

Inspection of Countess Anne Church of England School

School Lane, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 8AX

Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Countess Anne Academy. Their interests and talents are positively nurtured, helping them to excel both academically and socially. Pupils bubble with excitement as they talk about their experiences and opportunities. They told us that their school was great, and nothing could improve it. Pupils are proud of their achievements. Chelsea Flower Show gold medals, self-made films and singing performances reflect some of the high standards and quality of work pupils produce.

The school's 'golden values' are well embedded in the life of the school. Pupils live these values through their relationships with one another and their teachers. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and look for opportunities to help each other. They value and celebrate the differences in one other; this is reflected across the whole school community.

At the heart of the school's work is pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils have every confidence in adults to look after and care for them. Pupils said that they would talk to staff or use worry boxes to share any concerns. They told us that they don't remember any bullying occurring in their school.

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

Leaders have worked meticulously to improve the school since the previous inspection. Pupils access a rich and vibrant curriculum that is founded upon a solid understanding of their needs. Pupils achieve well from their starting points and are exceptionally well prepared to move on to secondary school by the end of Year 6. Governors are very thorough in the checks that they make on whether leaders are doing the best that they can for pupils in the school. Consequently, all areas of the school's work are judged to be outstanding.

The school's curriculum is extremely well organised. For each subject, lessons over time are very well planned. As a result, pupils develop a deep understanding in each subject and make links between subjects. This curriculum is enhanced through well thought out and memorable practical experiences, trips and visits. For example, pupils work with professional engineers to build moon buggies. Pupils use their intricate and thorough knowledge of space, gravity, friction and mathematics in order to design and create their buggies.

Leaders ensure that teachers know how to teach each subject well. Teachers receive high-quality training and use this effectively. Teachers are adept at spotting where pupils are finding work too easy or too hard and amend their teaching quickly. Teachers have an excellent understanding of how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The support is well targeted. It meets pupils' social and emotional needs as well as their academic needs. The highly inclusive nature of the school ensures that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Children in the early years make a flying start to their education. Leaders quickly

identify children's needs and adapt their plans to support children's early development. Children become confident and settle well. Classrooms are exciting, lively places where activities encourage children's curiosity, imagination and exploration. Adults work alongside children very effectively. They listen to children's ideas to develop their interests and experiences. For example, a well-planned hairdressing salon allows children to explore their speaking and listening skills. As a result, children develop their language and vocabulary quickly.

Children make a strong start with early reading. Adults are well trained and ensure that pupils quickly secure their knowledge of phonics. Pupils apply their knowledge well to their reading and writing. For example, Year 1 pupils used their phonics to spell different words describing the journey in the book 'Bear Hunt'. Pupils read widely and speak excitedly about the range of books they read at school.

Owing to strong curriculum planning and high-quality teaching, pupils are enthused by their learning. They actively seek to find ways to apply their learning in more complex ways. For example, children in the early years are able to concentrate on tasks for long periods of time because they are keen to learn. Pupils in Year 6 use their knowledge of the water cycle to create their own working model in the school grounds representing a wetland drainage system.

Pupils' enthusiasm and learning are particularly evident in music, which is a significant strength of the school. Pupils are taught to find their singing voice very early on in the curriculum. Teachers skilfully model the songs and encourage pupils to sing out aloud. By revisiting familiar tunes, pupils increase their knowledge of pitch, melody and rhythm. This leads to pupils performing independently to a very high-quality level.

Leaders go the 'extra mile' to promote pupils' personal development. Extra-curricular activities are well considered to develop pupils' sense of themselves. Roles such as a 'make believer' engage pupils to think about how they become responsible and active citizens. Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' aspirations. They provide pupils with the confidence and resilience to think bigger and better. For example, all pupils make films that make up the 'C.Annes film week'. They are then screened at a local cinema.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a high importance upon keeping pupils safe. Staff are well trained. They are alert to any signs that pupils are at risk of harm. Systems for keeping pupils safe are woven through the school's practice. Leaders encourage staff to record any concern, no matter how small. Records show that leaders respond quickly. They work with external agencies to check that pupils are safe. Leaders are tenacious and will pursue support for vulnerable pupils and their families. The school's pastoral team works effectively with pupils. Pupils receive high-quality extra support for their well-being. Leaders' checks for the suitability of those who visit or

work at the school are well maintained.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	140238
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10110239
Type of school	All-through primary
School category	Academy converter voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Murray Gifkins
Headteacher	David Lodge
Website	www.countessanneprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2019

Information about this school

- Countess Anne Church of England Primary Academy is a Church of England faith school located in the Diocese of St Albans.
- The school's most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) under section 48 of the Education Act was on 26 February 2015. The school's provision was judged to be outstanding.
- Countess Anne Church of England Primary Academy converted to become a single academy in October 2013.
- The governing body manages a breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders. Inspectors met with governors, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. A telephone interview was held with the school's improvement partner.
- The inspection focused upon early reading, mathematics, music and science.

- Inspectors visited lessons in those subjects. We talked to pupils and teachers from the lessons we visited. We looked at pupils' work in books. Inspectors talked to senior and curriculum leaders about their plans for the curriculum.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of safeguarding documentation, including that relating to attendance and behaviour, the single central record and records of staff training. Inspectors spoke about safeguarding with the designated leader of safeguarding and other teachers.
- Inspectors observed pupils at lunchtime and talked to them about what it was like to be a pupil at the school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought and collected their children from the school. They also took account of the 46 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 45 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered 12 responses made on the online staff survey. Inspectors also noted 24 responses from the pupil online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Craig

Ofsted Inspector

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