of the school.
- Leaders have recently implemented a new curriculum. Their 'book rich' curriculum is still developing. There is good coverage of a wide range of subjects that interest and excite pupils, and these are studied in detail. Pupils particularly enjoyed designing and

making a Europa Rover prototype for exploring Mars, for example. Staff provide a range of curriculum activities so that pupils can develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain. These include teaching pupils to value different cultures and understand the role of democracy in Britain.

- The majority of staff responding to Ofsted's questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. Morale is high. Staff feel very well supported by leaders, both in the management of behaviour and in improving the quality of teaching and learning. They particularly commented on and welcomed leaders' actions to reduce workload.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding well to support disadvantaged pupils, and they regularly review the impact of this support. Leaders have high expectations of what disadvantaged pupils can achieve and, as a result, the progress made by these pupils matches closely the progress made by others from similar starting points.
- Similarly, the primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively. Leaders and governors have a clear plan for how the money should be spent and what the impact should be. This ensures that pupils maintain healthy active lifestyles and supports more pupils in taking part in extra-curricular activities and inter-school competitions.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well led and funding for this group of pupils is used effectively. The leader with responsibility for SEND and behaviour supports learning across the school well, so that pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. Intervention strategies have a positive impact on the progress of these pupils.
- The school promotes the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills effectively. The school environment, with its wall art, quotations and current displays, emphasises leaders' commitment to learning beyond Great Yarmouth. Pupils understand the school's values well and how these apply to their community and wider Britain. They are taught to value difference and develop moral values.
- Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are a strength of the school. There is a wide range of clubs that pupils can attend.
- Leaders engage well with parents and carers. For example, parents and pupils are invited to attend mathematics and reading cafes. Parents spoken to during the inspection spoke really highly about the school and its leadership. A typical comment was: 'Brilliant, I can't praise them enough.'

Governance of the school

- Governors play a supportive and appropriately challenging role in the school's success. They share the same aspiration as the headteacher in ensuring that every pupil achieves their very best.
- Governors' monitoring of school improvement is thorough. They record the outcomes of monitoring visits and 'governor mornings', where they focus on a particular school priority, including areas for further improvement such as attendance and outcomes for the most able.
- Governors have been instrumental in making changes to leadership, enabling current improvements to take place.

- Governors execute their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Governors' monitoring of the school's performance management system is effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's culture is focused on making St Nicholas Priory Primary School a safe place to be. Pupils say that they feel safe and are listened to. They know who they can talk to if they have a problem.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe in a range of contexts and older pupils spoke confidently about keeping safe while using social media.
- Staff are well trained and raise concerns where necessary. They have a detailed understanding of the risks associated with the criminal exploitation of children known as county lines. They spoke about how they had adapted the personal, social and health education curriculum following recent training.
- Records of checks on staff recruitment, child protection concerns and communication with external agencies are clear and diligently maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the appointment of the headteacher and senior leaders, and is now good. Leaders' regular monitoring and evaluation identifies the strengths and weaknesses in practice. Targeted training and coaching are then used to enable staff to improve their practice.
- Teachers ensure that lesson time is very productive. The energy and excitement of teachers are an inspiration for pupils. Teachers use a range of strategies to engage pupils. As a result, pupils really enjoy their learning. Teachers consistently demonstrate high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond with positive attitudes.
- Teaching is characterised by teachers' strong subject knowledge, leading to confident teaching. It also leads to teachers skilfully tackling pupils' misconceptions and to well-developed questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to take forward their learning, for example when comparing fractions, decimals and percentages in Year 6.
- Teachers accurately assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and use this information to plan a wide range of learning activities that are accurately pitched for pupils' needs.
- Pupils know what to do to improve their work as a result of effective feedback from teachers. Pupils respond to this well and say that teachers' feedback helps challenge them.
- The teaching of reading skills is good. In the early years, children make a good start with their early development of reading because of effective teaching and an encouraging environment. The teaching of phonics in the early years is strong, with more pupils developing at an appropriate level. Good teaching in key stage 2 ensures that the progress pupils make in reading is broadly in line with national averages for all groups of pupils. The school library is inviting and well used.

- Pupils say they enjoy their mathematics lessons. There are strengths in the teaching of mathematics. These include: the good subject knowledge of teachers; effective planning of activities for pupils; availability of appropriate resources; high expectations of what pupils can achieve; and the opportunity to develop resilience in mathematical learning by encouraging pupils to tackle difficult problems.
- Teaching assistants are used very well. They are well directed by teachers and support pupils effectively through modelling and checking that individual pupils understand what they need to do. For example, teaching assistants provided focused support in phonics sessions in Year 1.
- Teachers set appropriate homework, which helps pupils improve their mathematics skills, research and independent writing. Information on the school's website and the school's 'learning packs' encourage parents to support their child at home with their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND. They set appropriate targets and provide high-quality support to ensure that these pupils make good progress.
- Classrooms are purposeful and present a positive learning environment. The relationships between teachers and pupils are productive and respectful. Teachers use the school's well-thought-out behaviour policy to keep pupils on track.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Throughout the school, pupils are polite, courteous, friendly and welcoming. They show high levels of respect, opening doors for one another and for adults. They have embraced the school's new mantra 'ready, respectful, safe' and its subsequent components 'wonderful walking' and 'legendary line up'. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong.
- Incidents of bullying are rare, and the school has clear systems to deal with any incidents effectively. Pupils trust staff to deal with any incidents quickly.
- Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm for their work and have good levels of resilience when solving problems. They are proud of their work. Pupils learn to talk about and manage their feelings well. They can articulate their thoughts clearly and work collaboratively with each other using the structure of 'thinking aloud'.
- Pupils listen thoughtfully to others' contributions in lessons. This was particularly evident in Year 4 reading, as they explored what the storyteller meant by 'free to roam inside it'.
- Prefects, who are proud of their responsibilities, actively support their peers, especially at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They help others to follow the school's mantra around behaviour and during the inspection were ensuring 'shirts tucked in'.

