Inspection of Codicote Church of England Primary School

Meadow Way, Codicote, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 8YL

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since November 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are hugely enthusiastic about their school. They are rightly proud of their achievements and how well everyone gets along. The school goes above and beyond to support pupils' well-being and build positive relationships. Pupils here are happy, safe and ready to learn.

Pupils enjoy learning and know staff want them to succeed. Pupils are motivated to come to school and so attendance is high. The dedicated staff team supports pupils well in lessons. This is particularly the case in reading, writing and mathematics. Due to the school's high expectations, most pupils achieve well in these subjects in national assessments, in readiness for secondary school.

The school ensures that all pupils are welcome and that they participate fully in all aspects of school life. Pupils know their ideas are listened to, including in early years. They relish contributing to decisions about their school. Pupils are treated equally and fairly. This fosters very high levels of mutual respect. Pupils make firm friendships. Older pupils are excellent role models for behaviour.

There is a plethora of wider opportunities for everyone, from learning musical instruments to accessing different sports and clubs and being in the choir. Pupils develop strong leadership skills through manning the office, looking after the school pets or being on the school council or eco-council.

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

The school is successfully navigating a period of expansion. Leaders have been highly proactive in adapting to the changing needs of pupils at the school. Pupils new to the school settle very quickly. The school has also pioneered a bespoke approach to identifying and then filling gaps in pupils' resilience, confidence and self-esteem. As a result, behaviour has remained exemplary in every year group.

The school's curriculum is well thought out from early years upwards. Staff know what to teach and in what order. Misconceptions are addressed. Pupils produce high-quality work in reading, writing and mathematics.

Across other subjects, pupils also recall key curriculum content. Older pupils are starting to make connections in their learning based on what they already know. However, there are some inconsistencies in how ambitious the work set in some of these other subjects is. This limits how well pupils have their knowledge deepened and extended so that they can achieve as highly as they are capable of.

Reading is prioritised. In Nursery, children understand how to identify sounds they hear. From Reception onwards, children follow a clearly structured reading programme. They soon know enough sounds to be able to read words fluently and independently, ready for Year 1. Anyone who struggles is quickly supported to catch up. Pupils across the school

read books that match their reading ability. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. They are exposed to rich and ambitious vocabulary from a range of diverse texts.

Children get off to a positive start in early years. Their ability to listen and take turns is impressive for their age. Children access learning opportunities that develop their creativity and knowledge of the world around them. They use new vocabulary well. They can articulate their understanding clearly and are suitably prepared for Year 1. Children apply reading, writing and mathematical skills in their play. However, there are sometimes missed opportunities to extend their learning even further.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs accurately identified. The school actions external advice so that pupils with SEND participate fully in school life. Leaders ensure that in-school experts support pupils' speech and language needs well. Most pupils with SEND achieve well from their starting points. However, for a few pupils, their targets are not aligned precisely enough to meet their specific needs. This limits how quickly staff address gaps in these pupils' learning.

Pupils are taught to celebrate and respect differences, preparing them well for life in a diverse society. They know discrimination is wrong. This means that unkindness is rare and not tolerated by pupils or staff. Pupils trust adults to help them. Very few pupils have time off school. The school takes swift and decisive action if pupils' absence becomes a concern.

The school's personal development programme is precisely aligned and adapted to the needs of the pupils. It firmly develops pupils' ability to problem-solve, persevere and have high levels of empathy. Pupils use this to take ownership for how to improve the school or lives of others. They actively research which causes to champion. They use democratic approaches to vote for their ideas.

Leaders and governors care deeply about the school. They are committed to the school's vision of 'everyone shall have success'. They fulfil their statutory and safeguarding duties well. Staff appreciate the care taken for their well-being and know they are valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, there are some inconsistencies in the level of detailed knowledge pupils are learning. Therefore, some pupils are not securing the in-depth knowledge in these subjects that they are capable of. The school needs to ensure that work set is consistently ambitious in these subjects and that leaders, including governors, check robustly that pupils can demonstrate a depth of understanding in these foundation subjects so they excel.

- For a few pupils with SEND, their targets are not precisely matched to meet their needs. This limits how well these pupils are overcoming their specific barriers to learning. The school needs to strengthen further its understanding of the most effective strategies to support these pupils and then to check that these specific approaches are suitably ambitious and having the desired impact.

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	117392
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345201
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	280
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Debbie Williamson
Headteacher	Liz Pollard
Website	www.codicote.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 November 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is in the process of expanding to become a two-form-entry school.
- The school is a Church of England school and of a religious character and so is subject to a section 48 inspection. A section 48 inspection was last carried out in October 2019. The school will be due its next section 48 inspection within approximately five years of its last inspection.
- The school has a Nursery class for children aged three and four years old. These children attend five mornings a week.
- The school runs its own before- and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the senior teacher, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, art and history. 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 some other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with seven members of the governing body for the school, including the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the governing body minutes and the school improvement adviser's visit notes.
- The lead inspector spoke with the school's improvement adviser from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses gathered through Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, as well as the staff survey. All inspectors spoke to several pupils from different year groups during the inspection, along with a range of staff.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gina Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Charlene Foster	Ofsted Inspector

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