

Inspection of Holy Apostles' Church of England Primary School

Battledown Approach, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 6QZ

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 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 2012 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 eight 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?

Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Pupils become well-mannered and very reflective young people here. They feel a strong sense of belonging at this church school and live out the school's values well. Pupils really like the science weeks, musical events, choir, extra school visits and visitors that staff provide. They enjoy the sporting activities, including the 'mud run'.

Pupils say that lunchtimes are usually fun. Sports leaders help younger pupils. Pupils say that staff are quick to respond if there is any poor behaviour at lunchtime, including during football, and this is usually managed well. However, on occasions, pupils say that when there are smaller issues, staff could be quicker to intervene. Nonetheless, pupils feel very safe at school. They say staff are very caring and support them well, particularly when they need to talk through a worry.

Pupils achieve very well in reading, writing, and mathematics by the time they leave for secondary school. Pupils experience a wide range of subjects. Pupils work hard and they complete the activities set. Nonetheless, some pupils would like to learn more and deepen their knowledge further. Inspectors agree. Pupils do not gain detailed knowledge and skills in every subject. This prevents pupils from excelling academically.

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

Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils learn 'the basics' well. Leaders' work is bringing about further improvements to the quality of education pupils receive. The school's overall effectiveness has turned a corner for the better and is good.

The standards which the oldest pupils achieve have remained very high over several years. In the early years, and across key stage 1, almost every pupil sees success as a reader.

Leaders' recent efforts to improve pupils' sentence writing, vocabulary, and spelling help pupils to write well. However, the writing curriculum, including in the early years, does not support pupils to excel.

The headteacher is well respected by staff and pupils. Leaders are out and about in the school a lot. They provide strong care and support. This develops pupils' character well. Pupils follow instructions and adhere to the school rules. Pupils are respectful to one another and behave well.

However, in the past, leaders did not assure themselves how effectively all curriculum subjects were being implemented. Leaders are making a determined start to overhaul the curriculum subject by subject now. However, it is early days.

Curriculum plans include appropriate subject content. However, the depth of knowledge which pupils are required to learn is at a superficial level in some subjects, for example in science. This means that while many pupils remember a lot about scientific concepts, and do well, others do not.

Leaders have not upgraded all subjects yet. Leaders' new plans in art and design and computing set out exactly what will be taught and when. As better plans are being put into place, for example in physical education, pupils are gaining the detailed knowledge they should.

In mathematics, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan work that meets pupils needs well. As a result, pupils complete number work accurately and many use their prior knowledge to secure complex work. Pupils say that their teachers demand a lot of them in mathematics. They like this feeling, but they do not feel it to the same extent in every subject.

Younger pupils use their phonics to read words and sentences well. Hesitant readers get the precise support they need and catch up. Even so, there are still occasions when the reading curriculum does not extend pupils' understanding of what they read consistently well. For example, it can be a big jump up in Year 6 for some. Their time at Holy Apostles' makes pupils determined in their learning, and so many pupils make this leap admirably. As a result, very many pupils are avid readers. However, some sequences of work, further down the school, are not demanding enough. This hinders pupils' ability to shine as the accomplished readers they can be.

Senior leaders ensure that teachers use all the information they have to provide timely support for any pupil who needs extra help. Pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do well because of the additional support they receive.

Leaders make sure that teachers plan a curriculum that enriches pupils' learning well. The curriculum ensures that pupils gain an appreciation of a range of cultures and religions. They know about the world around them and beyond. Sports events and competitions are open to all. Pupils appreciate learning about keeping healthy, including their recent work on drugs education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school completes the necessary checks to ensure that all staff are safe to work with children.

Leaders provide staff with the training they need so that everyone knows how to keep pupils safe. Adults know how to refer concerns about pupils' well-being and safety. The pastoral support leader knows families well and provides effective support. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and understand the risks of cyber bullying.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet planned coherently in every subject. It is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan and train staff in how to deliver the curriculum that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is well planned and implemented in every subject so that pupils know and remember more in every subject of the national curriculum.
- Governors have not held leaders to account for ensuring that the curriculum demands enough of the pupils it serves in every subject. Some pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge and understanding that they need to do consistently well. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans are demanding and build on what pupils already know and understand so that all pupils do as well as they should.
- Leaders' work to establish how well the writing curriculum is implemented is not developed fully. Leaders do not routinely assure themselves that teachers' plans, including in the early years, are delivered consistently well. Leaders need to have a better understanding of the implementation of the writing curriculum, so they are confident that pupils use and apply their writing knowledge and that planned writing opportunities enable pupils to excel in this subject in every year group.

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	115679
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10133443
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Brooker
Headteacher	Gareth Davies
Website	www.holyapostlesschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 June 2012

Information about this school

- There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection. However, the leadership has remained the same.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in November 2017 and found the school's Christian distinctiveness to be outstanding.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged or have SEND is much lower than that seen nationally.
- There is a pre-school on the school's site that takes children from aged two to four. This was last inspected in May 2019.
- There is before- and after-school care provided by external registered providers. These are inspected separately by Ofsted and did not form part of this inspection.

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.

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in June 2012 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 eight 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.

- The lead inspector met with five governors, including the chair of governors on day one of the inspection. Inspectors also met with the chair of governors on day two.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a local authority representative to discuss the external support the school receives.
- We met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and other members of the extended leadership team, including the leader of SEND.
- We reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- We examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to the safeguarding, attendance and behaviour of pupils.
- We considered the 17 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. An inspector also met with parents at the start of the school day to gather their views of the school.
- Throughout the inspection, we met with staff and pupils to gather their views.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, writing and physical education. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior and subject leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils. We also looked further into the quality of education pupils receive in science, geography and history.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Jelley

Ofsted Inspector

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