Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Capel St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Street, Capel St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 2EG

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 May 2025

Outcome

Capel St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this warm and welcoming school. They embody the 'Capel' values of 'care, achieve, persevere, enjoy, learn'. Pupils rise to the school's high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils continually show respect to each other and adults. They feel safe, knowing that their trusted adults will resolve any worries.

Pupils are keen to do their best in lessons. They have meaningful opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom. For example, working with a historian to add realism to their narrative writing. Pupils also complete field work, experience a 'CSI' workshop, and visit local farms and historical sites. Many pupils enjoy learning and achieve well.

Pupils can participate in a wide array of clubs to help extend their talents and interests. These include Lego, French, art, dance and multi sports. Pupils perform in rock and roll bands, class performances and local sporting festivals.

Pupils can adopt purposeful leadership roles. This includes being faith or school councillors. The school's 'eco club' advises the school on recycling, with class monitors actively helping their teachers. This helps pupils prepare to be responsible citizens of the future.

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

The school's curriculum is intended to help 'every child live life in all its fullness'. This ambitious curriculum has been completely revised since the last inspection. It outlines the important knowledge that pupils will learn each year. Within each subject, knowledge is

carefully ordered to help pupils build on what they know. Teachers know how to check pupils have learned important knowledge, and they do so effectively. This ensures that pupils grasp the most important concepts well.

Learning to read underpins the whole curriculum. In the early years, children build strong foundations in communication and language through play, songs and rhymes. In the Reception Year, children initially learn individual sounds and to blend these sounds to read words. Skilled staff help them to build up their vocabulary and decode unfamiliar words. This means children quickly start to read. Those pupils who need help to keep up are rapidly identified and supported. Staff help pupils to develop the reading fluency, accuracy and confidence they need to access the whole curriculum.

Similarly, the school's work on embedding its revised writing curriculum has had a significant impact on pupils' written work. Pupils learn to write for various purposes. Their writing shows sophistication and precision. Written work is of a high standard.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. Teaching often captures pupils' interest and encourages them to find out more, for example physically measuring jugs of water before completing calculations on capacity. On a few occasions, teachers do not provide sufficiently clear explanations as to exactly how to complete a task or calculation. Sometimes, tasks are not designed to give pupils enough opportunity to apply and extend their knowledge to more complex tasks and calculations. As a result, while most pupils achieve well, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive in this highly inclusive school. The expertly trained staff know their pupils extremely well and ensure that they receive appropriate support. This means pupils with SEND access and succeed in the same learning as their peers. Outdoor learning activities help build their positive mental health and resilience.

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils are very well prepared to be respectful citizens of the future. Pupils learn about diversity, respect and tolerance through reading diverse texts linked to curriculum subjects. They also visit a Hindu temple, participate in African drumming and study art from other cultures. Pupils have opportunities to discuss and debate moral issues in lessons. They also learn about democracy through voting for the school councillors. Pupils learn about possible future careers from local professionals visiting to talk about their careers.

The school ensures that pupils develop a strong community spirit. For example, pupils work with a local food bank and raise money for a local hospice. The school builds links with international charities, and pupils raise money to help children less fortunate than themselves to attend school in other countries.

Staff are proud to work at this school. Staff feel leaders are always considerate of their workload. School governors are proactive and committed to fulfilling their roles. They have an accurate oversight of the school. They are very supportive of the staff, ensuring their well-being is of the highest priority.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not consistently provide opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their knowledge and skills. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could in certain areas. The school should ensure that the curriculum is designed and delivered to help pupils practise, develop and deepen their learning across subjects.
- On occasions, explanations do not provide pupils with enough guidance on how to complete a task successfully. As a result, some pupils do not complete tasks or demonstrate their understanding. The school should ensure that teaching considers how explanations can be broken down so that all pupils engage in tasks which will help them learn.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

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	124749
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10378498
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alison Huard
Headteacher	Andrew Frolish
Website	www.capel-st-mary.suffolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in April 2025.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school hosts a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school provides a nursery for three-year-old children.
- The school has a Church of England religious character. The school had its last section 48 statutory inspection in February 2025.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The inspector met with a representative from the local authority as well as members of the school governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's records of behaviour and attendance and spoke with several groups of pupils to understand their experiences of school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.
- The inspector also met with a representative of the diocese.

Inspection team

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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