

# High Ash Church of England Combined School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110419
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	367384
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Whitelegge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Eaton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Pound Hill Great Brickhill, Milton Keynes Milton Keynes MK17 9AS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01525261620
<b>Fax number</b>	01525 261621
<b>Email address</b>	office@highash.bucks.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 May 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	367384

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 18 lessons or part lessons taught by 10 different teachers. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and pupils. The inspectors analysed 118 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the action to improve children's knowledge and understanding of the world in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The factors contributing to pupils' high attainment in writing.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2, particularly the most able in mathematics.
- How well new staff are inducted into the school so that they can make an effective contribution to the school's effectiveness and bringing about improvements.

## Information about the school

High Ash Church of England Combined is an average-sized primary school. It provides education for pupils from the villages of Great Brickhill, Stoke Hammond and Little Brickhill. The school attracts about half of its pupils from outside the normal catchment area. These pupils are mainly from the nearby town of Milton Keynes.

Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school has gained a number of awards including: Healthy School status, Activemark, Artsmark Gold and Challenge award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?****1****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****1**

## Main findings

High Ash Church of England Combined is an outstanding school. All pupils are highly valued and have equal access to the school's provision. They achieve exceptionally well because of good teaching and an outstanding curriculum. Attainment is high by the end of Year 6. Excellent care, guidance and support lead to very positive personal development for pupils. There are very strong partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies. Parents and carers are pleased with the care and education provided for their children. Typical comments made by parents and carers were: 'Fantastic school', 'There is a real sense of community, 'I feel welcome and involved' and 'Children achieve their potential'.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an extremely good start. They make outstanding progress because of the high quality provision. Pupils make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. A range of successful strategies has been implemented to promote high attainment in writing. Pupils have numerous opportunities to investigate and to solve problems in mathematics. These factors contribute to the high standards.

Lessons have a clear purpose so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers' explanations, instructions and questioning promote learning well. Assessment information is used successfully to plan teaching and to match tasks to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils are challenged well and make good gains in their learning. Just occasionally, learning slows when introductions are overly long or when the teacher does not make good use of pupils' ideas and questions to further enhance their learning or clarify any misunderstandings. An exciting and innovative curriculum provides considerable enjoyment and a wide range of learning experiences for pupils.

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration for others. Pupils are friendly, polite and respectful. They relate very positively to adults and to their peers. Behaviour is often exemplary in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles extremely well. They feel very safe and well looked after at school because of the first-class care and safeguarding. Pupils make considerable contributions to the school and to the local and wider community. Attendance levels are consistently high. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the future.

The school is extremely well led and managed and members of the governing body provide first-rate challenge and support. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and direction. She is very well supported by other key leaders who are all effectively involved in developing their areas of responsibility. New staff are successfully mentored and supported into the organisation. This school demonstrates an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and thorough. These findings are used well to inform planning and take action to bring about improvements where needed. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained high standards and high quality provision.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve elements of teaching and increase the proportion of outstanding lessons by:
  - ensuring that in all lessons, learning proceeds at a brisk pace and that overly long teacher introductions are reduced
  - ensuring that teachers make full use of pupils' ideas and questions to further promote their learning and to clarify any misunderstandings.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and skills broadly as expected for their age. They make outstanding progress in most areas of learning.

Throughout the school, pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of exciting activities provided and show extremely positive attitudes to learning. They told the inspectors, 'We have fun and learn new things' and 'Our learning is hands on.' All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able, make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, attainment is high in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening because of the regular opportunities for them to acquire and apply these skills in a range of lessons. Most pupils are articulate and confident speakers. They express their ideas and opinions very well. Pupils write for a range of purposes and in different styles. Their writing is accurate, imaginative and clear. Spelling and punctuation are usually accurate. Pupils apply and develop their writing skills very well in different subjects.

In mathematics, pupils, including the most able in Key Stage 2, make good progress because of good teaching and the interesting problem-solving activities presented. In Year 4, pupils' worked well collaboratively as they investigated different strategies to solve real-life subtraction problems. Pupils' independent study and research skills are well developed. They use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to support their learning. Pupils in Year 5 produced high quality projects on the Ancient Greeks. They found out interesting information about inventions, architecture, schools, food and the Olympics. The well-written text was enhanced by high quality illustrations. Pupils' skills in evaluating and improving their own work are very well developed by Year 6.

Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. They work extremely well in groups to solve problems. Pupils are considerate, supportive and appreciate the positive personal qualities of others. They participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities and choose healthy foods. Pupils feel extremely well cared for at school and are confident there are always trusted adults to turn to for help and support if needed. They make extremely good contributions to the school and to the wider community. The orchestra performs at various venues in the local community. Pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities. Those on the school council take their roles seriously and pupils in Year 6 enjoy providing clubs and activities for younger pupils. Pupils raise funds for a range of appeals and charities to help those less fortunate than themselves. At High Ash Church of England, pupils are very well prepared for their next school and for the future

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

because by the time they leave they possess high levels of literacy and numeracy skills and apply these well to new situations. Their personal and social skills are extremely well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching successfully promotes considerable enjoyment and good learning for all groups of pupils. Examples of outstanding practice were observed in English in Year 5 and in history in Year 6. Lessons are well focused and teachers effectively share the purpose of the lesson with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding of new work. Pupils' interest is sustained because activities are tailored closely to their abilities and needs. Teachers provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning. Skilful modelling and demonstration promote pupils' writing skills well. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make good contributions to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional help with literacy or numeracy. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve because they are set clear individual learning targets. The marking of pupils' work is effective. Good work is praised and constructive comments guide the next steps of learning.

