

# Inspection of Herne Church of England Infant and Nursery School

Palmer Close, Herne, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7AH

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive at this school. They are extremely happy to arrive in the morning. At the beginning of each day, pupils tell their teachers how they are feeling. Pupils who need extra support with their well-being visit 'The Nest', where they can arrange to see the 'well-being Womble' who helps them with building their confidence and self-esteem. Staff make sure that every child is very well cared for.

Teachers inspire pupils to reach high expectations. Staff know their pupils extremely well. These strong relationships mean that the school is often described as 'like a family' by parents, pupils and staff.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons, at lunch and playtime is exemplary. They play with each other harmoniously and develop a strong sense of self control. Children in early years learn the school's routines and teachers' expectations very quickly. Together with their teachers, pupils decide what their own class rules should be. Everyone feels included. Staff, parents and pupils say that there is no bullying in the school and that any unkindness is dealt with quickly.

The school's Christian ethos threads through the school day. Pupils are taught about the school's values and the importance of caring for one another. Pupils feel safe in school.

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

Leaders and governors provide an excellent education. The executive headteacher and head of school lead with a passion for making pupils' experiences as positive and fruitful as they can be. Staff promote the school's values of forgiveness, trust, love, respect and honesty with dedication. Leaders ensure that these values underpin all the decisions that they make.

Leaders have designed a very ambitious curriculum. They have thought incredibly carefully about what pupils should learn in every subject and when they should learn it. Pupils achieve very high standards, particularly in mathematics and reading, by the time they leave Year 2.

Teachers explain knowledge to pupils really effectively. In early years, teachers enthuse and excite children about their learning, so children get off to a flying start. In the Nursery Year, children settle very quickly. Staff provide pupils with high-quality care and challenging activities within a highly stimulating environment. In all year groups, teachers deepen pupils' understanding and enrich their vocabulary.

Knowledgeable teaching assistants support pupils very effectively. Pupils are curious and determined learners. They readily embrace teachers' skilfully thought-through activities. Teachers keep a close eye on how well pupils learn. Staff address any barriers pupils experience in their learning extremely well.

Early reading is a priority. Children regularly hear stories, songs and rhymes in early years. They begin to learn phonics as soon as they start in Reception Year. Expert teachers teach phonics in a well-structured and systematic way. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning to read. Staff support weaker readers so that they catch-up quickly. Older children choose the stories the whole class will read by voting for the one that grabs their interest the most. This is an example of pupils' developing understanding of what democracy means.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve exceptionally well. Staff identify pupils' needs quickly and help pupils who find it difficult to concentrate with purpose-built timetables and sensitive care. Some pupils benefit from using the school's sensory room where their anxieties reduce. This is often used as a stepping-stone to introduce pupils with SEND to learning with others.

Taking on positions of responsibility is part of daily school life for pupils. They become 'play leaders' so that they can help other pupils at playtime. One Year 1 pupil explained: 'We look out for children who are lonely, because that's not right.' Others join the 'eco club' where they make decisions about how their school community can improve the environment.

Pupils flourish due to the rich opportunities leaders make available to them. For example, pupils explained that the recent 'go green week' helped them to understand the effects of plastic on the environment. Pupils also learn important life skills as part of their curriculum. With their teachers, pupils use public transport to travel to the local swimming pool to learn how to swim. Teachers plan regular classroom conversations about spirituality. This encourages pupils to express their personal opinions and discuss their beliefs.

Staff are emphatic about how much they enjoy working in the school. They feel very well supported by leaders and appreciative of leaders' attention to their well-being and training. Leaders frequently ask parents for their opinions. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and feel well informed about their children's learning. Leaders use their expertise to contribute to education within the diocese of Canterbury and beyond.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide staff with high-quality training in safeguarding. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They are vigilant in spotting signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report concerns they may have about pupils and are knowledgeable about the latest government guidance on safeguarding. Leaders make sure that the correct checks are made when staff are employed by the school. Governors check that this is happening. Leaders work very well with external agencies and ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive specialist support quickly if they need it.

## 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 Ofsted 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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118710
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199342
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	306
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Martyn Cassell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Thomas-Friend (executive headteacher), Lucy St John (head of school)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.herne-infant.kent.sch.uk/">www.herne-infant.kent.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 January 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- In September 2016, the local authority arranged for Herne Church of England Infant and Nursery School to provide leadership support for St Alphege Church of England Infant School. This involved appointing the headteacher of Herne Church of England Infant and Nursery School as the executive headteacher of St Alphege.
- The school is a member of the Diocese of Canterbury and has a Christian character.
- The school's previous section 48 inspection of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England school took place on 22 March 2017. The next section 48 inspection is expected in 2022.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, governors, a local authority representative and a representative from the Diocese of Canterbury.
- On the first day of the inspection, inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, religious education and geography. This meant that in each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 36 staff who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of 107 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and 85 parents who provided free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the views of 30 pupils who responded to Ofsted's confidential pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

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