

Inspection of Puller Memorial, Church of England, Voluntary Aided Primary School

High Cross, Ware, Hertfordshire SG11 1AZ

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' love coming to school at Puller Memorial. They are treated with kindness and are carefully nurtured. Everyone is made to feel that they are a very valued part of the school.

Pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects and read confidently, regularly and widely. They really value specialist teaching, such as that which they receive in art. Pupils get some wider curriculum experiences, but they would value more clubs and school teams.

Leaders have established strong relationships with families. This helps staff to adapt pupils' school experience to carefully meet their needs. For example, leaders have provided tailored support to build the confidence of pupils suffering from anxiety to return to school following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pupils treat each other with respect. They include each other in their games at breaktime and lunchtime. Everyone has someone to play with. If pupils do ever have a worry, they know that teachers will listen and help.

Pupils understand and follow the school rules and routines. They are keen to learn. Pupils know that teachers have high expectations of them, and at the same time will support them.

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

Leaders have responded to the concerns raised in the previous inspection report. They have put in place high-quality curriculum plans. These are tailored to provide the right level of challenge for different pupils. Leaders have ensured that a programme of training is in place so staff have the subject-specific skills they need to teach the curriculum. This has included development of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) outdoor area, so pupils have a much richer range of learning activities. This training has also ensured that staff are skilful in teaching most subjects, such as reading, mathematics, science and art. In some subjects, staff are less skilled as full training has not yet been given. Teaching and assessment of what pupils know are not as strong in these subjects. This includes the precision of assessment in Reception, where pupils spend longer than they need to on some activities which do not help them to progress well.

Pupils now have a secure foundation for learning to read. Leaders have trained staff in a new approach to phonics and have ensured they have the appropriate expertise. Pupils can decode words effectively, and adults expertly support pupils with any misconceptions. Pupils quickly build their confidence with reading as books are well matched to what they can decode. Those pupils who take longer to secure their phonics have highly tailored support through the 'fresh start programme'. This

ensures they catch up. Pupils are reading with confidence by the time they reach key stage 2.

Leaders promote a love of reading from the start. Pupils now read a wider variety of genres than in the past. Pupils in key stage 2 enjoy reading a range of books from the '100 high-quality texts'. Pupils write reviews about these books and teachers monitor closely what they have read. Pupils have a well-organised library and reading corners in every classroom. These are well used to ensure each child has a high-quality text to read. Pupils' writing is developed effectively, but handwriting is not yet developed to a consistently high standard.

Pupils' personal development is supported well through well-structured programmes of personal social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE). These programmes are tailored to need. For example, mental health and anxiety have been prioritised following pupils' return to school after the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils take part in the 'storm break' programme, which equips them with a range of strategies for coping with mental health difficulties.

Pupils learn about tolerance, difference and acceptance in an age-appropriate way. For example, in the EYFS they learn about raindrop characters and how one gets treated differently when no one will speak to him. In Year 6, pupils learn about more complex scenarios such as how to make a refugee feel welcome. As a result, pupils are accepting of difference and treat each other in line with the school's Christian values.

Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly as a result of leaders' well-embedded restorative approach. Staff identify and support the needs of pupils and treat behaviour as a form of communication. Incidences of poor behaviour are extremely rare.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is carefully assessed and tailored to need. Teachers use recommended SEND strategies well and, as a result, pupils with SEND are fully engaged with their learning.

There are some wider curriculum opportunities, such as residential and other trips. However, these are relatively few in number and do not fully develop pupils' talents and interests.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The single central record includes all the necessary pre-employment checks on staff. Leaders have ensured there is a safeguarding link governor in place who monitors the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Leaders have checked that all staff have had appropriate training and receive regular updates, as safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility.

Staff are aware of the designated safeguarding lead and how to identify and report concerns. Engagement with families is a strength of the school. This has helped to ensure there is a culture where pupils feel that they always have someone they can talk to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have clear curriculum plans in place, but training to equip staff with the necessary expertise to teach these and assess pupils' progress is at different stages of development. As a result, pupils receive higher-quality subject-specific teaching and assessment in subjects where training has been implemented for staff. Leaders need to ensure that their planned programmes for training are delivered so staff have the necessary subject expertise for all of the subjects that they deliver. This includes the continued development of writing and use of assessment in EYFS.
- Pupils get some wider opportunities such as trips, visits and clubs, but these are not wide-ranging. As a result, pupils do not get as many opportunities to develop their talents and interests as they should. Leaders need to ensure that more opportunities for enrichment are provided so that pupils can develop their talents and interests fully.

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	117453
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10212206
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	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Victoria Clayden Smith
Headteacher	Sarah Stevens
Website	http://www.alburyandpullerschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2020 to lead the federation with Albury Primary School. The schools formally federated in February 2021.
- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- One pupil attends a registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also visited some music, art and computing lessons.

- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, as well as governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents on the school playground.
- Inspectors explored the school's safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 31 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 20 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 17 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and the 26 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kathryn Herlock

Ofsted Inspector

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