

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Little Hallingbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wrights Green Lane, Little Hallingbury, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7RE

Inspection dates:

7 November 2024

Outcome

Little Hallingbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of community at this school. Pupils feel happy and safe. They enjoy attending. Pupils receive effective support from caring and committed staff. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Parents and carers praise the school's warm and nurturing environment. It is a place where pupils play with and look out for one another.

Expectations of what pupils learn have risen. They learn an ambitious curriculum. Most pupils progress well through it and are prepared for their next stage. They develop a love of reading. Pupils enthuse about books their teacher reads in class. Early readers get helpful support from Year 6 'reading buddies'.

There is a calm and orderly culture in school. Behaviour, for the most part, is positive. Pupils take pride in their work. They are polite and friendly. In the early years, children learn routines quickly. They tidy away with care and attention. Pupils do not have any concerns about bullying. Any occasional issues are speedily resolved by adults in school.

Pupils enjoy frequent opportunities to embody the school's motto of 'life in all its fullness'. They engage well with the many leadership roles on offer. For instance, sports captains run the football club, and Year 6 pupils organise the whole-school talent show. These experiences build pupils' confidence. They become active and responsible citizens, ready for their next stage.

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

The school has reviewed its curriculum in light of previous pupil outcomes, which did not

reflect its ambition. It has acted swiftly to address inconsistencies in what pupils had previously learned. The school has put in place a broad, well-designed curriculum, which pinpoints what pupils should learn and when. This starts in the early years. Knowledge pupils learn carefully builds on what they already know and can do. This helps pupils to remember their learning. They typically develop detailed knowledge. For example, when learning about the Great Fire of London in key stage 1, pupils learn facts about the impact of the fire, which supports their learning later on.

Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum. Regular training supports them in using consistent approaches which support pupils' learning. For example, teachers explain and model new content successfully. They use engaging activities that help pupils understand what they need to learn. Staff adapt learning so pupils with SEND can access it alongside their peers.

Pupils are given opportunities to apply the knowledge they are learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 learn about fronted adverbials before using these appropriately in their own creative writing. In Reception, children learn about numbers before being provided with experiences to reinforce their learning through their play. However, on occasion in other lessons, pupils' understanding is not checked closely enough. Where this occurs, pupils move on to new learning without securing their basic knowledge.

Reading is given a high priority. Staff teach the phonics programme well. Children in early years remember the sounds they have learned. Pupils in key stage 1 decode and blend with confidence to read unknown words. Effective support is given to those who need to keep up. Pupils quickly learn to read with fluency. They use this knowledge to develop their writing skills, including their spelling.

The school has introduced a new behaviour policy and reset expectations. Staff and pupils understand these. However, these expectations are not fully embedded. Sometimes behaviour is variable. On occasion, there is low-level disruption in class, for instance unhelpful chatter. Some routines, such as at the end of breaktimes, are not established as well as they could be. As a result, some pupils are not always ready to learn.

Attendance has improved. The school works proactively with families who need support regarding absence. Staff work as a team to encourage positive attendance. The school identifies needs accurately, including those barriers for pupils with SEND. Pupils receive the help they need.

The personal development programme prepares pupils to be ready for their next steps. For example, they learn in depth about online safety. This helps them make safe and responsible choices. From the early years, children learn about road safety. This develops their independence as they begin to engage with the wider world.

Governors have the skills and knowledge they require for their roles. They have revised how they gather and review information about the school. There is regular support and challenge in place for leaders. Governors and leaders check closely on staff well-being and consider their workload. Staff recognise the school's collaborative approach to developing the curriculum has supported this.

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 does not consistently check pupils' understanding of what they have learned. This means pupils' misconceptions are not always addressed. This prevents pupils from making further connections to deepen their learning. The school should ensure staff regularly make checks on pupils' learning so they can move on to new content securely and start to build on their knowledge without gaps occurring.
- The school's expectations for how pupils behave are not fully embedded. At times, pupils do not respond quickly enough to staff. This can disrupt learning and delay the start of pupils' engagement in tasks. The school should ensure its expectations are consistently applied so that learning is not disrupted and high standards of behaviour are reflected throughout the school day.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2019.

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	115182
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345152
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Claire Berry and Steven Wilson
Headteacher	Ruth Baugh
Website	www.lhandsmhboschools.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation with St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Hatfield Broad Oak.
- The executive headteacher was appointed in November 2022. She has responsibility for this school and two others.
- There are two co-chairs of governors. Both have been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school has a Christian character. It is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. The school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2017. The next section 48 inspect is due this academic year.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the lead teacher, staff and pupils. As part of evaluating governance, the lead inspector met with the co-chairs of governors. Inspectors held meetings with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 reviewed a wide range of documents, including curriculum plans, school development plans, policies and documentation for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments submitted by parents during the inspection. There were no responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils. To mitigate this, inspectors spoke with staff and large numbers of pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sara Boyce

His Majesty's Inspector

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