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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Rosie Phillips
Headteacher
Hawridge and Cholesbury Church of England School
Hawridge
Chesham
Buckinghamshire
HP5 2UQ

Dear Mrs Phillips

Short inspection of Hawridge and Cholesbury Church of England School

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in September 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are rightfully determined and ambitious for the school to provide the best for your pupils. Through your strong guidance and support, the leadership team is very effective in reviewing teaching and learning, swiftly taking action to improve outcomes for pupils. You are supported well by the assistant headteacher. A broad and good range of pupils' work is displayed around the school to celebrate their achievements in a variety of subjects. The parents and carers that I spoke with were very complimentary about how well the staff support and care for the pupils and work hard to help them to do well at school.

Since the last inspection, you and your team have been successful in improving the school. Leaders are effectively supporting staff to consistently challenge pupils in their work so that they achieve the best outcomes. Teachers check pupils' understanding effectively to ensure that they learn well. Currently, you are refining the approach to challenging pupils in their learning so that they have more opportunities to make even greater progress.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and appropriate areas for further development. They challenge and support the senior leadership team effectively. Governors visit regularly to carry out a wide range of tasks, including evaluating safeguarding. The governors attend a range of training to support their roles and responsibilities.

Pupils enjoy being part of the school community and have high praise for the effective support that they receive from the staff. One child said, 'Teachers give us feedback so that we can improve our work.' Another pupil said, 'The teachers are good and determined to get the best from us.' Pupils are very proud that they take part in many exciting clubs, including football, gym and French. The calm, supportive and well-organised environment ensures that everyone is valued within this nurturing and caring community. Pupils move around the building in an orderly manner and are respectful of each other. They play well together and thoroughly enjoy using the outdoor adventure equipment safely, where they are well supervised by staff.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is rightly your first priority, and everyone is vigilant. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. There is well-chosen, ongoing training for staff and governors so that they know how to keep pupils safe. Rigorous systems to monitor and check the well-being of pupils are evident. You successfully work with outside agencies to support pupils and their families well. Pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of staff are firmly in place.

Pupils feel safe in school and are well supported by the adults around them. They are aware of the potential dangers when using the internet. Pupils said that if they ever viewed anything on the internet that made them feel unsafe, they would tell an adult. They confidently said to me that they know how to take part in fire practices and lockdowns. Two reception children confidently told me that the school is nut free and gave very clear reasons why the school is now much safer for those pupils with nut allergies.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on the following: how effectively leaders are ensuring high-quality teaching and learning in phonics; what progress leaders have made in the early years since the last inspection; and how effectively leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils, make consistently good progress.
- The proportion of pupils meeting expectations in the Year 1 phonics screening checks in 2018 was below the national average. Leaders have accurately evaluated the teaching of phonics and made some well-chosen adjustments. Regular assessments take place to check pupils' knowledge and assess whether any need additional support. After-school phonics clubs are offered to give some pupils additional support so that they can read with greater confidence. To promote the understanding of phonics further, staff weave phonics questions into other subjects across the school day to check pupils' understanding of words and sounds. Consequently, in comparison with last year, a higher proportion of pupils currently in Year 1 are on track to reach the expected phonics check standard this year.

- At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to ensure that teaching in the early years is of a consistently high standard by making sure that all activities extend children's learning and have a clear purpose. The indoor and outdoor environments are now well organised, with stimulating learning opportunities. The outdoor area has been extended with a wide range of furniture and equipment to enhance children's learning. One group of children was role-playing being builders, using a variety of toy building equipment. There are effective strategies to develop children's communication skills. For example, three children role-played working in and visiting a toy fruit and vegetable shop, buying and selling fruit, with the 'shopkeeper' writing down the quantity needed in numbers.
- Pupils now have greater opportunities to develop their skills and understanding across the early years curriculum. Adults support children's learning effectively. The children are motivated and calm, confidently knowing the routines in the classroom. The well-planned activities now have a clear purpose, leading to a positive impact on children's outcomes.
- In the lessons we visited, disadvantaged pupils were learning confidently from the challenging tasks set for them and working well towards meeting their learning goals. Leaders' well-chosen activities to engage disadvantaged pupils are ensuring that they are making good progress. This progress is carefully evaluated at regular intervals. Pupils who are disadvantaged are actively encouraged to attend a homework club and a reading club to give them more opportunities to develop their comprehension skills and receive support with their homework. Disadvantaged pupils receive a range of useful and well-planned additional adult provision. Leaders provide parents with help with, and advice on, how they can help and encourage their children at home.
- Funding to support pupils who are disadvantaged is used effectively. The governing body holds leaders to account for the spending of the pupil premium. Leaders have rightly evaluated that there are still differences in the progress for some disadvantaged pupils, including the most able in school, compared to all pupils nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are sustained so that they achieve as well as all pupils nationally
- high expectations of pupils' progress in phonics is maintained so that more children reach the expected standard by the end of Year 1.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Oxford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Buckinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Darren Aisthorpe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the assistant headteacher, the acting lower school leader, the English co-ordinator, the school bursar and four governors. I spoke on the telephone with a representative of Herts for Learning and had a meeting with a group of pupils. I spoke with eight parents on the playground, and considered 50 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 30 free-text comments.

You and I observed teaching and learning across the school. I looked at pupils' learning in their mathematics and English books. I also scrutinised pupils' science books, their learning journals, and evidence of learning in the classrooms. I observed pupils at playtime and spoke with them informally. I also considered the school's action plan, the school's self-evaluation and a range of documentation related to safeguarding, pupils' progress, governance and leadership.