

Inspection of a good school: Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet School

Church Lane, Ufton Nervet, Reading, Berkshire RG7 4HH

Inspection date: 12 October 2022

Outcome

Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are hungry to learn at this caring and friendly village school. Leaders make the best of its rural setting, using the local environment, community and village church as rich resources for learning. Pupils love regularly visiting Ufton Court to learn local history and forest skills. Parents and carers delight in their children coming home, full of enthusiasm about what they are learning. All parents who responded to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, would recommend this school with a 'family feel'.

The school vision, 'dream, believe, challenge, achieve', is at the heart of school life. It encourages pupils to be the best they can be. Pupils have carefully considered who inspires them to 'dream big', using the most inspiring to name the school's houses. The headteacher is ambitious for the school and all pupils who attend.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Teachers deal with any minor disruptions swiftly. Leaders have made sure that pupils have strategies just in case behaviour goes wrong. Pupils know to tell someone to 'stop', 'walk' away to keep themselves safe, and 'talk' to an adult to get help. Pupils say that adults are good listeners. They feel safe at school and bullying is rare.

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

Pupils study a broad and engaging curriculum. They enjoy what they study, recalling facts with enthusiasm. Leaders are improving the curriculum further. In some subjects, they have identified all the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to learn. Teachers check that pupils have learned this through carefully crafted assessment questions. However, in a few foundation subjects, leaders have not identified some of the key knowledge that pupils should learn precisely enough. This leads to some element of teacher choice in what to teach and makes it hard for teachers to build on previous learning. Teachers are not sure, at times, what the most important knowledge is that pupils need to learn.

The teaching of reading is a priority. Staff teach the recently introduced phonics programme well. They carefully check that pupils remember the taught sounds. Reading books match the sounds pupils learn. In Reception, children love listening to stories, confidently sharing their thoughts with others. Older pupils look forward to story time or visiting the school library. Reading non-fiction books is a popular pastime. At lunchtime, older pupils love sharing stories, selected from the outside 'book barrow', with their younger 'buddies'. Staff give extra support to pupils who struggle to learn to read. Pupils become confident readers, ready to start the next step in their educational career.

In mathematics, leaders have clearly identified what pupils should learn. Mathematical knowledge builds effectively over time. Teachers know exactly what they need to teach, and deliver new content well. They check carefully what pupils know and remember. Teachers make sure that pupils learn from any mistakes they make. In the early years, children practise their mathematical skills well. They are beginning to confidently use numbers in different contexts.

Pupils appreciate the leadership opportunities on offer to them and take them seriously. School councillors, for example, represent pupils' voices. They are busy organising the school disco, a much-loved pre-pandemic school event. Leaders help pupils to know how to look after their well-being. They provide pupils with different strategies such as guided meditation and finger knitting. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy in body and mind.

There have been many changes in leadership since the previous inspection, and this has brought some challenges for staff. Currently, morale among staff is high. Staff say that the headteacher is supportive and takes effective action to reduce stress at key points. Teachers appreciate the time they are now given to get a better understanding of the impact of their subject curriculum on pupils' learning.

There are some inconsistencies in the school's work to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Whereas sometimes needs are accurately identified and met, this is not always the case. Sometimes, expectations of some pupils with SEND are not high enough. Leaders do not yet have an accurate understanding of how well all pupils with SEND are learning. Leaders are addressing this.

Governors use visits to the school to see curriculum development in action. This allows them to ask the right questions of leaders to identify what is working effectively and what could be better. They do this well, having an accurate view of the school's strengths and next steps.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. All staff know their role in keeping pupils safe. They are trained well to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Communication is strong in this small school. Staff know the pupils and their families very well. Staff understand what to do if they have any concerns. They are quick to notice any

changes in behaviour that may mean that a pupil is upset about something. Leaders promptly respond to any concerns that are raised. They take appropriate action.

Governors frequently check the school's systems for safeguarding work well.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking is not always precise enough around the key knowledge that all pupils must learn and remember from Reception to Year 6. This impacts upon how well pupils achieve the ambitious end points. Leaders need to ensure that they identify the precise content that pupils need to learn as they progress through the curriculum.
- Oversight of how well pupils with SEND are learning is not sharp enough. Sometimes, learning for pupils with SEND is not well enough matched to their current needs. This means that some pupils with SEND do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that there is a strong oversight of the effectiveness of the provision for pupils with SEND in the school, so the needs of these pupils are fully met.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2012.

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	110021
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10241755
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	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Shanon Kneeshaw
Headteacher	Melissa Whitaker
Website	www.sun.w-berks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been four headteachers since the previous inspection. The current headteacher joined the school in January 2022.
- The chair of governors took up her role in September 2022.
- The school currently makes use of one alternative provision.
- Sulhamstead and Ufton Nerve School is a voluntary aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxford. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, staff and pupils.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they discussed 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.

- The lead inspector heard some pupils read. She also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair, and spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated leader for safeguarding. The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks and records of concerns. They also spoke to staff, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, teachers and support staff to discuss the wider development of pupils' behaviour, well-being and workload.
- The inspectors considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View, along with their free-text comments. They also took into account the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils. An inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Clare Morgan

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022