

Inspection of a good school: Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School

Checkendon, Oxfordshire, RG8 0SR

Inspection date:

12 May 2021

Outcome

Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Checkendon is a school where pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers make learning 'fun and interesting'. A wide range of activities enhance pupils' school experiences. They look forward to and enjoy virtual trips to art galleries, music concerts, the theatre and museums as well as visits to the local wildlife area. Pupils especially relish the after-school running and drama clubs.

Everyone knows each other well in this small, harmonious school. Staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils work hard and discuss their learning in a thoughtful and mature manner.

Pupils have positive relationships with each other and with all adults in the school. Several pupils spoke to inspectors about how staff always help them with any worries they may have. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are extremely rare.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They play happily with their friends during break times. They have a well-informed understanding of other faiths and cultures. The themes of equality and diversity thread seamlessly through the curriculum. One pupil captured the sentiments of many, 'Everyone is welcome to our school. The world is not always a fair place, but we want to do our bit to change that.'

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

Checkendon is a place where leaders and staff cultivate and nurture pupils' love of learning. Leaders make sure that no one is left behind. Staff ensure that every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), has the opportunity to participate fully in all that the school offers. Pupils with SEND thrive and flourish in their learning because of the bespoke support they receive.

Leaders have designed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum in all subjects. It is organised so that pupils are taught the essential knowledge they need in the right order. Leaders have further refined curriculum planning in history and geography. They are in the early stages of implementing these new, improved plans. This carefully considered approach means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In mathematics, teachers provide activities which build on what pupils know and can do. As a result, pupils successfully remember their mathematical knowledge and skills. Inspectors observed younger pupils confidently comparing and ordering numbers, using the right mathematical vocabulary. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve word problems.

Reading is an essential part of the school day. Children learn phonics as soon as they start in Reception. Leaders have developed a well-considered approach to the teaching of early reading. Staff plan and deliver high-quality phonics sessions. Teachers are quick to support pupils who need to catch up. At times, books that pupils read do not match the sounds they are taught. Leaders are reviewing this aspect of the school's phonics programme. Nonetheless, pupils experience a rich range of literature and pore over the diverse selection of books on offer.

Children get off to a great start in Reception. They settle quickly and enjoy their learning. Teachers develop children's curiosity and build on their interests. Children are keen to share their learning. They spoke to inspectors with great confidence about the right conditions for baby chicks to hatch and how to keep them healthy. Children develop a good understanding of the world around them.

The values of 'courage', 'respect', 'integrity', 'compassion' and 'hope' are central to the Christian school's ethos. They help guide pupils to consider thoughtfully the difference they can make through their words and actions. During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions, the school council and 'values ambassadors' continued their work remotely. They successfully raised funds to support different charities.

Governors bring a wide range of skills to their role. This helps them support and challenge leaders effectively. Governors understand how the curriculum is designed in each subject. They are aware of the school's strengths and next steps for future development. Staff say that they enjoy working at the school and that leaders make sure that their workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that there is a strong culture of vigilance. Systems for reporting and recording any safeguarding concerns are thorough.

The headteacher has created a culture in which staff are not complacent. Staff know what to do to keep pupils safe if they have any concerns or worries. Training for all staff is up to date.

The school has also prioritised pupils' mental health to make sure that pupils are kept safe, both emotionally and physically. Staff teach pupils about the risks that they might face in their everyday lives, including when working online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum has been designed coherently. It is well sequenced and helps pupils learn the essential knowledge they need for the next stage of their education. Leaders are in the process of implementing new planning in history and geography. This will further enhance and support pupils' learning.
- Leaders ensure that pupils enjoy and read a rich selection of books. However, at times, some of the books that younger pupils read do not help them practise the sounds they are taught. Leaders should review this aspect of the phonics programme so that reading books build on pupils' learning in lessons.

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 or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School, to be good in June 2016.

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 information from Parent View 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 [here](#).

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	123200
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10192853
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Richard Castle
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Seymour
Website	www.checkendon.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher. Inspectors also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of early reading, mathematics and history. They discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the curriculum.

- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school’s single central register was reviewed. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke to pupils, staff and parents.
- The lead inspector met with two governors.
- The lead inspector made telephone calls to a representative from the Diocese of Oxfordshire and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of seven members of staff who responded to Ofsted’s online staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the 15 free-text comments. An inspector met with a few parents at the end of the day during the inspection.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. A total of 23 pupils responded to Ofsted’s online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

James Broadbridge

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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