

Inspection of Hazlemere Church of England Combined School

Amersham Road, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP15 7PZ

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a purposeful buzz of learning around most of the school. Pupils are keen to be here and to learn. They are courteous, listening carefully to teachers and to each other. They know that staff have high expectations for their work and behaviour, and they take pride in meeting these expectations. They are keen to discuss their work, explain their learning and show their reward stickers.

Leaders and staff have high ambitions for all pupils. They want them to be safe and happy, and to do well. This ambition is realised overall. However, in the Nursery and Reception classes, although children have a lovely time, learning is less successfully managed than in the rest of the school.

Pupils are very proud of their school values, especially respect, kindness and responsibility. They explain how everyone in the school tries to demonstrate the values, particularly kindness. They understand what bullying is and say that it is rare because grown-ups sort out any unkind behaviour quickly.

Reading is celebrated wherever you go. Pupils cherish the beautiful books around the school. They love the stories staff read to them and are excited that they learn to read increasingly complex texts themselves.

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

Leaders have overhauled the school's curriculum. This work is still in progress for some subjects, but most of the curriculum is ambitious and well designed. Where it is, staff have a sound understanding of the knowledge that pupils need to learn. Teachers make thoughtful use of resources to help them deliver well-sequenced learning. However, some subjects are not yet fully thought through. Here, the thinking around the knowledge that pupils need to learn is not clear enough. This hampers pupils' success.

In early years, there is more work to do. Difficulties with staffing led leaders to prioritise reading and mathematics, both of which are planned and delivered well. However, early years practitioners do not have a good enough knowledge of the characteristics of effective learning. They do not make the most of learning opportunities to develop children's vocabulary, communication and language skills.

Where staff have a clear understanding of what the curriculum is aiming to achieve, they use ongoing assessment effectively. They identify what pupils know and what they need to learn next. They use this information well to plan the next steps of learning. This approach has helped them to make up gaps in pupils' knowledge that have come about following disruption during the pandemic. This has been particularly successful in reading and mathematics. Pupils who need it have been given extra help to catch up. This work has been effective.

However, end-of-topic assessments are often vague and lack precision in terms of what staff are trying to find out. Leaders do not routinely use the information to help them understand how successful the learning has been. They do not know what knowledge needs to be revisited.

The focus on reading is clear throughout the school. Books are everywhere, and pupils read and are read to regularly. Leaders have adopted a new phonics programme and have given all staff time and training to be confident to use it. Phonics sessions are effective, and pupils relish their early reading lessons. Reading books match the sounds that pupils know. Pupils become confident readers with a real love of reading.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is highly knowledgeable. She ensures that all staff understand pupils' specific needs, commissioning specialist training as required. Consequently, staff adapt learning effectively for pupils with SEND. The SENCo monitors provision closely, supporting and checking that pupils are fully included in the life of the whole school.

Leaders are keen to restart the enrichment opportunities that paused during the pandemic and have already booked exciting trips. In school, they have ensured that pupils continue to develop their learning about the world. For example, pupils are supported well to be active citizens and take part in public life, including the life of the church.

Leaders are committed to promoting equality, but there is some tentativeness about discussing different family types and relationships, including same-sex relationships. Some older pupils were unsure of vocabulary they could use. This will limit their ability to understand the wider world.

Leaders and governors are systematically improving the school, while looking out for the well-being of all involved. They work thoughtfully to involve parents and carers, the vast majority of whom are extremely positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff have a secure understanding of possible risks to pupils, signs to be alert to, and what to do if staff identify any worry. Leaders take prompt and effective action when concerns are raised. This action helps to secure support for pupils and their families.

Together, staff and leaders monitor pupils sensitively. They teach pupils how to identify risks themselves, so they are more able to keep themselves safe. Leaders have focused on keeping safe online, as they are concerned that, when at home, some pupils access online games designed for older players.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There has been considerable turbulence in staffing in early years. Some practitioners do not have strong enough knowledge of the characteristics of effective learning. Consequently, children's vocabulary, communication and language skills are not developed effectively. Leaders need to ensure that staff are supported to develop their understanding and that the quality of provision is monitored, so that all children learn well.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to complete the process of reviewing the curriculum in all subjects within their identified timescale. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- There is lack of precision in how summative assessment is used. Too much is left to individual class teachers. Leaders at all levels need to make sure that information about what pupils know and what they still need to secure systematically informs evaluations and planning for improvement.
- Leaders are committed to promoting equality, but there is some tentativeness about discussing different family types and relationships. Leaders should ensure that all adults are confident and supported so that pupils are able to confidently show respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.

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	110462
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10211704
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Drew Wotherspoon
Headteacher	Baljit Bhabra
Website	www.hazlemerschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been many staff changes, including two new assistant headteachers. There is also a new chair of the governing body.
- At the point of inspection, there was no early years lead in post. One has been appointed to start shortly. There were temporary supply teachers working in this provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Oxford. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in May 2017.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.
- An externally registered company provides a breakfast club and after-school club on the school site.

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 had 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 met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers and the SENCo. They also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. A video call was held with school improvement advisers from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school by speaking with leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met the members of the safeguarding team to examine their knowledge, records and actions. During these meetings, records were scrutinised, including those related to safer recruitment of staff. Case files were sampled to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents by talking to some at the beginning of the school day and the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and the accompanying free-text comments. They considered staff views by talking to them in groups and through the online staff questionnaire. They spoke to pupils formally and informally, in groups and around the school.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Simon Francis

Ofsted Inspector

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