

Inspection of Highfield Church of England Primary School

Hawthorn Road, Highfield, Southampton, Hampshire SO17 1PX

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 July 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

At the very heart of Highfield Church of England Primary School are the values of love, serve and trust. These values are instilled in children from the very start of their school journey in Reception. Threaded through every part of the school is the Christian ethos.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are encouraged to make friends. They do so readily and get on well together. They share their thoughts, take time to hear the views of their friends and think about others before themselves. Positive relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils are known as individuals. Their different needs are identified, and staff support pupils well so that each of them makes good progress. Pupils say that everyone is included.

High expectations and clear routines are important and are regularly reinforced by staff. This leads to a calm, purposeful learning environment. As a result, pupils behave consistently well across the school and do well in class.

A committed and active school council enables pupils to have a voice about what they want to change in the school. They use their collective voice wisely to influence decision-making about improvements to many aspects of the school.

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

Following the last inspection in January 2022, the acting headteacher and her team began to tackle the weaknesses that had been identified. They did so rapidly while continuing to strengthen other parts of the school's work. Leaders have worked hard to address the workload and well-being issues that staff previously faced. As a result, staff now feel invigorated and there is a sense of togetherness. The support of governors, the local authority, diocese and Aspire Community Trust has been invaluable.

An exciting, engaging curriculum in Reception helps to lay the foundations and provides pupils with everything they need so that they are ready for key stage 1 and beyond. A joy of learning is instilled in children from the very beginning. They soak up what they learn, play with each other and interact positively with peers and adults. Children are taught to be curious and independent. They impressively sustain concentration and never give up when things are difficult.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum that leaders have carefully thought through. The key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and develop have been planned and sequenced well from Reception through to Year 6.

Some subjects are taught more consistently than others. This is because teachers' subject knowledge in a small number of subjects is not as well developed, and teachers are not as confident about the best approaches to use to teach these

subjects. Importantly, leaders recognise the need for a more targeted approach to staff professional development. Additionally, they know that monitoring the curriculum and other aspects of the school's work need to be more systematic so that they help to focus their actions more precisely.

Reading is at the heart of the school and pupils love reading. There are plenty of opportunities for them to read. They make use of the well-stocked library and enjoy the quiet, calm space. Parents are actively involved in reading to pupils at home. The teaching of phonics is prioritised from the very start of Reception and a systematic approach is followed. This means that phonics is taught consistently well. The books pupils read match the sounds that they are learning, and this helps them to feel successful. Those pupils who struggle receive additional help. As a result, they catch up quickly.

Pupils have access to a rich, diverse and exciting range of opportunities that extend well beyond the classroom. These opportunities enrich pupils' experience at school, developing their character and resilience. Pupils are taught about British values and have a mature understanding of the rule of law and democracy, shown by their behaviours and actions towards each other. They are taught about the importance of being an active citizen, through litter picking in the local community and taking care of the local environment.

Pupils are not just tolerant of each other and their differences, they embrace the differences they see around them and have a strong understanding of the contribution they can make to the world in which they live. They are taught that they have a right to have a voice and are encouraged to express their views, either in class, through the worry boxes or to any adult. One pupil said, 'We feel safe and comfortable here; we never worry about speaking up'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Since the last inspection, leaders have transformed the school's safeguarding practices. Leaders and staff are now trained well in all areas of safeguarding. Policies are now clearer, and staff understand and follow them consistently. Staff are alert to the different risks facing their pupils and know what to do when they have concerns. Leaders work well with other partners to ensure that pupils and their families get timely support when they need it. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They know what to do if they are worried about something and trust that adults will help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of subjects are not implemented as well as others. This is because teachers' subject knowledge in these subjects is not as developed as it is

in other subjects. Teachers also lack an understanding of the most effective approaches to teach these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is consistently well implemented in all subjects.

- There is not a strategically formulated plan to further develop staff subject knowledge across subjects or to develop leadership at all levels. As a result, improvements in these areas have been slower than in other areas. Leaders need to ensure that all leaders and staff receive appropriate professional development to have maximum impact.
- Leaders' monitoring and evaluation are not strong enough. This means that the actions they take are not focused precisely enough on what it is that needs to improve. Leaders need to ensure that they know how and when different aspects of the school's work, including the implementation of the curriculum, will be monitored, so that this monitoring can routinely inform the actions they take.

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

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| Unique reference number | 116395 |
| Local authority | Southampton |
| Inspection number | 10243439 |
| 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 | 314 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Helen Thompson |
| Headteacher | Rosie Savill (acting headteacher) |
| Website | www.highfieldceprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 26 and 27 January 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is currently led by the deputy headteacher, who took up the post of acting headteacher shortly after the last inspection in January 2022.
- A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has been appointed and is part of the school's senior leadership team.
- The infant and junior departments of the school are on separate sites.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Winchester.
- The school's last s48 inspection took place on 2 July 2018.
- The school is an associate member of the Aspire Community Trust. The school works closely with the other schools in this trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.
- Inspectors met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, to discuss governance.
- The lead inspector held discussions with a representative of the Diocese of Winchester, a representative of the local authority and the chair of the Aspire Community Trust to discuss the support they had provided to the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and computing. 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 met with the early years leader to discuss the early years provision. The lead inspector visited the early years provision as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors met with the SENCo to discuss the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside during social times and during assembly. They also observed pupils walking between the two school sites.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and speaking to staff, pupils and governors.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement documentation and governing body minutes.

Inspection team

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|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Shaun Jarvis, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Sarah Brinkley | Ofsted Inspector |
| Paul Bateman | Ofsted Inspector |
| Clare Wilkins | Ofsted Inspector |

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