

Inspection of a good school: Little Missenden Church of England School

Little Missenden, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP7 0RA

Inspection dates:

24 October 2019

Outcome

Little Missenden Church of England School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this small and friendly school. Leaders have thought carefully about ways to develop pupils' confidence and readiness for the next stages of their education. For instance, each pupil in Year 2 is given a special job to help with the running of the school. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. They are very proud of the badges stating their roles. Parents told us that their children grow in confidence as they move through the school. Inspectors noted that pupils were articulate, polite and forthcoming.

Adults across the school have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. In the dining hall, for example, pupils learn to use their cutlery and scrape their plates after lunch. In lessons, pupils mostly listen carefully to their teachers. Outside, pupils enjoy playing together. They are active and sometimes just a little boisterous, but adults support them well, ensuring that everyone is happy and safe. Pupils told inspectors that they have plenty of friends and that adults help them. They are not worried about bullying.

Pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers plan lessons across a range of subjects, which help pupils to attain well. Expectations are high, and pupils are mostly engaged and industrious.

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

Leaders ensure that pupils enjoy rich learning opportunities across a range of subjects. They make successful use of expertise from the local community to help them in providing this. For instance, a chef comes in to teach pupils about cooking and nutrition.

Staff benefit from attending local network groups to share skills and resources with colleagues. Leaders are mindful of the potentially high workload for staff in delivering a high-quality curriculum within a small school. The headteacher makes sure that staff do not get weighed down by unnecessary paperwork. This gives them time to do their job well. Teachers told us they feel that the benefits of working in this small school far outweigh the challenges of having multiple roles and responsibilities. They feel well

supported by leaders and value highly the teamwork that helps drive the school forward.

Leaders, including governors, cherish the place of the school within the community. Through regular activities, such as the harvest festival and tea parties, they help pupils to be connected to, and supported by, their community. Leaders are also mindful of supporting pupils to develop a wider world view. They have thought carefully about this when selecting themes for learning or arranging 'international days', for example, which celebrate the wider world.

Plans for subjects show teachers what should be taught and when, in sequences that build pupils' learning well. Teachers usually adapt their subject plans well to take account of what pupils have already learned and make sure that pupils are able to complete activities in lessons. This ensures pupils learn well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In science, for example, pupils have regular opportunities throughout the early years to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They develop an enthusiasm for science and relish using scientific terms like test and experiment. Teachers build carefully on this as pupils move into Year 1. This helps pupils to recall facts about their learning easily and from memory.

Pupils develop a secure sense of number from the early years onwards. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to strengthen and apply their understanding through solving problems and looking for patterns. Pupils with SEND are given the support they need to experience success and strengthen skills. Pupils enjoy the challenge of mathematics. They develop as confident and competent mathematicians.

Leaders prioritise the development of secure reading skills. Teachers ensure that individual reading books are carefully matched to the letters and sounds that pupils know. Teachers have introduced the 'chapter book challenge' to provide for the needs of the highest attaining pupils. However, for these pupils in particular, the teaching of reading is not sufficiently well matched to their needs to provide ongoing challenge during lessons. Pupils do not have regular opportunities to change their library books, for example, or to listen to a range of stories and poems. As such, they do not fully develop an awareness of authors and styles to support their learning in other subjects effectively.

Pupils develop strong phonics skills. This supports them well in both their reading and writing. Teachers assess pupils' acquisition of these phonics skills carefully. They ensure that any pupils who struggle are given the help they need to catch up quickly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are ever watchful about keeping pupils safe. They take care to ensure that everyone is well trained and aware of what to do should they have any concerns.

Pupils, staff and parents are confident that pupils are safe at the school. Pupils learn how to manage risks, including age-appropriate e-safety. The close relationships across the school help pupils to feel known and safe. Staff take care to get to know pupils well. They

quickly spot and take appropriate action if pupils have worries or there are signs that all is not well.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders need to develop opportunities for pupils to read more widely. The teaching of reading should provide pupils, particularly the most able, with opportunities to understand more complex texts in order to extend their skills, support their wider learning and further develop their love of reading.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Little Missenden Church of England School to be good on 21 March 2011.

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 are 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

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| Unique reference number | 110457 |
| Local authority | Buckinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 10111315 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 55 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Jane Elkins |
| Headteacher | Michelle Green |
| Website | www.littlemissendenschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 March 2016 |

Information about this school

- This is a small Church of England voluntary-aided infant and nursery school. There are up to eight children in the Nursery class, then spaces for up to 15 pupils in each of Years R, 1 and 2. Pupils from Years 1 and 2 work together in the same class.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, leaders, staff, and representatives from the governing body. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from diocese on the telephone. An inspector spoke to parents at the school gate and considered their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. We visited a range of lessons and looked at learning plans. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about pupils' learning and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. A range of safeguarding documentation was considered.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Joy Barter

Ofsted Inspector

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