The curriculum successfully promotes high attainment for pupils and contributes extremely well to their personal development. It provides exciting and memorable learning

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

experiences for pupils. Provision for reading, writing and mathematics is high quality. ICT is used very well to support learning in a range of areas. Health education and the wide range of physical activities provided contribute extremely well to pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Provision for art and music are further strengths. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument and to perform in the school choir or orchestra. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of clubs, including athletics, choir, dancing, sewing, knitting, design and technology, ICT and various sports. Visitors and visits further enhance the curriculum and pupils' learning. A popular and successful residential visit for Years 5 and 6 to Flatford Mill provides exciting outdoor activities and develops social skills. ♦

Highly effective care, guidance and support are central to the school's very positive ethos. Pupils and their parents and carers fully appreciate the extremely well-organised, safe and welcoming environment provided. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with the guidance and support needed to promote good and sometimes outstanding progress. A range of well-presented workshops in areas such as letter sounds and numeracy successfully helps parents and carers to support their children's learning. In partnership with other agencies, the school is successful in supporting pupils and their families who need additional help. There are very effective arrangements for monitoring and promoting high attendance. ♦ ♦ ♦

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff are firmly focused on providing high quality provision and promoting high outcomes for pupils. As a parent or carer wrote, 'The school is led and managed very well.' The strong teamwork among the staff and a clear commitment to continuous improvement help to ensure that all staff do the best for the pupils. The leadership and management of key areas such as the Early Years Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and special educational needs are all very effective. Senior leaders and local authority advisers systematically monitor and develop teaching. New teachers, particularly the newly qualified, receive effective coaching, mentoring and support from colleagues. These successful arrangements contribute to the consistently good classroom practice.

Members of the governing body show a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. They are supportive and provide constructive challenge so as to hold the school to account. Safeguarding is given considerable attention. There are

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

highly effective policies and procedures to protect and safeguard pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of these procedures are robust and thorough. All staff are well trained in the area of safeguarding. The school successfully promotes safe practices for pupils through teaching and the curriculum.

◆ All groups of pupils are highly valued and have full access to the wide range of provision. Equality of opportunity is therefore promoted extremely well and discrimination is very effectively tackled. Community cohesion is promoted well. Partnerships with the parents and carers and the local community are particularly strong. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths. The school is currently developing opportunities to further extend pupils' understanding of global community cohesion.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Strong leadership and effective planning promote outstanding provision and exceptionally good outcomes for children. They settle very well into the setting and make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of strong relationships between adults and children and the considerable attention given to care, safety and welfare. Children are confident, safe and secure in a very positive learning environment.

Teaching and the curriculum are outstanding and children are provided with an exciting range of indoor and outdoor activities. They thoroughly enjoy their learning and make exceptional gains in all areas of learning including their knowledge and understanding of the world. Assessment and record keeping are effective and each child has a comprehensive picture of their learning. Assessment information is used well to plan



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

teaching and the curriculum. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing children's language, reading and numeracy skills. Adults successfully promote speaking and listening skills through skilful prompting and questioning.

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully improved children's early writing skills. They have numerous opportunities to acquire and practise writing. For example, children begin to write simple sentences about their canal visit or write a sentence about their favourite toy they have drawn. There is an effective balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have good opportunities to explore, be creative and work independently. For instance, children created impressive sculptures using natural materials such as bark, leaves, pebbles and pine cones in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Interesting topics and visits are promoting children's knowledge and understanding of the world very well. The well-resourced outdoor learning areas encourage children to be active and purposeful learners. Outstanding partnerships with parents and carers mean that they are firmly involved in their children's learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

**Views of parents and carers**

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires are happy with their children's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with their children's safety in the school, their sense of enjoyment, the quality of teaching, the amount of information about their child's progress, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the leadership and management. These very positive views reflect the findings of the inspection. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and how well the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Most pupils are extremely well behaved and the school has very effective procedures for dealing with any unacceptable behaviour that may occur. The school has appropriate systems for dealing with concerns and strives to meet the needs of parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at High Ash Church of England Combined School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 118 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	68	35	30	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	76	64	42	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	58	48	41	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	69	58	41	35	8	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	60	41	35	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	51	55	47	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	64	54	49	42	3	3	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	42	53	45	4	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	53	47	40	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	42	52	44	7	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	38	55	47	7	6	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	67	57	47	40	1	1	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	64	38	32	5	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



7 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of High Ash Church of England Combined School, Milton Keynes, MK17 9AS**

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. High Ash Church of England is an outstanding school, and you can be very proud of it.

These are the main strengths.

- You thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance levels are high. ♦
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a super start and make outstanding progress.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching you receive.
- An exciting and wide range of learning activities is provided including clubs, visits and visitors. ♦
- You get on extremely well with each other and your behaviour is often outstanding.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- You feel very safe at school because teachers and other adults take excellent care of you and provide exceptionally good guidance and support.
- You make outstanding contributions to school life and to the wider community.
- The headteacher leads the school extremely well and she receives very good support from other key leaders.

We have given your school just a few points for improvement.

- We have asked teachers to ensure that learning in all lessons moves along at a good pace. We have also asked that steps are taken to use your good ideas and questions to improve your learning and to clarify any misunderstandings you may have.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).