

Inspection of a good school: Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School

Longlands Close, Crossbrook Street, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, EN8 8LU

Inspection dates:

15–16 June 2021

Outcome

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

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly school. Pupils respect and value each other. They treat others with kindness. There is very little bullying. Pupils are confident that if it were to occur, adults would deal with it well.

Pupils learn how to stay safe, for example, online. They feel safe in school. They feel confident that if something was worrying them, they could share it with a member of staff.

Leaders' and teachers' high expectations have a marked, positive, effect on pupils' behaviour. In their break and lunchtimes, pupils play well together. They move around the school in a calm and orderly fashion. They are consistently polite and courteous to others.

In lessons, pupils routinely work hard. They listen well and speak with confidence. They are keen to learn. This means that in areas where the curriculum is strong, pupils learn well. However, pupils do not learn as much as they ought to in subjects where the curriculum is weaker, including early reading.

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

Leaders' modified curriculum is leading to comprehensive change, but is not yet complete. Pupils learn some parts of the curriculum better than others.

In places, the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has hindered leaders' work. For example, their intended review of the impact of the new curriculum was delayed by the third national lockdown. Nevertheless, leaders have persisted and are currently testing how well their new approaches work. There are some pleasing early outcomes to this, such as how enthused and knowledgeable pupils are about aspects of history. Leaders'

new approach to supporting pupils' reading comprehension is having a notable effect on pupils' reading in key stage 2.

Aspects of the curriculum, though, are not as good as they need to be. Some planning has been slow and some training insufficient. Leaders and teachers do not know enough about how to teach some subjects well.

This includes the teaching of phonics. Weaknesses here stem from a lack of understanding of how phonics should be taught. Teachers and teaching assistants have not had the training they need. They do not consistently adhere to a clear approach to teaching phonics. The books they give pupils to read are not well matched to the sounds pupils learn. Leaders have not identified where phonics is not being taught as it should be. This slows pupils' early progress in reading confidently and fluently.

The steps leaders take to support the individual needs of pupils, and particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are extensive and effective. There is a thorough transition programme. This ensures that when pupils arrive in Reception, staff know their strengths and the areas where they need more help. Leaders quickly identify the difficulties some pupils have, such as with speech and language, and act quickly to help these pupils.

This comprehensive approach continues for pupils with SEND as they move through the school. Strong, ambitious leadership of SEND provision ensures pupils benefit from a range of support tailored directly to their needs. Staff are trained well to support pupils with SEND. They make effective use of the strategies leaders provide to help pupils. The result is that pupils with SEND access curriculum provision well. They experience the same strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum as other pupils.

Leaders and staff have clear, high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They have created an environment in which pupils are confident in their work, in their play and in being themselves. Pupils are ready and keen to learn.

There is usually a range of activities to support pupils' wider development. For example, residential trips help to develop pupils' confidence and resilience. Leaders have adopted creative approaches to compensate for the impact of the pandemic on their ability to do these things, such as by running a 'virtual' trip to the beach.

Support for pupils' personal development is underpinned by a coherent programme of personal, social and health education, as well as by a well-constructed physical education curriculum. Diversity is celebrated throughout the school. Leaders give high priority to caring for pupils' mental health and well-being.

At the moment, governors are not supporting leaders well. They do not challenge leaders' assertions about the quality of provision effectively. They do not know about the things which need to improve.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that early reading, governance and the effectiveness of the broader curriculum may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant about keeping pupils safe. Staff know and use the system for passing on concerns. Safeguarding records are thorough, easy to follow and show the timely actions leaders take to keep pupils safe.

Pupils feel safe. They are kept safe from bullying and they are taught to keep themselves safe.

There were some minor administrative errors in the single central record of pre-employment checks at the start of the inspection. These were quickly resolved.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not understand how to teach early reading well enough. They have not given staff the training they need or checked well enough how well the curriculum is taught. This means that the way in which pupils are taught to read does not conform to a clear scheme. Pupils do not learn to read as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure staff at all levels know how to, and do, teach in strict accordance with an identified phonics programme.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account well enough. They were unaware of the weaknesses in provision. Leaders and governors should make sure all governors have a secure understanding of how to undertake their roles effectively.
- Some aspects of the curriculum are at an early stage of development. Teachers, and some leaders, do not have the information they need to teach some subjects well. Leaders should ensure that all subjects have clear and cohesive curriculum plans to guide teachers' work.

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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. 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 the school to be good on 9–10 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 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	117428
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10197319
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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair/Chair of trust/Chair of governing body	Teresa Wynne
Headteacher	Sarah Chaloner
Website	www.holytrinity.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9 – 10 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School has a designated religious character of Church of England. Its most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) took place on 31 March 2016.
- The school uses no alternative provision for pupils on its roll.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school. We met with the headteacher and other leaders. We spoke with a representative of the local authority and with governors. We were unable to meet with a representative of the diocese during the inspection.
- We reviewed minutes of meetings of the governing body, reports from the school's improvement partner and the school's information about attendance, exclusions and the reasons for pupils joining and leaving the school during the academic year. We considered the 14 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 5

free-text comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's surveys of the views of staff or pupils.

- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics and humanities. For these, we spoke with curriculum leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, and with pupils. We visited lessons and reviewed pupils' work. We also met with curriculum leaders for art, PE, relationships and sex education and PSHE, to discuss provision in those subject areas.
- We reviewed the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and safeguarding records. We spoke with leaders, governors, pupils and staff about the processes in school for keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Nutbeam

Ofsted Inspector

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