

# Inspection of a good school: High Wych Church of England Primary School

High Wych, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire CM21 0JB

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 November 2023

## Outcome

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

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at High Wych Church of England Primary School. They have positive relationships with staff. Everyone is treated with respect. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their school. They are proud of their school and the facilities, such as the reflection garden.

Pupils know staff will look after them and try to keep them safe. They can recall learning about how to keep themselves safe. When they are online or crossing roads, for example. Pupils know they can share concerns with their teachers via the class worry boxes. They know these concerns will be responded to quickly.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to extend their learning beyond the curriculum. There is a range of pupil councils, who lead projects across the school. The pupils benefit from close links with the local church. They also enjoy participating in a range of community projects, such as the scarecrow festival, safe travel planning and mini-police.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous to others. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and collaborate with each other on their learning. When outside, they play together well. Pupils trust the adults to deal with any problems quickly. Consequently, they say bullying rarely happens.

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

The school provides pupils with a broad and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is sequenced from the early years through to Year 6. This ensures knowledge builds over time. The curriculum has undergone several recent changes. These changes have ensured a consistent teaching approach across the different subjects. This familiarity is benefitting pupils, who approach learning with confidence.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and many produce work of a high standard. Teachers often check that pupils understand and remember what they have learned. They use a variety of quizzes, tests and discussions. Pupils answer questions enthusiastically. All pupils work towards the same high expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive extra support materials to aid their understanding. Additional adults are well trained. They provide effective support, as needed, to ensure pupils with SEND keep up. Pupils engage well with the variety of tasks set.

Reading is a priority. The reading curriculum has undergone changes in the last two years to further strengthen the approach to early reading. Staff are well trained to teach phonics. They use a variety of techniques to engage pupils. Pupils are motivated during phonics lessons and respond positively to tasks. Pupils have a wide variety of books to read, which are matched to their reading ability. Guided reading sessions include interesting texts. These are chosen to teach pupils about life beyond school. The new approach to phonics provides a wealth of intervention materials. Staff use these to help pupils to keep up. Despite this, a small number of pupils do not read as fluently and confidently as the school would like. These pupils do not always receive effective support to ensure they catch up quickly enough.

The school encourages and achieves high attendance. There are a range of awards for good attendance, which pupils value. Requests for time out of school, such as holiday requests, are dealt with robustly. Pupils behave well in school. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. If pupils do not reach these expectations, they are supported with individual behaviour plans. Outside of lessons, pupils play well with each other. They enjoy a range of outside play equipment and opportunities to participate in competitive games.

Pupils' broader development is delivered through the personal, social, health and economic curriculum and regular acts of collective worship. In addition, the school provides pupils with a range of opportunities beyond the curriculum. Trips are coordinated to ensure all pupils have opportunities to learn about various faiths and sports. There are opportunities for pupils to take on leadership responsibilities. These include the religious education council, eco-council and school council. Pupils learn about fundamental British values, such as democracy. Pupils speak positively about the range of clubs on offer. This work is preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain.

The governing body and school leaders are mindful of staff well-being. Staff are encouraged to have a work-life balance. They make efforts to reduce staff workload, where possible. A small number of staff and parents shared concerns about communication. In particular, how recent changes to the curriculum and various policies have been shared with them.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- A significant minority of pupils do not read as confidently and fluently as the school would like. These pupils lack the reading skills to access the full curriculum. To address this, the school should ensure that these pupils receive effective and prompt support.
- Over the last few years, the curriculum and various policies have undergone several changes. Some parents and staff feel that there is a lack of communication about these changes. The school should do all it can to keep parents and staff informed of changes, the reasons, and their impact, to ensure all stakeholders remain fully informed.

## 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 October 2013.

## 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117398
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294980
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Cathryn Sharples
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mandy West
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.highwych.herts.sch.uk">www.highwych.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a Church of England voluntary controlled school. The school's last section 48 inspection under the Education Act 2005 for schools of a religious character was conducted in January 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke to the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the foundation and key stage 1 coordinator and the key stage 2 coordinator. They also met with four members of the governing body and held telephone discussions with the deputy director of education for the diocese and the local authority school effectiveness advisor.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about 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 inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector also took account of the 73 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including all 73 free-text comments. She also considered 19 staff survey responses.
- The inspector observed pupils at play in the playground.

### **Inspection team**

Sarah Fowler, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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