- The school is effective in encouraging pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. The strong emphasis on physical education and the wide range of after-school and lunchtime activities have a positive effect on their health and fitness.
- Breakfast club is popular and well attended, with a good choice of food. The club encourages independence, good table manners and social skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates the school. Displays around the school support diversity, online safety, aspiration and challenge. The school provides opportunities for pupils which are rich, wide and personalised.
- Pupils say that they feel ready for their next steps, whether this is moving from key stage 1 to key stage 2 or onwards to high school. Many of the Year 6 have yet to visit their identified schools as local schools offer different transition programmes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils support one another and work well together. This was particularly evident during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The school's new approach to behaviour has resulted in pupils' behaviour on the corridors being of the same standard expected in the classroom. Pupils said 'wonderful walking' had prevented them running on the corridors and messing around.
- The behaviour of the very few pupils who have particular behaviour issues is managed well. The school ensures that pupils receive external support when needed; this support is well received by parents. Pupils say they are supported well and 'learn to manage my angry feelings'. The use of social stories and structured lunchtime activities have contributed towards the improvements in behaviour.
- Attendance is not yet good enough. However, school processes for monitoring absence are strong and staff use a range of appropriate strategies both to reward and encourage attendance and to challenge absence.
- Pupils arrive at school on time and are not late for lessons.
- There have been very few exclusions in the past two years and the school has a reciprocal arrangement with a local school so as to reduce the use of exclusion further. This works successfully.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils are being strengthened by strong and inspiring leadership, which has led to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Current school assessment information and work in pupils' books are convincing. They show that the progress of current pupils is good in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups.
- In 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above the national average. This stemmed from the implementation of a systematic approach, high-quality teaching and increased targeted support for pupils who need additional help.

- In the first set of key stage 1 results in 2018, the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average.
- By the end of key stage 2, attainment was low in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics are a strength of the school. In recent years, not enough pupils have achieved the higher standard by the time they leave the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress throughout the school. Good systems support these pupils. Teachers have high expectations of them, plan work carefully and provide additional support where it is needed. These factors help disadvantaged pupils to usually achieve as well as other pupils in school.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress, because planning for their needs is detailed and thorough. Strong leadership ensures that expectations of pupils' progress are high. Staff match a wide range of support well to pupils' individual needs, including mental health and well-being.
- Pupils read frequently and confidently. Pupils in key stage 1 talked enthusiastically about their books when reading to the inspector. A structured approach to reading has been adopted throughout the school, and this leads to good progress. Pupils apply their phonics skills well when reading words that they do not recognise immediately. Pupils' reading journals were immaculate in presentation and showed the progress pupils had made in developing comprehension and inference skills.
- Progress in a range of other subjects is good. Pupils have opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding in a variety of themes that interest and excite them. An example was Anglo-Saxon art and Escher, where pupils had worked together to design and make a batik blanket using a complicated tessellating pattern.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is strong. Leaders employ innovative ideas to adapt teaching and learning activities and approaches, and to meet the additional needs of individual children.
- Children join the early years from up to 13 different nurseries. The school's accurate and detailed baseline assessments show they have skills that are well below those typical for their age. However, children make good progress. The school's induction process for new children is thorough, involving parents in 'play stay' activities and visiting both their home and nursery. One parent stated: 'He loves it here, comes home and wants to write.'
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is strong. As a result of the carefully planned activities, both in class and outside, children have many and varied opportunities to write. They use and apply phonic strategies, such as 'ea' in 'beans' when writing shopping lists.
- Children know their routines well and are interested, enthusiastic learners.
- Staff keep detailed records of children's achievements and their next steps in learning. These are used to provide the children with support so that they can continue to

improve their skills. Staff are skilful at modelling and encouraging children to talk about their learning.

- Children are well behaved, maintain good levels of concentration and listen to each other. They are kind to one another, take turns and share the equipment well.
- The school provides a safe and caring learning environment. Teachers and support staff know the children well and can talk confidently about individuals' strengths and next steps. Detailed and effective plans support children who need additional support. This is often in the areas of social and communication skills.
- Children have a good start to their education in the Reception class. Children are prepared well for Year 1.
- The proportion of children, including disadvantaged children, who reach a good level of development is low.

School details

Unique reference number	121093
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10057796

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Harry Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Maria Grimmer
Telephone number	01493 843552
Website	www.st-nicholaspriory.org.uk/
Email address	head@st-nicholaspriory.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools. The school added Years R, 1 and 2 since the previous inspection, opening in 2017 as St Nicholas Priory Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School.
- The majority of pupils come from White British/White Other backgrounds; however, the school has a high level of different ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including those with an education, health and care plan, is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons, many with one of the school's senior leaders, and in three intervention activities. They carried out additional learning walks.
- The team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, a local authority representative and three representatives of the governing body. Inspectors had informal conversations with pupils in lessons and at social times. Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at: safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures; self-evaluation and improvement planning; monitoring reports from the governing body; external consultants' reports; assessment information; records of pupils' attendance; and other information provided by school leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books in lessons and a sample of books belonging to pupils in both key stages.
- They took account of seven free-texts sent by parents and carers during the inspection, and the 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the 28 responses from staff.

Inspection team

Sally Garrett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Nutbeam	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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