

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

The Green, Sarratt, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 6AS

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils live and breathe 'The Sarratt Way'. Regular reminders guide pupils to demonstrate the three school values: creativity, courage and compassion.

Pupils typically meet adults' high expectations. They listen respectfully before completing the activities teachers arrange. Pupils remember lots of what they learn, be it Year 1 pupils identifying shapes or Year 6 pupils sharing facts about World War II.

Doing their best to be their best is something that pupils do through the extra-curricular offer. Pupils benefit from dedicated staff facilitating cross-school competitions. These allow pupils to show courage. They compete locally and nationally in sports like football, netball and swimming. Pupils strive to win but demonstrate a great deal of sportsmanship when faced with defeat.

Pupils are exceptionally compassionate. They treat others as they would like to be treated. This includes in how they look after school resources. The 'tidy tigers' regularly check that school is 'spick and span' and that things work as they should. When someone joins or visits the school, pupils extend the hand of friendship. Having friends to play and learn with encourages pupils to attend school regularly.

Pupils rarely have concerns. Still, they know it is important to share their worries with staff. Pupils trust that doing so will ensure they get the help needed to remain safe.

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

Leaders, staff and pupils work hard to realise the motto, 'small school, big heart, huge aspirations'. Aspects of the school, principally pupils' behaviour and how staff go above and beyond for pupils' wider development, prove this exceptionally well.

Leaders were shrewd in introducing two expectations about pupils' behaviour. This simple approach ensures clarity. Staff and pupils understand and live out these expectations.

Pupils relish the rewards that recognise their kind, polite conduct. They strive to get their name in the coveted 'golden book'. Pupils like how their parents join the weekly assembly to hear staff explain what it is they did to deserve the accolade. Also, pupils play happily during social times. Eagle-eyed staff hand out raffle tickets to pupils who demonstrate kindness. There is then a weekly prize draw, which pupils discuss with delight.

Leaders seek out exciting ways to broaden pupils' horizons. In addition to clubs that foster pupils' creativity and fitness, there are frequent trips, workshops and visitors. Staff tap into local resources. For example, they invite locals in for collective worship or to share their memories of the village. Leaders consider how best to turn a one-off event into something extra special. For instance, pupils worked with a performing arts community group across several weeks. It led to pupils showcasing their work in a theatre performance.

Leaders changed the phonics and reading programmes to better meet pupils' needs. Nearly all pupils now keep up with the pace of these programmes. How teachers instil a love of reading works very well. Pupils love the expressive voices teachers use to bring stories to life. Still, there are a few issues in how staff teach reading, which hinders support for the few weaker readers. For example, insisting these pupils learn sounds that go far beyond their assessed stage. This then limits the opportunity for weaker readers to secure the sounds they need to know to confidently read the books they receive. Leaders are aware of these shortcomings but are still in the process of addressing them.

The curriculum includes helpful specificity, identifying what it is pupils learn and when across the school. This provides teachers with a helpful steer when preparing lessons and arranging activities. As a result, pupils remember lots of what they learn. In mathematics, for example, pupils are very confident in their recall of facts and their ability to calculate.

Leaders work carefully with staff and parents to ensure accurate identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A period of monitoring allows a pupil to receive extra tuition or resources to support their learning. If this does not help, leaders consult with external agencies to identify a pupil's specific SEND needs. Doing so then helps staff to make further adjustments to meet pupils' needs well. It shows in pupils with SEND making suitable progress from their respective starting points.

In recent years, governors and school leaders have worked hard to cultivate a caring, welcoming school community. Because of the school's positive reputation, many pupils join the school at times other than the start of the Reception Year. Sometimes, the assessment information staff receive from a pupil's last school, and the checks staff do themselves upon a pupil starting at this school, do not swiftly identify pupils who need extra support. It means a few pupils do not achieve as highly as they ought to by the end of Year 6.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out robust checks on adults who wish to work with pupils. Trust leaders and local governors check this.

Weekly briefings, alongside more formal training, ensure staff know the part they play in recognising and reporting pupils at risk of harm. Leaders have an in-depth knowledge of the pupils and their families. This ensures leaders and their staff notice and report when something is not quite right. Leaders always take swift, effective action to ensure vulnerable pupils get suitable support.

Pupils learn how to stay safe. For example, leaders invite in experts to teach pupils about sharing concerns, as well as how to use technology safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- How staff elect to teach phonics, including in lessons and through catch-up support, does not provide enough opportunity for weaker readers to revise the sounds they need to know. As a result, the progress these pupils make is slower than it should be. Leaders should ensure staff receive the training and guidance required to teach leaders' adopted programmes in a way that maximises the learning for every pupil.
- A relatively high number of pupils join the school other than at the start of the Reception Year. Sometimes, leaders and staff lack rigour in how they assess a pupil upon them joining the school. It leads to some pupils going 'under the radar' and not achieving as highly as they should based on their starting points. Leaders should put in place a clear system for reviewing, making and using assessment to ensure every pupil who joins the school mid-year goes on to achieve their very best.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Sarratt Church of England Primary School, to be good in December 2015.

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	146723
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10269210
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gillian Pugh
Headteacher	Nicola O'Hare
Website	www.sarratt.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Sarratt Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in April 2019. The school joined the Chess Valley Primary Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust. When its predecessor school, Sarratt Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2015, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of 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 22 March 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- There is before- and after-school childcare for pupils attending the school. It is run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- There is a separately registered and inspected pre-school on the school site, offering early education to children aged two to four.
- Leaders do not currently use alternative provision for any pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with leaders, including the chief executive officer, the head of school, the assistant head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of the trust, the chair of the local governing body, two local governors and a representative working on behalf of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with senior leaders and subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with leaders to review records. The inspector also met with an office administrator to scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. To further evaluate safeguarding, the inspector spoke to governors, staff and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan, self-evaluation form and minutes from meetings of the trust board and the local governing body.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views by observing and speaking to pupils. The inspector also took account of the 96 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- The inspector gathered parents' views by reviewing the 63 responses and 49 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector gathered the views of staff by speaking to several of them and reviewing the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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