

# Inspection of Hawkhurst Church of England Primary School

Fowlers Park, Rye Road, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook, Kent TN18 4JJ

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils welcome visitors with joy and pride to their inclusive and caring school. Pupils feel safe, happy and special. Expectations for behaviour are consistently high, and pupils rise to meet them. Playtimes are active and fun, with older 'buddies' helping younger pupils every lunchtime.

Staff provide highly sensitive nurture to support pupils with any worries. Relationships are compassionate and respectful. On the small number of occasions when it happened in the past, bullying was dealt with immediately. Pupils can tell adults about any worries. Every concern is taken seriously, and well-being is constantly promoted. Strong pastoral care underpins school life and is unanimously appreciated by families.

Older pupils appreciate leadership opportunities. As 'reading ambassadors', they become role models to inspire younger children. Pupils are thrilled to attend a wide range of free activity clubs after school. Music is thriving, with many pupils learning instruments, attending choir and performing in a concert in a large arena.

Pupils enjoy exceptional personal development through 'well-being' breakfasts, art exhibitions, open afternoons and special celebration assemblies. Pupils are proud to support charities, including a local food project to help families in need. Parents share glowing feedback about the expertise, kindness and warmth of leaders and staff.

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

Children make a good start in early years, where staff provide high-quality care in a stimulating and inclusive environment. Reading is prioritised from the moment pupils start school. Staff have embedded a strong phonics programme. Pupils work together, reading and writing in groups, to learn sounds and remember them. Staff match books precisely to give pupils the practice they need. Teachers support parents with strategies to help at home. Assessment is sharp and effective. Pupils achieve highly in phonics and become confident and fluent readers as they progress through the school. Pupils' love of reading blossoms further with whole-class reading sessions, special celebrations and free books for all. The library is well stocked with a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction books, including texts adapted to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff provide effective one-to-one help to pupils who need it. No pupil is left behind when it comes to learning to read. Many less confident readers have become 'reading ambassadors', boosting their self-esteem while helping younger pupils.

Support for pupils with SEND is superb. Parents appreciate the expertise of leaders to identify needs and provide impressive support. Pupils with dyslexia are thriving with adapted books and targeted help. Some pupils need help with concentration and managing emotions. They are supported skilfully with resources, including

wobble cushions, adapted seating, standing desks, fiddle toys, brain breaks and sensory activities. Pupils who struggled to self-regulate now show impressive self-control. They independently access 'calm spaces', which are thoughtfully equipped in every classroom. Leaders work closely with specialists, such as educational psychologists, to continually adapt provision to help pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for all. All subjects are clearly sequenced with skills, knowledge and vocabulary, from early years to Year 6. Teachers share good subject knowledge in positive learning environments to help pupils know and remember more. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, applying skills and knowledge to solve problems successfully. In the strongest curriculum areas, such as art and design, curriculum intentions are fully realised through well-chosen lesson activities and assessment. In other areas, subject leaders are new to their roles. Some subjects are less established, and activity choices are not precise enough to match the intentions of the curriculum.

Behaviour in lessons is excellent. Children in early years show great concentration and engagement. In every classroom, expectations are clear, and learning is not disrupted. School values of compassion, hope and community are realised every day, modelled by staff and pupils. Everyone treats each other with kindness and respect. Attendance has improved for all groups of pupils as a result of tenacious work by the school.

Well-being and mental health are high priority. As a result, pupils show resilience in the face of challenges. This is particularly evident in forest school sessions. Pupils are respectful of diversity and treat everyone with kindness and equity. Staff frequently showcase pupils' talents in assemblies.

The headteacher and assistant headteachers are inspirational and effective, leading by example. Staff and families regard them highly, appreciating their high visibility and engagement. Parents say that 'they always go the extra mile' and 'we are truly part of a caring and inclusive community'. All staff feel highly supported with workload and well-being. Governors share leaders' dedication and inclusive ambition. They fulfil their duties, and provide strong support and challenge to drive school improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and governors know and understand the vigilant safeguarding systems in place in this school. The single central record is meticulously maintained. Recruitment practice is rigorous in ensuring that all adults are thoroughly vetted.

Leaders are tireless in ensuring that extra help is secured for families experiencing difficulties. Leaders communicate effectively with external agencies such as health providers and social care. Records of actions are detailed and robust.

Pupils learn about online safety and healthy relationships through curriculum activities and assemblies. Staff respond to local risks with timely and sensitive support for pupils. All pupils feel safe in this school.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, lesson activities do not match the intentions of the planned curriculum. As a result, pupils do not always achieve highly across all areas of learning. Leaders must continue their work to implement subjects with precise activity choices to ensure that curriculum impact meets ambitions for pupils in every class and subject.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118602
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256398
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Simon Curd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jodi Hacker
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hawkhurst.kent.sch.uk">www.hawkhurst.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Canterbury. The school was rated good in its most recent section 48 inspection, in July 2016.
- The school offers a breakfast club on site, led by school staff.
- The school offers 'wraparound care' after school, led by an outside provider.
- The school currently uses no 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 headteacher, assistant headteachers, special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, teachers and support staff.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors studied documents and records, including the school's single central record and child protection referrals. Inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding leaders, staff, governors and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, art and design, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to pupils, and looked at pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read and observed catch up interventions to evaluate how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- The lead inspector met six members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Canterbury.
- Inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils during social times and in lessons.

### **Inspection team**

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Toby Martlew

Ofsted Inspector

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