

Inspection of a good school: Hartlebury Church of England Primary School

The Village, Hartlebury, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 7TD

Inspection dates:

22–23 January 2020

Outcome

Hartlebury Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a lot of joy in this well-led school. Staff and pupils like being here and there is a strong sense of united purpose. Everyone is expected to work hard and behave well, and they do. But there is also time for fun and laughter and adults always listen to what pupils have to say.

Bullying hardly ever happens. Even so, pupils are taught what to do if it does, and they learn how to stay safe in different situations. Pupils are quick to welcome newcomers. They understand the meaning of friendship and respect.

Different subjects are planned and taught well. This means that pupils learn the right things at the right time. They are taught to be literate and numerate and the weekly timetable is packed with different subjects. Strong academic standards have been maintained over time, although the most able could do even better.

Outside class, pupils can take part in trips and clubs. A school 'pledge' lists the different experiences that pupils will have at school, such as performing on stage, fund-raising for a good cause and visiting London.

At this school, pupils get a breadth of experience and learn to be responsible, thoughtful and considerate.

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

There is a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere in this school. In all classes, pupils enjoy lessons, work hard and achieve well.

Pupils' positive attitudes allow everyone to get on with learning. Staff are quick to spot and praise helpful behaviour, which builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem. On the other hand, if anyone needs reminding about expectations, then this is done equally well and without fuss.

Well-organised curriculum planning sets out what pupils should be taught each term. This gives clear guidance to staff and ensures that pupils learn what they should. In religious education (RE), for example, the quality of leadership, planning and learning is superb. Pupils learn about different beliefs. They also learn to reflect, discuss, debate and empathise. In doing so, they have to call on their learning in different subjects. In turn, what they learn in RE helps them to improve their knowledge and understanding of literature, history, art, music and more. Pupils get an exceptionally good deal in this subject.

The school gets children reading as soon as they are ready. Phonics teaching starts in Nursery and follows a well-planned progression that goes up through the classes. Throughout early years, staff focus on correct pronunciation of letter sounds and regularly sing and read rhymes and stories to children. In the older classes, staff continue to read aloud to pupils and introduce them to authors they haven't come across before. This feeds their appetite for reading and widens their vocabulary and general knowledge. In addition, there is a lunchtime book club and pupils bring in books to recommend to others.

If anyone finds it hard to keep up, then they get extra help. Consequently, by the time they leave, most pupils are reading at the expected standard for their age. There is a similar picture in mathematics, although sometimes pupils make mistakes that are not picked up quickly. In both reading and mathematics, the most able pupils could do better if they were given more guidance about how to apply what they already know.

The school makes sure that pupils see and aim for excellence. The school choir, for instance, has achieved success in a local competition. Pupils take part in sports, perform on stage and learn to play a musical instrument. Older pupils can become school ambassadors if they show leadership or represent the school in positive ways. Furthermore, the school introduces pupils to the best of human endeavour and achievement. They listen to the music of great composers, and learn about the work of influential scientists and artists.

There are also optional activities to choose from, including clubs such as those for basketball or board games, and residential visits to outdoor activity centres. Learning outside happens on the school site too. Each week, children in the Nursery and Reception classes spend time in the school's forest school area. Here, they hunt for bugs, go pond-dipping, build dens and have a thoroughly worthwhile time. This generates lots of language and is a springboard for work back in class.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive extra help, often with specialist input. This is organised so that they do not miss out on anything else.

There was a high response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, with parents and carers making many positive comments. Pupils, too, had plenty of good things to say. They value their academic work and say that the school has taught them how to make and keep friends.

Staff morale is high. Staff report that Hartlebury Church of England Primary School is a well-led, supportive and happy workplace. Inspection evidence supports these views.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders keep everyone up to date with safeguarding requirements. They also have effective arrangements for checking on systems and staff knowledge. Pupils know what to do if they have a problem or worry and staff act correctly when any concerns arise.

Allegations of bullying or unkind behaviour are dealt with properly.

Registers of pupils' attendance and records of checks on staff include all the right information. Medicines are stored in the right places. Pupils are supervised throughout the school day and first-aid treatment is available if needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In reading and mathematics, sometimes the challenges set for the most able pupils do not hit the mark. This means these pupils do not increase their knowledge or develop their skills as well as they might. In reading, pupils' knowledge of inference could be better. In mathematics, pupils do not use what they know to work efficiently in ways that save time. To improve this, leaders should check that the challenges set out in curriculum plans are being managed in class in the best possible ways.
- On occasions, pupils make mistakes in mathematics that are not picked up quickly. This is not a big problem but, when it happens, it slows learning or allows a bad habit to go unchecked. Leaders should make sure that mistakes are picked up as soon as possible.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Hartlebury Church of England Primary School, to be good in 2013.

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 the school and 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

Unique reference number	144261
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10122538
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robert Keal
Headteacher	Caroline Unitt
Website	www.hartlebury.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England voluntary-controlled primary school. In April 2017, it became part of the Severn Academies Educational Trust (SAET).
- The school runs before- and after-school childcare on site.
- The school provides Nursery classes in the mornings and afternoons for children from the age of three years old.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I focused in particular on the following subjects: reading, mathematics and RE. In these subjects, I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, examined teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way the subjects were planned and taught. I also looked at a few other subjects in less detail to check how they were organised and taught.
- I examined external performance data about the school and looked at school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. I also checked the school's website.

- I asked pupils, staff, leaders and governors about safeguarding arrangements. I examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. I also found out about safety procedures and routines at the school.
- I watched pupils' behaviour in class, in assembly, at lunch, on the playground and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, I had formal meetings with the headteacher, subject leaders, governors, the chief executive officer of SAET, directors, teachers and pupils. I also talked informally with pupils, staff and parents to gather general information about school life.
- By the end of the inspection, there were 74 recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 74 free-text comments. I considered these and looked at the 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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