

# Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School

Birch Green, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG14 2LR

## Inspection dates

21–22 May 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have created a school founded on the love of learning and care for others. These values permeate the school.
- Leaders' well-designed curriculum provides breadth and balance for pupils to make good progress in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education.
- The broad curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to link their spiritual, moral, social and cultural thinking to the rest of the curriculum. Pupils value the diversity in contemporary British society.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving. Leaders work well with external experts to ensure that teachers are up to date with the most effective approaches in education.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils use teachers' feedback effectively to improve their learning.
- Pupils are ambitious, self-assured and curious. They are proud of their achievements and take pleasure in congratulating others.
- Safeguarding is effective. Governors carefully check that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe at school and home.
- Leaders' and teachers' support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. These pupils make good progress.
- Leaders support disadvantaged pupils well so that they overcome the barriers they face. Leaders' support ensures that these pupils access the fullest extent of the curriculum, including clubs, trips and enrichment opportunities.
- The use of the physical education (PE) and sport premium enables pupils to enjoy sport and reach very high standards. Nearly all pupils take part in extra-curricular PE and many reach county-level competitions.
- The quality of provision in the early years is good and improving. Leaders have recently made substantial investment in the quality of provision and this is starting to make the desired improvements.
- While expectations across the school are high, sometimes learning sequences are too easy in key stage 1 and for the most able pupils across the school. As a result, these pupils do not always make the progress they should.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - developing the curriculum to ensure that teachers plan well-sequenced lessons for the most able and potentially most able that provide suitable next steps, leading to their strong progress across the curriculum
  - ensuring that all teachers in key stage 1 have consistently high expectations of their pupils and provide activities that enable them to make strong progress across the curriculum.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - equipping teachers with the skills and strategies to plan sequences of learning that meet the needs of all pupils, including the most able, in all subjects of the curriculum and in the early years.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders have built an exceptionally positive team of staff during a time of substantial staff changes. All staff show remarkable care for each other and commit to reaching for the highest levels of success for themselves and the pupils. Leaders have established an ethos that encourages teachers to be open about their strengths and weaknesses and embrace development opportunities. Nearly all members of staff that responded to the staff survey strongly agreed that leaders encourage, challenge and support teachers' improvement.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school. Leaders use this understanding to create improvement plans that provide effective professional development for staff. Leaders work in partnership with a range of external specialists and organisations to ensure that staff access the latest thinking in education. Through careful monitoring, leaders ensure that staff use their training to improve teaching, learning and assessment.
- Pupils value and benefit from the broad and logically structured curriculum leaders have designed. Clear links between subjects such as science and religious education enable teachers to plan well-sequenced and connected lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about Christian understandings of creation alongside scientific classifications of animals. This ensures that pupils have a mature understanding and better remember what they are learning.
- Leaders' commitment to ensure that pupils have a balanced curriculum means that the quality of teaching sport, PE and music is as strong as the key subjects of English and mathematics. The school has a well-taught music curriculum that inspires pupils to take instrumental lessons and participate in the many music festivals and concerts that leaders provide. Leaders' use of the PE and sport premium ensures that all pupils make strong progress in PE. As a result of the funding, pupils regularly reach county-level competitions in a range of sports and some have reached national-level competitions. In recognition of their achievements, leaders have been awarded the gold standard of the nationally recognised School Games Mark.
- Leaders understand the needs and capabilities of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders provide a range of personally enriching opportunities across the curriculum and support them to make good progress academically.
- The actions of leaders to promote equality of opportunity has ensured that pupils with SEND make good progress. The special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENCo) understands the needs of these pupils and monitors their progress. The SENCo provides effective training for staff so that they can support these pupils effectively.
- Leaders promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural values very well and ensure that pupils have a strong understanding of fundamental British values such as tolerance. Pupils value each other's differences and are curious about how different people live their lives. Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Subjects leaders, many of whom are new to their roles, are well focused on improving

the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They work closely with staff to ensure consistent high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. They are aware that they have not yet clarified for staff their understanding of how to provide for pupils' excellent achievement across the curriculum.

