

High Wycombe Church of England Combined School

Loakes Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 2JU

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2017

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors are committed to continuing to improve the school's performance. Staff morale is high and teachers are enthusiastic.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Across the school, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making similar progress to their classmates.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and often use skilful questioning to extend pupils' thinking. They give good advice and guidance on how pupils can improve their writing and work in mathematics. Pupils act on the advice given. The curriculum meets pupils' needs and pupils develop a good understanding of British values.
- Teachers and learning support assistants build strong positive relationships with all pupils. Groups are well managed and pupils settle to work quickly.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They report that bullying is rare and that they are confident that staff would sort any incidents out quickly. Pupils speak confidently, listen to others and collaborate well. They enjoy school and attend regularly.
- Children in the early years have a good start to their learning and quickly settle into school routines. Adults ensure that children develop good communication and reading skills.
- Most parents praised the school. Many described its welcoming, 'family' atmosphere and the helpfulness and approachability of staff.
- Governors use their helpful skills and expertise to provide effective challenge and support to leaders.
- Leaders do not analyse information about pupils' achievement well enough. They do not clearly identify the progress of the different groups of pupils.
- Occasionally, teachers do not move pupils on to more demanding work quickly enough. Sometimes, the work planned for the most able pupils is too easy.
- Teachers do not give pupils effective guidance on how to improve in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that senior leaders analyse information about pupils' performance more sharply so that the overall progress of different groups of pupils is identified and any concerns acted upon promptly.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - make sure that pupils move on to more demanding tasks swiftly, and set work for the most able pupils which is suitably challenging
 - provide pupils with effective feedback to help them improve their work in the foundation subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher knows the strengths and areas for improvement in her school well. Plans for improvement, incorporating the views of all stakeholders, are targeted appropriately on the key areas. She is successfully developing an effective management team and has gained the loyalty and confidence of staff.
- Following the previous inspection report, the headteacher addressed the recommendations promptly to bring about the necessary improvements. For example, pupils now have more opportunities to write independently and there is consistency in the way teachers use assessment to promote learning. Senior leaders have a strong and relentless focus on improving the quality of all teaching.
- The process of appraising the effectiveness of teachers and learning support assistants is thorough. A wide range of evidence is used to evaluate teachers' work, including the progress pupils make. Staff are set appropriate targets in line with the school improvement plan. Relevant training for staff is well planned and matched to the learning needs of pupils. For example, learning support assistants have been trained in phonics teaching and they support pupils' development of phonics skills well.
- Leaders have designed an engaging curriculum that meets the needs of their pupils, coming from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, well. There is a suitable emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics and a good balance of other subjects. Music, the creative arts and sport are prominent. Good opportunities to perform or to compete in sport raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' experiences are further enhanced by themed weeks, such as in science and art, a wide range of clubs and educational visits. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 spoke enthusiastically about what they had learned about staying safe from their visit to Hazard Alley.
- The welcoming and friendly atmosphere in the school is indicative of leaders' emphasis on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Throughout the year, pupils reflect on a range of values, such as respect, forgiveness and friendship. Pupils develop a good and age-appropriate understanding of the fundamental British values and learn how to be a responsible citizen in modern society.
- Senior leaders ensure equality for all and that there is no discrimination against any group of pupils. For example, leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are able to take part in all extracurricular activities, including school visits, and so widen their life experiences. Additional effective support is provided for pupils who are not making enough progress and need to catch up.
- The funding to support disadvantaged pupils and the extra help given to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are used to good effect. Extra help is provided to enable these small numbers of pupils to overcome any barriers to learning. As a result, these pupils make at least similar progress to their classmates.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used well to promote pupils' participation in sport. Specialist PE teachers have improved pupils' skills in sport and raised class teachers' coaching abilities. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting activities, including dance and gymnastics, and participate in a good number

of sporting competitions. Leaders are also promoting walking to school as part of a healthy lifestyle. Several pupils proudly displayed badges achieved by walking to school.

- Leaders strive to engage with parents. For example, as well as good support on the website on how to help their children at home, parents also receive regular informative newsletters, and updates from each class teacher on what pupils have been learning. A few parents commented that communications from the school were not always clear or timely enough.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors at the start and end of the school day agreed that their children settled in well and were happy at school. They said that teachers were helpful and approachable, and that their children were making good progress and were safe and secure.
- Together with teachers, senior leaders regularly check on pupils' progress in each subject. They ensure that any extra support previously given to pupils has been effective. However, leaders are not analysing the information about the achievement of different groups of pupils sharply enough to identify trends in their performance, including any concerns.

