Inspection of Hawridge and Cholesbury Church of England School

Hawridge Common, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 2UQ

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	**Requires improvement**
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?

The school aspires for pupils to flourish and achieve their best. However, this ambition is not yet being fully realised. There is more work to do to ensure that the curriculum and teaching enable all pupils to achieve well.

The school's values are the foundation of its ethos. Values such as respect, understanding and teamwork create a positive culture and sense of belonging. Pupils demonstrate these values in their good behaviour. They learn and play happily together. Pupils rightly feel cared for well by staff. Strong pastoral support means that there is always an adult on hand if pupils are worried or upset.

Through activities such as forest school, pupils benefit from rich opportunities to learn about the environment and develop their social and physical skills. Clubs, visits and special events enrich considerably pupils' experiences and enjoyment of school. Older pupils are enthused about their forthcoming residential visit.

Pupils learn to care for and support others, for example, by being 'buddies' to younger pupils and organising fundraising events. Special occasions, such as the harvest festival, help pupils to reflect on those in the community who are less fortunate. Pupils benefit from meaningful leadership experiences. These include opportunities to be a prefect and to serve on the school council.

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

The school has worked hard to address the decline in pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6 in the 2023 statutory assessments. This has been an exceptional challenge due to many factors. These include the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a rise in the number of pupils with complex needs and several temporary staffing changes. As a result, not all of the school's planned improvements have yet been embedded in the way that leaders intend. While achievement has improved, there are inconsistencies in the quality of education for some pupils. This means that not all pupils achieve as well as they should.

Since the previous inspection, the school has implemented a new phonics programme and strengthened its work to instil a love of reading. This has contributed to improvements in early reading. Nonetheless, the school is still refining the phonics programme to establish the sounds pupils should learn, term by term. Most younger pupils get off to a secure start to learning to read. Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies in the teaching and support for the weakest readers in Years 1 to 6. As a result, this is not yet fully effective and risks these pupils falling further behind.

Overall, the curriculum is suitably ambitious and appropriately sequenced. However, there are weaknesses in the school's approach to developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting. This is particularly so for younger pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Gaps in pupils' knowledge are not addressed systematically. This is reflected in weaknesses in pupils' sentence construction, letter

formation and spelling. In contrast, practice is much stronger in mathematics, where teachers routinely identify and address gaps in learning.

As soon as children join the school, staff act swiftly to identify any additional needs so that support can be put in place promptly. Targets from pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans translate well into short-term targets. When it is needed, therapists provide specialist input. Staff give sensitive, caring support to pupils who need help to manage their emotional needs. However, learning tasks are not always designed well enough to reflect pupils' needs and barriers to learning. This results in some pupils being unable to complete their work successfully. Typically, this is in subjects in the wider curriculum, where pupils need to apply their reading and writing skills. As a result, not all pupils with SEND are achieving as well as they should.

The school's strong partnership with parents and carers has been pivotal to the success of improvements in pupils' attendance. This helps the school to understand the root causes of any attendance issues and provide the most appropriate support for pupils and their families.

From the start of Reception, children learn to share, take turns and to be kind to each other. Throughout the school, staff help pupils to understand what it means to be part of a community. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures and that diversity is to be celebrated. This reflects the school's values and commitment to ensure that pupils are prepared well for life beyond the locality. Pupils learn how to keep healthy and safe. They are encouraged to be active through participating in sporting activities and the 'daily mile'.

Governors are knowledgeable and ably fulfil their responsibilities. Leaders, governors and staff are united in their high aspirations for pupils at the school. There is a strong sense of teamwork and demonstrable commitment to improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's support for pupils in key stages 1 and 2, who are still at an early stage of learning to read, is not as effective as it needs to be. As a result, the weakest readers are at risk of falling further behind. The school needs to ensure that staff are clear about the intended milestones the school wishes pupils to achieve, term by term, and that they utilise their early reading training effectively to support pupils.
- The school has not ensured that there is a sharp enough focus on important aspects of pupils' writing, including spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Weaknesses and gaps in pupils' knowledge are not systematically addressed. As a result, this hampers the

quality of pupils' writing, particularly in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. The school needs to strengthen the curriculum and teaching approaches to writing.

- In some wider curriculum subjects, teaching is not consistently adapted well to take account of pupils' needs. This includes pupils with SEND and other pupils who find reading and writing challenging. Sometimes, pupils struggle to get started or complete their learning tasks successfully. The school should widen its approaches to helping pupils with weak literacy skills to ensure success for all pupils across the breadth of the curriculum.

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

Unique reference number	110445
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10341301
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Sue Walton
Headteacher	Rosie Phillips
Website	www.hawridge-cholesbury.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a religious character as a Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place on 2 October 2024. The next section 48 inspection will take place within eight years of the date of this inspection.
- During recent years, there have been many changes of staff. Four new teachers started at the school in September 2024.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has declined. During recent years, there has been an increase in the number of pupils with EHC plans.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects and sampled pupils' work in history and English.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of school documents, including the school's strategic plans and self-evaluation. They held meetings with leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and attendance and other aspects of the school's work.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including parents' free-text comments. An inspector talked with some parents at the end of the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views during meetings with them and talked to pupils during social times of the day and when visiting lessons.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mo Galway	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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