- The curriculum, though designed to link the broad areas of learning effectively, does not clearly outline the expectations for the most able and potentially most able pupils. As a result, teachers do not always plan sequences of learning that cater for these pupils' needs well enough for them to make the progress they should. For example, in 2018, at the end of key stage 2 the most able pupils made progress in reading below the national average.
- In key stage 1 teachers' expectations of what pupils know and can do are sometimes too low. As a result, learning sequences are sometimes too easy. This results in some pupils not always making the progress they should.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors share leaders' aims and commitment to school improvement and are knowledgeable and diligent in their work. They support and challenge leaders effectively to meet governors' high expectations.
- Governors systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the work of leaders and staff. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors use their evaluations to challenge leaders and hold them firmly to account for the school's performance.
- Governors regularly evaluate the quality of their own work. They undertake valuable training that helps them to understand their responsibilities and carry them out with even greater effectiveness.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All adults place safeguarding as their highest priority. They look for signs of harm and take swift and appropriate action when they have concerns. Leaders ensure that all adults undertake regular training and use this training to keep pupils safe.
- Leaders keep clear records regarding vulnerable pupils and are tenacious in making sure that child protection referrals are dealt with appropriately.
- Leaders ensure that all required checks are carried out to be certain that all adults working with pupils are suitable. The record of these checks is maintained accurately. Governors and representatives from the local authority check these records carefully to confirm that leaders and staff carry out their duties effectively.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers and pupils have very strong relationships. Teachers understand the needs of pupils and create learning opportunities that lead to good progress. Lessons are characterised by very purposeful learning and high achievement.

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge that helps them plan lessons that link learning across the curriculum effectively. For example, pupils in Year 3, while learning about mountains in geography, also learned key vocabulary about mountains in French, studied the French Alps and enjoyed reading adventure stories about the Yeti in English. Furthermore, teachers organise learning so that pupils build new learning on what they already know, understand and can do. The linked and carefully sequenced lessons planned by teachers help pupils better remember what they have learned.
- Accurate assessment ensures that teachers provide clear feedback to pupils and plan learning activities that help most pupils to take next steps in their learning. Pupils understand the importance of improving their learning and use feedback well. They take responsibility to learn from their mistakes and, as a result, make good progress.
- Teachers require pupils to choose their words carefully and give pupils many opportunities to practise using sophisticated language. Pupils from an early age at the school, speak and write with confidence and mature vocabulary.
- The teaching of phonics and reading is effective and contributes towards pupils' good writing. Teachers stimulate pupils' interests so that pupils enjoy reading and see it as an important skill as well as something fun to do. Teachers effectively equip pupils to analyse texts to learn about how language works and what makes good writing. As a result, pupils improve their own writing by carefully considering their reading.
- In mathematics, teachers effectively use the new approach introduced by leaders. Teachers equip pupils to explore mathematical concepts in depth. Pupils value and benefit from the many opportunities teachers provide for them to practise reasoning and solve tricky problems.
- Pupils with SEND are fully included within lessons and make good progress from their starting points. Teaching assistants support pupils with SEND effectively. They are well trained and deliver one-to-one and group support sessions that contribute positively towards these pupils' progress.
- Teachers' expectations are usually high and often very high in most areas of the school. This is not always the case for the most able pupils and in key stage 1. This means that, at times, teachers do not provide opportunities for these pupils to think deeply about what they are learning. For example, some teachers sometimes ask simple questions that do not help pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- A very important feature of the curriculum designed by leaders is the personal development and welfare of pupils. Staff successfully deliver leaders' vision of a school where adults and pupils, 'aim high, build confidence and love learning.' Teachers develop ambitious, self-assured and curious pupils who are proud of their achievements. Pupils willingly and capably improve their own learning.
- Pupils support each other exceptionally well in their learning and congratulate others

for their success. They proudly point out their classmates' work on the many displays of pupils' work around the school.

