

Inspection of Furneux Pelham Church of England School

Furneux Pelham School, Furneux Pelham, Hertfordshire SG9 0LH

Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in June 2009 under the relevant inspection framework at that time.

The new judgement of 'good' reflects the current inspection framework as well as any changes at the school since the last inspection.

The school has not been inspected for 10 years, which is longer than the five-year maximum interval between inspections. Changes in school effectiveness may have happened at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Furneux Pelham is a small village school, in the heart of the community. Everyone knows everyone, and the school is a happy and safe place. Pupils enjoy coming to school and playing with their friends. They also enjoy learning and the wide range of activities that they take part in.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, both in terms of their behaviour and their learning. As a result, pupils behave very well and do their best. Pupils make strong progress throughout the school. The proportion of pupils that reaches the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined has been above the national average for several years.

Pupils told us that bullying is rare and that staff deal with it quickly when it happens. Although there is work to do to improve systems and record-keeping around allegations of bullying, we agree with these views. Bullying does not happen very often at Furneux Pelham. When it does happen, it is dealt with appropriately. However, there are a small number of parents who feel that allegations of bullying are not dealt with appropriately.

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

The school's curriculum is interesting and wide-ranging. Pupils have lots of interesting opportunities, such as educational visits, visitors to the school and residential trips. The school makes good use of the local environment. For example, younger children enjoy their 'welly walks' in the surrounding countryside.

Leaders and governors have begun work to develop the school's curriculum. They recognise that, in subjects other than English and mathematics, the curriculum is not entirely coherent. There is a lack of clarity about what will be taught when, and how pupils' knowledge and skills in individual subjects will be built on.

Pupils do well in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils reach at least the expected standard in these subjects. They also develop strong knowledge and skills in the other national curriculum subjects, such as history and art. The broad primary education they receive prepares pupils well for secondary school.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils. Teachers give pupils work that is challenging and interesting. They expect pupils to present their work neatly and to do their best. Pupils respond well to these expectations.

The school has a very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils have the support and resources they need. Leaders check their progress regularly and ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Leaders know pupils with SEND and their individual needs well. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is appropriate and meets pupils' needs.

Pupils behave very well throughout the school. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils respect their teachers and listen carefully to what they say. They respond quickly when they are asked to do something. Pupils are notably courteous and respectful to adults and to each other.

Typically, pupils attend school regularly and on time. The school's overall rate of attendance is consistently just above the national average. A proportion of pupils take holidays during term time. Leaders rightly view this as a concern.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. The environment is welcoming, attractive and interesting. Staff in the early years have a good understanding of how young children learn. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they join the Reception class. By the time they move on to Year 1, they are ready for the different demands of the national curriculum.

Pupils learn to understand and appreciate the differences between groups of people. For example, pupils visit places of worship from each of the major religions. This helps them to understand the important elements of different faiths such as Judaism and Islam. Pupils take part in a range of fundraising activities for different charities. The school has developed a particular link with a local food bank. In December, pupils took part in a 'reverse advent calendar' event, bringing gifts in for others rather than receiving something themselves.

Procedures for handling allegations of bullying are not strong enough. The steps to be followed, and the records to be kept, are not sufficiently clear and explicit. This undermines parents' confidence that issues will be resolved. Leaders had taken the first steps to address this before the end of the inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. Staff know pupils well and notice when something is wrong. Pupils know that the adults in school will listen to them if they are worried about something. Staff are well trained to notice possible signs of abuse or neglect. They report their concerns promptly and appropriately. The school's designated safeguarding lead has strong knowledge and understanding of the role. Appropriate action is taken when concerns are reported. Leaders ensure that all required pre-appointment checks are carried out before anyone is allowed to work with pupils. The school's single central record meets requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan next year's curriculum and train staff in how to deliver it that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied in this case.
- A small proportion of parents are concerned about how the school deals with bullying. The school's systems for dealing with allegations of bullying are not strong enough. There is no step-by-step process for when a parent, for example, alleges that a pupil is being bullied. Records of such allegations do not show clearly enough how the concern was investigated and what happened as a result. The school must introduce a robust system for handling allegations of bullying. It should detail the records to be kept, and how concerns will be followed up.
- The curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics is not fully developed. There is a lack of clarity about what the school intends pupils to know, and be able to do, by different points as they move through the school. Leaders and governors should continue their work on developing the school's curriculum. They should ensure that it is coherent and well sequenced throughout. They should also make sure that the intended development of knowledge and skills is completely clear in all subjects.

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	117394
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10110333
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Miranda Trenchard
Headteacher	Brigid Dyson and Louise Foley
Website	www.furneuxp.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2009 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has changed its leadership arrangements. The previous headteacher continues to lead the school from Monday to Wednesday. Since September 2019, the previous deputy headteacher, now co-headteacher, leads the school on Thursdays and Fridays.
- Furneux Pelham is a Church of England school. It is part of the Diocese of St Albans.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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The school has not been inspected for 10 years, which is longer than the five-year maximum interval between inspections under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Changes in school effectiveness may have happened at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made most outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection.

- We met with: the co-headteacher and other leaders; teachers and pupils; and members of the governing body. We spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- In order to check the effectiveness of safeguarding, we: checked the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks; met the school's designated safeguarding lead; spoke with staff and pupils; and checked the school's child protection records.
- We observed and talked to pupils during their breaktimes and as they moved about the school.
- We considered a range of school documents.
- We spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. We took account of 72 responses to Parent View, two emails from parents and a letter from a parent.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing and mathematics. That is, we met with the leaders of these subjects, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils about their work, spoke to teachers, and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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