

Inspection of Hever Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hever, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NH

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly school. They especially love the spacious outdoor areas where they can play games, plant vegetables, climb on equipment or sit and draw with their friends in the woodland area.

There are warm professional relationships between pupils and staff. Adults know pupils well and have high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils work quietly in lessons and move around the school very sensibly. Any minor disruption is quickly acted on by adults, as is any bullying. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Pupils are courteous and polite to each other and welcoming to visitors. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as coding club and science club. Sports, including judo and hockey, are very popular. In particular, pupils enjoy singing as part of their daily assemblies.

Teachers want the best for pupils and help them to succeed, especially in English and mathematics. However, pupils' knowledge in some other subjects is underdeveloped. This is because leaders have not considered well enough what pupils should know and remember in some subjects.

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

Leaders recognise that the curriculum has not been effective enough in the past. Since the last inspection, they have focused primarily on improving pupils' learning in reading and mathematics.

Staff prioritise the teaching of reading. Pupils learn phonics using a well-organised programme. Most pupils learn to read accurately and fluently so that they are ready for learning in key stage 2. Where the pandemic has hindered learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2, extra phonics sessions are helping them to catch up. Pupils benefit from daily practice, reading books that are typically well matched to the sounds they are learning in lessons. Occasionally, some adults do not spot quickly enough when children in the early years try to guess new words rather than use their phonics understanding. Leaders' plans to ensure reading is taught consistently are well thought through.

In mathematics, well-trained staff have high expectations of pupils' achievements. Teachers plan learning which builds up pupils' understanding right from the start of Reception Year. Adults check for gaps in understanding and make sure that pupils know what they should before moving on to harder work. Pupils appreciate the time they get to revisit and consolidate their learning. Consequently, pupils achieve well in mathematics. A similar approach to teaching in subjects such as science and computing helps pupils achieve and learn effectively in these subjects too.

However, pupils' learning is underdeveloped in several other subjects. This includes history, geography, art, modern foreign languages and design technology. In these

subjects, leaders have not thought carefully enough about what pupils should know and remember. Teachers are not well-enough trained in what to teach or how to teach it. Sometimes, the activities they choose do not help pupils learn or embed new knowledge. As a result, pupils' knowledge is not as secure as it should be and consequently, they are not prepared well enough for secondary school. Likewise, the curriculum in the early years is not effective enough to ensure that each child learns the new knowledge and skills they need. In particular, there are not enough opportunities for children to develop their communication and language skills through talking to adults as they learn.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well cared for. Leaders identify pupils' needs well and work hard to get the extra help they need. In English and mathematics, staff adapt tasks and planning for these pupils appropriately. However, this is not always the case in other subjects.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and governors. Governors understand their roles well and are now more robust in holding leaders to account. However, the school's improvement has not been quick enough. Although some plans have been hampered by staffing changes and the pandemic, leaders have not focused sharply enough or urgently enough on some necessary improvements. As a result, pupils underachieve in too many subjects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding. They understand the potential risks pupils face and record any concerns promptly. Leaders liaise well with external partners to help keep pupils safe. Recording and reviewing processes have been revamped to ensure that safeguarding records include full details of any actions taken to support pupils. The single central record of staff's recruitment checks is kept up to date.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe in the local community and when online. They know that adults will help them if they have any worries. Extra help with mental health is available should pupils need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in several subjects and in the early years is not effective enough. Leaders have not chosen the important knowledge to be learned in each subject. They have not made clear the logical order that knowledge should be taught so that pupils gain knowledge over time. Curriculum planning and sequencing should be improved so that pupils' knowledge builds over time.
- Staff are not well-enough trained in how to teach some subjects, including for pupils with SEND. As a result, choices of what to teach are often based on the

activity itself rather than the intended development of knowledge. Leaders should ensure that staff receive training so that they can choose activities based on what they know pupils need to learn.

- In some subjects, teachers do not consistently check pupils' knowledge and understanding before moving on to harder work. As a result, pupils' learning is not secure enough. Teachers need to consider how best to assess pupils' learning in these subjects so that pupils know more and remember more of the curriculum.
- Leaders have not focused sharply enough on making some necessary improvements. Leaders and governors need to ensure that they focus sharply on the areas most in need of improvement. They should ensure that the effectiveness of changes they make are monitored and adapted so that the school improves quickly.

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	118718
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10203132
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	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Cooke and Bridgette Harris (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Joanna Stratton
Website	www.hever.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been changes to the leadership structure since the previous inspection. The senior leadership team is now made up of the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. Subject leadership has also been reorganised and consequently, many staff are new to their subject leadership role.
- The school currently uses no providers of alternative provision.
- A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was carried out in June 2017, when the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England School were judged 'good'.
- The school runs an afterschool provision called 'Wellyboots'.

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 these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited a sample of reading, mathematics and history lessons.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at a wider selection of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors discussed safeguarding with leaders, governors, staff and pupils. They reviewed the school's policies and procedures used to keep children safe, including checking the single central record of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gain their views of the school. They took account of the responses to the online survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the inspection. They observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and lunchtimes and as they moved around the school. Inspectors also took account of the responses to the online pupil survey.
- The lead inspector held meetings with school leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the dioceses. A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Laura James

Her Majesty's Inspector

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