- The school's strong promotion of emotional well-being promotes pupils' social, emotional and mental health. Pupils show exceptional grace and understanding when facing relationship challenges and have the social skills needed to resolve issues without adult intervention. They capably explore deep emotional issues together and support each other very well.
- Staff provide pupils many opportunities to take positions of responsibility across the school, and pupils carry these out conscientiously. For example, older pupils enjoy and benefit from leading and organising younger pupils' play during playtime. Similarly, pupils take great pride in representing the school in the many sporting competitions available for them outside of school.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe at school and home. Nearly all parents reported on the parent questionnaire, Parent View, that their children feel safe at this school. Pupils understand the risks associated with using computers and know how to stay safe online.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and show self-discipline from a young age. They regulate their own behaviour and can sustain their concentration over long periods of time.
- The school's ethos is very evident on the playground where pupils enjoy playing together and support each other exceptionally well. In the rare incidences when disagreements arise, pupils help each other deal with negative emotions and avoid unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is very rare. This is confirmed by parents. When bullying does occur, staff help pupils restore positive relationships and the incidents do not recur.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' attitudes to learning are strong so pupils want to go to school. This contributes towards the very low absence of pupils. Absence is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils that are persistently absent. This academic year, no pupils were persistently absent from school.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The good quality of teaching, learning and assessment has ensured that pupils make good progress across the curriculum, including in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2018, at the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment was above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard and greater depth. Because teachers do not always provide difficult tasks in these subjects for pupils in key stage 1, some of them do not always make the progress they should.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics

screening check in Year 1 was above the national average. All disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard. Pupils' strong knowledge of phonics help them to read well. Leaders have successfully developed a school ethos where pupils read regularly to develop their reading skills and as a fun activity. Pupils also enjoy reading a wide range of texts, including both fiction and non-fiction.

- At the end of key stage 2, in 2018, pupils' attainment was above the national averages in reading and mathematics at the expected and higher standards and at the expected standard and greater depth in writing. Work in books and school assessment information show that most pupils are making the progress they should in key stage 2. The most-able pupils and the potentially most-able do not always make the progress they should because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for these pupils to think in depth about what they are learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make good progress across the curriculum. This is because leaders and teachers understand the needs of their pupils and put in place effective support.
- Pupils make good and sometimes better progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum. This is because leaders and teachers have ensured that the school's curriculum is well designed and implemented effectively, including with extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend what they know and can do. For example, pupils excel in subjects such as PE and music because these subjects are taught well, and many pupils take part in the music ensembles, choir, orchestra and the many sporting clubs held before, during and after school.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leaders have high ambitions for the early years and have made substantial, positive changes that are starting to take effect on the quality of the provision. Leaders have a clear vision for the early years provision and have skilfully secured the necessary resource to bring it about. For example, leaders have built a new nursery room, giving the opportunity for staff to create learning activities tailored to the needs of the children in the nursery.
- Staff use many effective ways to develop children's use of language. Staff extend children's vocabulary by accurately modelling spoken English and expecting them to use sophisticated language. Children also learn early phonics well.
- Leaders have built strong partnerships with parents. Parents report that staff work well with parents to ensure that their children make a good start to their education and move from Reception to Year 1 successfully. Parents also commented to inspectors that leaders provide many effective ways for parents to understand how well their children are learning in school and how to support their children at home. In particular, parents appreciate the opportunities they have to visit the school, such as the 'stay and play' event when parents and children explore the early years provision together.
- Children leave the provision well prepared for Year 1. Staff ensure that children are equipped with the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to be successful in key stage 1. The proportion of pupils who reached a good level of development in 2018 was just above the national average.

- Children live up to leaders' high expectations of behaviour very quickly. They share very well when playing together, and when disagreements occur, overcome them quickly. When teachers require the children to sit and listen to adults and each other, they do so politely.
- Children typically engage well with the learning activities and take pride in their achievements. Many children enthusiastically showed their accomplishments to inspectors. At times, however, the provision does not meet the needs of some of the children well enough so that some of them do not make the progress they should.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure. The environment is safe, and adults are well trained to care for and protect children from potential harm.

## School details

Unique reference number	117563
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10087417

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Grubb
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Richards
Telephone number	01992 583239
Website	<a href="http://www.hertingfordbury.herts.sch.uk">www.hertingfordbury.herts.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@hertingfordbury.herts.sch.uk">head@hertingfordbury.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2018

## Information about this school

- Hertingfordbury Cowper Church of England Primary School is a voluntary aided school. Its previous section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was October 2016. The report for this inspection is available on the school's website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, SENCo and subject leaders. They also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed lessons across the school and carried out scrutiny of pupils' books with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and analysed 167 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 53 free-text responses and 21 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke with teachers, support staff and pupils through the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of information, including the school's website, development plan, assessment information about pupils' learning and leaders' monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Al Mistrano, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Katherine Douglas

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). 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).

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2019