

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

Bishops Lane, Hunton, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 0SJ

Inspection dates:

12 May 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy being at school. They love to learn and are confident that staff will protect and nurture them. The close-knit school community helps to ensure that teachers know each child well. Pupils work and play happily with each other throughout the school.

Teachers have high expectations for every child. They are ambitious for pupils to succeed in their learning as well as in their personal development. The excellent relationships mean that pupils respond well to their teachers' encouragement. They are eager to show their teachers what they can do.

Pupils behave exceptionally well both in and out of class. In their lessons they concentrate and learn with purpose. Teachers encourage pupils to work with each other which they do in a mature way. In the lunch hall and out on the playground, pupils show respect and care for each other. Pupils told inspectors that bullying very rarely happens.

Parents are very pleased with what the school offers their children. One parent's comment summed up how many feel, 'My child has thrived. I have trust and they have never let us down! Wonderful school and team!'. Parents also appreciate the improvements the new headteacher has made since joining the school.

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

Reading is a central priority in the school. Leaders have ensured that pupils learn to read in a systematic way from the start. The daily phonics sessions are precise. Teachers ensure that pupils grasp well the sounds and letters. Pupils respond well to the activities and make strong progress in their reading. Pupils are guided and encouraged by their teachers to work hard to improve their skills. They use their decoding skills well to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils read with determination even if they encounter difficulty. Throughout the school, teachers choose class texts that engage and challenge pupils.

Pupils' learning in mathematics is sensibly sequenced. The curriculum allows pupils to build their mathematical skills and knowledge securely. While there are strengths in the delivery of mathematics, there is still more to improve. Aspects of the curriculum need to be developed further so that it is more detailed and precise, so that teachers consistently teach to the right breadth and depth.

COVID-19 (coronavirus) has slowed down the process of introducing planned changes to the curriculum. Leaders have been reviewing their whole curriculum over the past year. This process was begun by the acting headteacher. The new headteacher has picked up the work to ensure that it is completed and that teachers bring in the planned improvements swiftly. Leaders have made a strong start in some subjects. In art, for instance, there is a clear programme of what knowledge pupils need to learn.

Teachers are quick to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have a good understanding of each pupils' needs and they tailor the support they give accordingly.

Learning beyond the classroom has had to be reduced over the last year because of the constraints that COVID-19 has placed on the school. However, leaders have now begun to open up more opportunities to expand pupils' learning further. Pupils have enjoyed working with an artist in residence and there are plans for more art events in the future. Recently, a group of pupils walked to a nearby farm to learn about the sheep that live there. Leaders also encourage pupils to be reflective through thinking about the school's values of compassion, perseverance and respect.

The headteacher is fervent in her desire to improve the school further. She wants the very best for each pupil. Staff and governors are wholly in favour of the direction she has set. Teachers are appreciative of the care leaders have taken over considering their workload and wellbeing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of care and safety at the school. Staff are alert to their pupils' welfare. They keep watch over them and make sure they pass on any concerns. Staff training has helped staff's understanding and awareness of safeguarding matters. The headteacher has introduced weekly briefings that staff have found helpful. Leaders have ensured that all appropriate recruitment checks are carried out. Governors are aware of their responsibilities. They realise that they must resume in full all their monitoring activities following the reduction of COVID-19 restrictions.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have taken to plan next year's curriculum and train staff in how to deliver it that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to ensure that each subject is well-planned, well-sequenced and clear about what pupils need to learn. They have made an effective start in art, design and technology and physical education. Leaders now need to complete and introduce swiftly and effectively the improvements to all remaining subjects in the curriculum.
- Leaders have made improvements to the mathematics curriculum. They have devised their own mastery programme which is being delivered consistently. However, leaders need to make mathematics planning even more precise and detailed to ensure complete coverage of content.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Hunton Church of England Primary School the school to be good on 21-22 October 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	118726
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10192847
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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Reverend Peter Callway
Headteacher	Anita Makey
Website	http://www.hunton.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school with four classes.
- There have been several changes of headteacher since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up post in January 2021.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with school leaders and other members of staff, including the special education needs coordinator. They also met with governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. They looked at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training. They also considered how well adults in the school act on emerging concerns about pupils' welfare.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views about the school. They looked at 37 responses to Parent View, including 32 free texts, and 13 replies to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. This involved talking with senior leaders, subject leaders and class teachers about how these subjects are delivered. Inspectors then visited lessons to see this in action, talked to pupils about what they had learned and looked at their work. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Yasmin Maskatiya, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alice Roberts

Her Majesty's Inspector

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