Governance of the school

- Within the governing body, there is a good range of relevant experience and expertise. These skills are enhanced through training and by further astute appointments to the governing body.
- Governors have been closely involved in the evaluation of the school's performance and the subsequent plans for improvement. They receive regular information about pupils' progress and supplement it with their own focused visits. Governors make regular checks on the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures at the school.
- Governors understand that, as a result of senior leaders' efforts, teaching and pupils' learning are improving. In addition to giving good support to the school, governors provide an appropriate level of challenge. They ensure that teachers' movement up the pay scale is warranted and that increases in teachers' pay are closely linked to the progress pupils make. They also make sure that effective use is made of the pupil premium and the primary physical education and sport premium, to support disadvantaged pupils and to promote greater uptake of sporting opportunities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A small number of parents, in response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, expressed deep concerns over the handling of a historical and serious safeguarding incident. While inspectors did not investigate the incident itself, actions taken by the school were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform their judgements. From this evidence, there was no indication that the school staff had failed in their safeguarding duty or that safeguarding procedures at the school are in any way lacking.
- Inspectors found that staff were well trained in safeguarding and aware of their

responsibilities, for example the need to report concerns, however minor, immediately. Several governors as well as the headteacher are trained in safer recruitment. The designated safeguarding lead, who is also the headteacher, is appropriately trained in her role and ensures that safeguarding continues to have the highest profile in school. Procedures have been reviewed rigorously. The headteacher provides weekly updates on safeguarding and checks that staff have a good understanding. Safeguarding records are well maintained, for example through a chronological list of events, and are stored appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The morale of teaching staff is high. They are enthusiastic and follow the school's procedures closely, such as those for planning lessons. Teachers have established warm relationships with pupils and manage their groups well.
- All teachers use the school's marking policy effectively to assess pupils' writing and mathematics work. Marking is one of the school's strengths. The advice and guidance given by teachers help pupils to improve their work. Generally, teachers use skilful questioning to gauge pupils' understanding. They give pupils time to think and expect them to explain their answers.
- Teachers and learning support assistants collaborate well. Teachers brief their assistants fully, so that assistants feel well prepared and know their roles in lessons. They provide good feedback on pupils' progress to inform the planning of future activities. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially to those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Phonics and reading are taught well. Texts have been selected that appeal to, and challenge, pupils. Reading is given a high profile in the school. For example, pupils have regular library visits, special days are devoted to reading, and teachers bring in their own books to share their personal reading experiences. Leaders have ensured that the school library is an attractive and comfortable place, with a good range of books.
- The teaching of writing and mathematics is well organised. Teachers plan activities that engage pupils and match pupils' different abilities. Other subjects, including science, geography and history, are thoughtfully planned and taught. Teachers ensure that pupils experience high-quality writing activities in other subjects. There is a rich provision for music, including specialist teaching, clubs and good opportunities for pupils to perform. Teachers do not give such helpful advice to pupils about their work in other subjects as they do in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and can plan engaging activities to motivate pupils and extend learning well. Leaders are demanding greater challenge for pupils of all abilities and teachers are responding well. Challenges and extension questions are stretching most pupils' thinking but, for the most able pupils, the work is sometimes not hard enough. Also, pupils are not consistently moved on quickly enough to more demanding tasks.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show a good deal of self-confidence because they feel valued and well cared for. They speak candidly about their work and their opinions of the school. They demonstrate strong moral values. Pupils spoken to said that everyone should be treated equally, no matter what they look like or where they come from. They also showed a good understanding of fundamental British values.
- Older pupils were proud of supporting others, for example by raising money for charity and through a community project for clearing litter. All Year 6 pupils have some extra responsibilities, such as helping younger pupils or as assembly monitors. Pupils take pride in their learning, maintaining tidy exercise books and, generally, presenting their work well.
- Pupils reported that they feel safe and secure at school. They are learning how to keep safe in other environments as well, such as when using the internet or crossing the road. Pupils spoke of the need to make healthy choices when eating and the need for regular exercise. Several pupils proudly pointed out the badges they were wearing for completing a month-long walking challenge.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils said that they like their teachers and enjoy coming to school. Attendance overall is above average and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which has been slightly below average in the recent past, is currently similar to others.
- Generally, pupils move around the school sensibly and with consideration for others. Mostly, pupils respond to instructions promptly and settle to work without fuss. Pupils know the school rules and how they are expected to behave. Pupils agreed that poor behaviour in lessons was unusual but that, occasionally, a few pupils could become distracted and talkative if the lesson was boring.
- Incidents of poorer behaviour, which are few in number, are well recorded, carefully analysed and appropriately managed.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's assessment information about pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics, confirmed by the standard of work seen in their books, shows that pupils in all years are making good progress from their starting points in these core subjects. The school's initiative last year to build greater challenge into activities for all pupils has helped pupils to make better progress in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have successfully addressed the dip in performance in reading, writing and mathematics of pupils in key stage 1 last year, which was due to instability in staffing.

