

Inspection of a good school: Sywell Church of England Primary School

Overstone Road, Sywell, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN6 0AW

Inspection date: 14 March 2023

Outcome

Sywell Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a warm and welcoming place to learn. Pupils are happy and feel safe.

Pupils talk confidently about the school's Christian values: 'Fellowship, love and respect'. School leaders have discussed the school's values with the whole school community. Pupils know what the values mean to them. They understand about different religions, faiths and beliefs. Pupils know what it means to be respectful.

Pupils are keen to get involved with school life. They value the opportunity to be librarians and to help at lunchtimes in the dinner hall. Leaders plan to restart the school council. This was popular with pupils. Pupils are eager to take part in a school council again.

Pupils' behaviour is generally good. Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy. It sets out what leaders expect. Pupils are happy when playing together at breaktimes and bullying is rare. If bullying does happen, teachers sort it out quickly. Pupils concentrate well in lessons. Occasionally, pupils lose focus. However, all lessons that the inspectors visited were calm and orderly. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have prioritised the important knowledge and skills that pupils should acquire, in most subjects. Teachers expect pupils to work hard. Staff provide activities that challenge and help pupils to remember new information. This is stronger in core subjects such as English and mathematics.

The reading curriculum is strong. Leaders prioritise and value reading. The library is at the heart of the school, proudly run by the pupil librarians. Pupils talk confidently about the many authors and types of books that they read. Pupils begin learning to read straight away in the early years. Teachers teach phonics well. Pupils regularly revisit the sounds

they know. They develop confidence and fluency in reading. Pupils with SEND have time to catch up, with good support from teachers. Leaders carry out regular checks on what pupils know and remember in reading.

Leaders have ensured that the mathematics curriculum is clearly sequenced. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. Teachers carefully break the learning down into clear steps so pupils can understand new concepts.

Teachers support children to make a good start in the early years. Leaders have precisely planned the early years curriculum so that children are well prepared for Year 1 and beyond.

Leaders have clear expectations for how teachers should assess pupils in early reading, English and mathematics. Teachers check how well pupils are learning and adapt their teaching accordingly. However, in some other subjects, teachers do not always check the errors that pupils make closely enough. Pupils do not always correct their mistakes before moving on.

Pupils with SEND receive effective support to access the curriculum. Staff break learning down into smaller steps. Leaders have the same ambitions for pupils with SEND as for all other pupils. As one pupil rightly put it, 'This is an inclusive school.'

Teachers create a calm, friendly environment for learning, including in the early years. Teachers address any issues with behaviour quickly so that those issues do not hinder pupils' learning.

Leaders promote some aspects of pupils' wider development well. Pupils enjoy the variety of trips offered. For example, pupils have visited a local rugby stadium and the Sikh Gurdwara. Parents also value these opportunities. Pupils have some choice of clubs but would like more to take place after school. Pupils say that they would like to have their own school sports teams. Pupils enjoy personal, social and health education and relationships education lessons. They sing songs to help them remember key ideas. However, pupils struggle to recall some knowledge about family relationships and British values such as individual liberty and the rule of law.

Those responsible for governance make sure that they support and challenge school leaders. They have encouraged improved links with the local community. The local governance committee understands the school's priorities for improvement.

Teachers feel that leaders manage staff workload well. Leaders support staff well-being. Staff also appreciate the high-quality training that they receive to improve their practice, including training from the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff identify pupils and families who may need support. They keep clear records and make checks on pupils' well-being. They make sure that pupils and families get the help they need. Recruitment and pre-employment checks are rigorous. School and trust leaders understand their responsibilities. All leaders know what actions to take in the case of any concerns about adults.

Leaders make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. This includes in relation to online safety and online bullying. Pupils know about permissions and passwords. Pupils know who to talk to if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not use assessment well enough in all subjects to check what pupils know and what, if any, misconceptions they may have. This can hinder pupils' ability to remember long-term what they have been taught. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment effectively so that pupils build secure knowledge and skills over time in all subjects.
- Leaders do not promote some aspects of pupils' wider personal development as effectively as they should. Pupils do not consistently recall and understand what they have been taught about the fundamental British values. They do not yet have a well-developed sense of what constitutes different types of family relationships. Leaders should ensure that they provide effectively for pupils' broader development so that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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 predecessor school, Sywell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, to be good in December 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	148312
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10281527
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Holman
Headteacher	Jo Shortland
Website	http://www.sywellceprimaryschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Sywell Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in March 2021. When its predecessor school, Sywell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school has undergone some significant changes in leadership in the last two years, since joining the multi-academy trust. The current headteacher was previously the senior teacher and interim headteacher.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 and other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of the local academy committee and officers from the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, 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 observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes. They spoke to staff, pupils and trust leaders about behaviour.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by checking the school's records and speaking to leaders, parents, staff and pupils about safeguarding.

Inspection team

Donna Moulds, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Evans

Ofsted Inspector

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