

Inspection of The Rackham Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Witchford, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2HQ

Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inviting school where everyone receives a warm welcome. Typically, pupils enjoy coming as they have time with their friends and enjoy learning. They know and understand the school's aim of 'working together to be the best that we can possibly be'. Pupils appreciate that staff have high expectations of them. They know how they can meet these expectations. Pupils are taught about an inspirational person by staff or through a presentation by the person themselves. This supports the development of pupils' self-belief to achieve their goals.

Pupils listen to one another's ideas and are respectful of different opinions. They are generally motivated to learn and contribute to discussions and activities. Where this does not happen, a gentle reminder is usually enough to ensure pupils regain their focus. The improvements that the school has been making to the curriculum and its delivery have ensured that pupils achieve well. Pupils find the topics and activities that they have recently learned about interesting and engaging.

Pupils know that adults are there to keep them safe. They understand the importance of staying safe online, when riding their bikes and when crossing roads. Pupils take on leadership roles, including school councillors and reading ambassadors, which contribute to the wider school community.

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

The school's curriculum has undergone a review that has led to many changes. It is a broad and balanced curriculum, which is relevant for the pupils who attend the school. Staff present new ideas clearly and check pupils' knowledge. They use this information to address gaps in pupils' understanding and adapt future learning. As a result, pupils learn and remember the curriculum well in most subjects. However, in a few subjects the implementation of the curriculum is less effective. Some subject curriculums are new. Pupils find it difficult to remember important knowledge or build links to what they have learned before in these subjects. This prevents them from building the depth of knowledge they need.

The local pre-school has recently become part of the school. Children enjoy attending. Staff support children's understanding of new words during story time. Despite this, the pre-school curriculum is not aligned to the curriculum that the children follow in the Reception Year. This means that children are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Reading is a priority in the school. Older pupils enjoy the high-quality texts that the teachers share with them. The library and reading ambassadors advise pupils of a diverse range of texts to read. As a result, pupils enjoy reading.

Phonics teaching begins as soon as children start school. All staff know how to teach the phonics scheme, which ensures consistency. Pupils take home books that help them practise their sounds. Any pupils who need more practice are given this. Parents come

into school to understand the teaching of phonics and how they can support their children at home. As a result, pupils quickly become confident readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have high-quality provision in place to meet their individual needs. The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Staff are well trained so that they can effectively support pupils to learn alongside their peers. The school works well with external agencies and has a wide network that it can access or signpost families to. Parents and the school work in partnership to ensure that pupils with SEND access the curriculum well.

Staff know and understand the behaviour policy. Most pupils behave well. However, there is some low-level disruption to learning, which staff usually address. As the school's approach is becoming more consistent, the number of incidents is reducing. Attendance has dramatically improved now that there are clear systems and communication in place.

The school's personal development offer has a clear focus on pupils' emotional literacy. Pupils learn how to express how they are feeling and have strategies to positively change any negative emotions. The school prides itself on its inclusivity and diversity. Pupils develop their character through the artistic and musical opportunities the school provides for them. For example, throughout their time at the school, pupils can learn to play a musical instrument, which some of them choose to pursue.

The school has ensured that over a short period of time there have been rapid improvements made. Governors know their roles and responsibilities extremely well. They provide the right balance of support and challenge for the school. Governors carefully consider the well-being and workload of staff alongside this. The school community is extremely positive about how everyone works together to ensure they achieve the school's aims.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, the curriculum is new. Consequently, pupils have not yet gained the depth of knowledge that they could. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum in these subjects is fully and effectively implemented so that pupils build their knowledge well.
- The pre-school curriculum does not precisely align to children's learning in the Reception Year. This means that children do not build their knowledge and skills as well as they could. The school must ensure that the pre-school curriculum prepares children well for the Reception year and beyond.

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 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	110807
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10345120
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Brian Zielinski-Smith
Headteacher	Georgina Turner
Website	www.rackham.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher started in the role in January 2023.
- The school does not make any use of any alternative provision.
- The school manages its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school has run the pre-school since September 2024.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- This is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school within the Diocese of Ely. The school is not due an inspection of its religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, this academic year. The last section 48 inspection of the school took place in June 2019.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s educational 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 spoke with members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with the school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, music and art and design. 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.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors also spoke to those school leaders, including those responsible for SEND, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- Inspectors gathered and considered the views of pupils, parents and staff. This included considering the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Katie Devenport, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Julie Winwood

Ofsted Inspector

Joanna Pedlow

Ofsted Inspector

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