Current pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving much better. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are also making good progress. The extra support provided for the small numbers in each cohort of disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, helps them to make similar or better progress compared to their classmates.

- Leaders' focus on improving pupils' writing is bearing fruit. Pupils' handwriting shows rapid improvement and current pupils, of all abilities across the school, are making steady progress in developing their writing skills. Pupils attain high standards in English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Pupils acquire phonics skills quickly. In recent years, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics has been maintained around the national average. By the end of Year 2, the vast majority of pupils have picked up the necessary phonics skills. Pupils enjoy reading and do so regularly. Pupils spoken to in Years 5 and 6 were able to explain the characters and plots in the books they were reading.
- In mathematics, pupils focus on fluency, and securely develop their skills in calculation. They have fewer opportunities to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils, under their teacher's guidance, can select activities of appropriate difficulty (the 'superhero' challenge). Sometimes, the most able pupils spend too long on introductory work before tackling the more demanding and challenging activities.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed. Teachers and support staff exude confidence and are ever-smiling and encouraging. They create a secure and happy learning environment. Safeguarding is at the heart of the Reception team's work and is effective. Children settle in well and learn to listen to others and share resources fairly. During snack time, children showed good manners and listened politely to classmates as the teacher encouraged them to explain what was special about them.
- The good teaching enables children to make rapid progress. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been maintained at or above the national average over the past three years. Children make strong progress in all areas of learning and, together with an effective transition programme, they are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Adults observe children closely and carefully record their development. Leaders plan appropriate activities that help children move on to the next stage of development. Children's progress is carefully recorded, using a suitable software package. Examples of children's work are also retained in hard copy and include parents' observations about their children's development.
- Leaders have rightly identified speech and language as a common area of weakness for Reception children. As a consequence, adults continually focus on developing children's communication skills. They take every opportunity to engage children in conversation, modelling correct pronunciation and encouraging children to explain what they are doing or want to investigate further. Activities are organised to encourage children to collaborate and interact with each other, developing their social as well as

language skills. The few children who speak English as an additional language are supported well to develop their speaking and reading skills quickly.

- Adults teach phonics well. They are well trained and model accurately how to produce the correct sounds for letters. They encourage children to practise letter sounds regularly.
- Children are generally attentive and tend to stick with their chosen activities. They show self-confidence and soon learn to do things for themselves, such as collecting their own resources. Good examples of collaboration between children were seen during the inspection. Children behave well.
- The inside space is large and well structured, with areas devoted to particular activities. There are a good number of well-planned activities for children to choose from, covering the full range of early years learning. This is also the case for the outside activities. However, towards the end of the day, the resources are less well displayed and, as a result, less inviting. The outside area is relatively small and cramped, but the Reception leaders have begun to transform it into a more exciting space. For example, the race track for trikes, alongside the mural of a sports stand, has transformed an otherwise dark and dull area.

School details

Unique reference number	110463
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10036875

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Harley
Headteacher	Celine Hawkins
Telephone number	01494 524220
Website	www.hwce.co.uk
Email address	office@highwycombecombined.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are six classes from Year 1 to Year 6, and a full-time Reception.
- Almost half of the pupils have a White British background. The remainder are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is close to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the

minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with staff, including the headteacher, other senior leaders, teachers and learning support assistants. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors met with the chair of governors and one other governor. An inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority by phone and a consultant from the school's diocese.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding procedures at the school, including the single central record, the evidence collected to check on applicants' suitability for employment and the quality of safeguarding training. Inspectors spoke to governors and staff about their understanding of safeguarding procedures. They spoke, by phone, to the local authority's designated officer and its safeguarding adviser.
- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in all year groups, some of which were undertaken with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work in books, across all year groups and most subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with three groups of pupils during formal meetings, and informally with pupils during lessons and breaktimes.
- A range of documentation was considered, including the school development plan, the self-evaluation report, the records of monitoring of teaching and learning, and information about pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding, and toured the school site.
- Inspectors analysed 58 responses and 36 free-text comments submitted in response to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, during the inspection. They also considered the 69 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

James McVeigh, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Emma Palastanga	Ofsted Inspector

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