

Inspection of Nash Mills Church of England Primary School

Belswains Lane, Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 9XB

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 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 are very happy to come to school. They arrive in the morning excited, ready to learn and try their best. Pupils achieve well in most subjects. Pupils are polite and kind towards each other. They demonstrate the school values of wisdom, hope, dignity, forgiveness and community.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs on offer, such as cooking, choir, drama and sports. They are proud to represent the school in competitions and cultural events. All pupils know that they will have the opportunity to participate in school activities and visits, especially the residential trip. This is because the school staff work hard to make sure everyone is included.

On the playground, older pupils make sure younger pupils have fun, organising games and activities for them. Bullying is very rare, and when it happens, pupils know that staff will deal with it promptly and sensitively. Pupils feel safe and know who they can talk to if they have a worry or concern.

Pupils understand the importance of working together positively. They quickly learn how to manage their own behaviour because staff help them to do this. Pupils learn about and respect others who are different to them.

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

Leaders are determined that every pupil will learn to read and have made this a priority. They have invested significantly in books and training for staff. Pupils in early years are taught new sounds, systematically building on those learned previously. Pupils who are falling behind and pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly and receive swift, targeted support. By the end of Year 1, most pupils have the phonic knowledge they need to be able to read at a standard appropriate for their age. Older pupils enjoy selecting texts and reading about families and cultures that differ from their own.

Leaders have been meticulous in identifying the knowledge they want pupils to learn across the curriculum. As a result, pupils, including those in early years, develop their skills and understanding in each subject area. The context of the school and its community have been carefully woven into programmes of study. In history, for example, pupils complete projects linked to the local canal and the papermill origins of the school's founder.

In many subjects, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 develop a broad range of vocabulary linked to their learning. In some subjects, however, pupils do not know with clarity vocabulary that will help them build on previous learning and what the expectations are for the finished task. This means that in these areas of the curriculum, pupils do not always build on what they have learned before or confidently complete work with a high level of pride in the outcome.

Pupils with SEND follow the same broad curriculum as their peers. Teachers skilfully adapt activities where necessary so that pupils with SEND access the curriculum. Pupils build well on what they know and can do. Parents and carers are rightly positive about how well pupils with SEND are cared for and supported.

Leaders have carefully identified what they want children to know by the end of the early years. Most children achieve well. Staff have created an interesting and well-organised learning environment. Children settle well into routines and enjoy role play and construction activities. Occasionally, some children only develop a basic understanding of the activities that have been planned for them. This is because sometimes adults do not make full use of opportunities to ask questions or extend children's vocabulary and understanding.

Adults manage behaviour consistently and fairly. The story of 'The Good Samaritan' is threaded through much of the school's pastoral work. Pupils are well behaved and supportive of each other. They value friendship. Pupils have an excellent understanding of values such as democracy. This is enhanced through democratic voting for leadership roles in school and visits to the Houses of Parliament.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate leaders' consideration for their well-being and the support they receive to develop professionally. This includes those staff at the very start of their careers.

Governors have a strong strategic vision for the school. They have a very secure understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development, check the work of the school regularly and challenge leaders appropriately.

Parents and carers hold the leaders and staff in high regard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training and that the appropriate recruitment checks are made. All staff know how and when to report safeguarding concerns. Leaders respond swiftly to concerns, referring these to external agencies when appropriate. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that these agencies help to support the most vulnerable pupils effectively.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about road safety and how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils can speak to a trusted adult if they have a worry or concern and know that they will be listened to and supported.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, although important subject vocabulary has been

identified, pupils do not consistently know or remember it. This means that pupils sometimes struggle with the important words they need to link what they have learned previously with current learning. Occasionally, in some subjects, pupils' work does not match the standards they achieve or that teachers expect in other areas of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that staff check that pupils fully understand the vocabulary they have learned before they move on and that consistently high expectations for completed tasks are in place.

- In the early years, when children are involved in some activities, adults do not always use opportunities to extend children's knowledge of vocabulary and develop their understanding. This means that on occasions, some children do not learn as much as others during this time. Leaders should make sure that adults working with children in the early years routinely use teaching approaches and questioning to better guide learning and develop vocabulary.

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	117418
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10241553
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sylvia Low
Headteacher	Allan Maher
Website	www.nashmills.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is in the Diocese of St Albans.
- The school has a religious character, Church of England, and was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 13 June 2016. The next section 48 inspection is due within eight years from the previous inspection.
- The school hosts a privately run breakfast and after-school provision. This is inspected separately.
- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision for any pupils.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, eight governors and a representative working for the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors reviewed curriculum plans 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 also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To further inspect the curriculum, inspectors reviewed schemes of work across all subject areas, examined a sample of books across the school and visited early years.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector spoke to leaders, including governors. The lead inspector reviewed documentation, including safeguarding records and the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke to staff and pupils.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors held discussions with several of them, alongside observing pupils in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To gather staff's views, inspectors held discussions with several of them. Inspectors also took account of the 25 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors considered the feedback from 52 parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 29 free-text responses. They also spoke to members of the school community at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Michael Thomas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Fordham

Ofsted Inspector

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