

Inspection of Ardeley St Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane, Ardeley, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 7AJ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their school because they learn well, play happily and feel safe. Pupils know that their teachers care about them. Pupils' welfare is at the forefront of every adult's mind. Pupils say there is always an adult to help them if they ever have a concern.

Pupils have high expectations of their own and others' behaviour. This is because their teachers have helped instil important values such as respect, kindness and tolerance. Bullying almost never happens. Should it occur, pupils know staff will deal with it immediately.

Pupils are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. They gain knowledge quickly because their teachers know how to structure learning clearly. Pupils participate in a rich variety of visits and extra-curricular activities which help reinforce what they learn in school. They explore fine art, learn about Greek mythology, care for farm animals and read about people who are different from them. These experiences help them to develop a wider understanding of the world around them. As a result of this, pupils become responsible, compassionate and open-minded citizens. Parents are very happy with the quality of education their children receive.

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

Leaders have constructed a broad and ambitious curriculum in line with their vision to equip pupils with the knowledge they need for the future. Teachers know how to ensure knowledge builds on what pupils have learned before. Staff are skilled at breaking learning down into smaller steps. This ensures that pupils understand new knowledge and ideas clearly. Teachers' regular revisiting of previous learning enables pupils to remember important knowledge. Pupils like this. Teachers regularly pick up on pupils' mistakes, misconceptions and gaps in knowledge. They sensitively help pupils to improve their learning. At times, in some areas of the curriculum, pupils are not given the opportunity to apply their knowledge independently. This prevents pupils from learning to use their knowledge in new and novel contexts.

Leaders have made the teaching of reading a priority. Teachers adopt consistent approaches so that pupils learn to read quickly. Children in Reception recognise many new sounds and blend and read familiar words. Older children swiftly become fluent readers because they regularly practise sounds they have already learned. Pupils read books which are closely aligned with their reading level. Pupils say this helps them to read well. Pupils strive to move on to the next level of reading book because they enjoy reading so much. Leaders regularly check how well pupils are reading. Any pupils that need additional help receive this promptly.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive good quality provision. Leaders successfully enlist help from outside agencies to ensure pupils with SEND gain the precise support they need. Leaders

provide training so that teachers know how best to support pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt the curriculum accordingly so that pupils with SEND learn well.

Children in Reception build language well. They quickly begin to develop their understanding of the world. This is because teachers present new knowledge very clearly. They provide children with many activities so that they can explore what they have learned further. This helps them to remember knowledge better.

Pupils' behaviour is positive in lessons and around the school. Pupils are respectful to each other, their teachers and visitors. This is because leaders have created a caring ethos. At the heart of this is the development of important social attitudes toward themselves and others. As a result, pupils demonstrate empathy for those that need help. They look out for each other. They welcome those that are different from them. Pupils attend well because they do not want to miss school.

Pupils understand the importance of democracy. They have their own opportunities to vote for school counsellors to represent their views about the school. The personal, social and health education curriculum provides pupils with a firm understanding of how to ensure positive healthy relationships as they mature.

Teachers appreciate the support they have received from leaders. This has helped equip teachers with strong subject knowledge. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school contexts and strengths within the realms of curriculum. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. However, some reporting systems in school are not always rigorous enough to provide precise information about how well staff are implementing some school policies. Leaders have begun to address this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

As a result of regular training, all staff know how to identify pupils who may be at risk and in need of help. Staff communicate their concerns immediately to leaders. Leaders respond rapidly and provide the support pupils need. Leaders make timely and appropriate referrals to outside agencies. Governors regularly check how safe pupils feel.

Pupils have a thorough awareness of the potential risks of being online and how to keep safe outside of school. Leaders carry out necessary checks on those new to school. They make sure all staff are safe to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' evaluation of a small number of areas of school life, such as behaviour and attendance, is not as rigorous as it might be. As a result of this, leaders do

not precisely know how well some school policies are working or if their actions are having the impact they intended. Leaders must continue their development of quality assurance systems so that they have a more accurate picture of how the school is performing.

- In some areas of the curriculum, some teachers do not ensure pupils have regular opportunities to apply their knowledge independently as intended. As a result of this, pupils do not gain more complex knowledge as well as they might. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers implement the planned curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to build more complex knowledge and apply this without adult support.

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.

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	117420
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10226855
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	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Aimee Lauezzari
Headteacher	Barbara Young
Website	www.ardeley.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	4 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently has nursery provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 met with the chair of the governing body, members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography and history. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and a review of any curriculum documentation.

- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding lead. They scrutinised safeguarding records and spoke with pupils and with staff. Inspectors observed pupils during breaktime and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. Inspectors met with parents when they came to pick up their children. There were 18 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered 18 free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Adam Cooke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rod Warsap

Ofsted Inspector

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