

Inspection of Ashton St Peter's VA C of E School

Leighton Court, Ashton St Peter's Primary School, Leighton Court, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 1EW

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Ashton St Peter's VA C of E school is a warm, caring community where everyone is welcome. Pupils are kind and respectful of each other's differences. Bullying and hurtful language are not tolerated. On the very rare occasions pupils fall out, they trust adults to help them resolve any issues.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. From Reception Year to Year 6, they listen carefully to teachers and are enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils want to do well. Outside, on the playground, pupils play nicely with each other. Younger children take turns and share the equipment. Pupil 'prefects' check whether others are lonely and need a friend. If pupils are worried, they know that adults will take care of them.

A range of trips and experiences help bring the school's curriculum to life. For instance, pupils talked excitedly about the local zoo and local museum, and how these link to their science and history lessons. School clubs, such as crochet club, are well attended.

The school's 'values education' and religious ethos are an important part of school life. Pupils learn about ideas such as 'love' and 'thankfulness'. Pupils' caring attitudes spread much wider than the classroom. The school council, for instance, raises money for a range of charities and food banks. Pupils act as 'rangers' to look after the school garden and environment.

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

Since arriving at the school, the headteacher and his team have focused sharply on improving the school's curriculum. Leaders reviewed how the different subjects were taught to pupils. Curriculum plans have been reorganised and adapted.

In each subject area, leaders consider carefully what is important for pupils to know. Starting in early years, leaders arrange knowledge clearly so that pupils build on their previous learning. In art, for example, Year 6 pupils build on their previous drawing knowledge, and can use a number of complex shading techniques to represent different textures.

Teachers know their subjects well. They pick activities that are engaging and help pupils learn. In Reception Year, for instance, adults support children to learn their number facts so that they are ready for mathematics in Year 1. The Reception Year curriculum is a strong foundation for future learning.

Teachers regularly check on what pupils know. Many subjects, like mathematics, have helpful assessment that supports teachers to spot gaps in pupils' understanding. Pupils are then given support to catch up. In a small number of subjects, however, some assessment is not linked to the key knowledge that pupils

have been taught. It does not give teachers a clear picture of what pupils have learned.

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Leaders reviewed and changed the way reading was taught to pupils. An effective phonics programme helps pupils to build their reading knowledge step by step. Pupils learn to become confident readers. Well-trained staff support pupils who find reading tricky to catch up so that they are reading as fluently as their classmates. Across the school, pupils and staff love reading. Teachers regularly read and share books with their class. Pupils access a range of high-quality fiction and non-fiction texts that show them a world beyond their usual experiences.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Their needs are identified accurately and shared with teachers. Teachers use 'pupil passports' to make relevant adaptations to their lessons so that pupils with SEND make the same progress as their peers. If pupils with SEND fall behind with their learning, staff help them so that they are not behind for long.

The school's values are reflected by the manner in which staff look after all pupils, including those who may be vulnerable. Staff understand pupils' backgrounds and needs in detail, particularly those of the most disadvantaged pupils. There is high-quality emotional support for all pupils. Consequently, pupils feel valued and looked after.

Across the school, pupils have the same high expectations of behaviour as staff. Pupils expect everyone to behave well. They could describe to inspectors what happens if pupils misbehave. Very few, however, remember incidents when their learning was disrupted. Pupils behave exceptionally well.

A well-sequenced personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum supports pupils to learn about the wider world. Leaders work closely with parents and the diocese to ensure that PSHE education is balanced carefully with the school's religious ethos and values. For instance, pupils learn about relationships and different families in an age-appropriate way.

Governors worked closely with the local authority to ensure that leaders had the right support and challenge to improve the curriculum. Governors support leaders to keep a close eye on the staff's well-being and workload. Leaders ensure that staff have the right training, support and time to continue to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have been trained well to spot if a pupil is at risk of harm. There is an established culture of reporting any concern about a child, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team. Procedures for reporting concerns are clear.

Leaders maintain thorough safeguarding records. The records show appropriate and timely responses to concerns about pupils. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the needs of their pupils, including the most vulnerable. They work closely with a range of external agencies to help pupils get the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, assessment is not closely linked to the knowledge that has been taught. This means that, in these subjects, teachers are not as clear about what pupils have learned. Leaders must ensure that all assessment matches the knowledge that is in the curriculum plans.

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

Unique reference number	109703
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10200533
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ruth Banton
Headteacher	David Bower
Website	www.ashtonstpeters.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2018

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection in 2018.
- The school manages a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also considered curriculum plans and a range of pupils' work from geography, art and PSHE education.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed safeguarding processes and procedures. Inspectors spoke to pupils, governors and staff about safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the leader of early years and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors considered the 33 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 22 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 19 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 62 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynne Williams	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marc White	Her Majesty's Inspector

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