

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

Liguge Way, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6XF

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 January 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Philip Sherwood. This school is part of The Keys Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Hester Wooller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Horrocks.

What is it like to attend this school?

The values of 'love, courage, respect, aspiration and curiosity' are embodied by the pupils at this exceptional school. Pupils describe their school as being like 'another home' because of the support provided. Pupils flourish because they know that all staff 'want the best for them'. Parents are rightly very positive about the education their children receive. They value the school's ethos, the broad education it provides, and the school's place at the centre of the village community.

The very strong relationships across the school help pupils approach their learning with courage. They know that if they make mistakes, they will be helped to learn from them. The same approach assists pupils in their wider development. They willingly take on leadership opportunities and participate in work with linked schools and at community events.

Behaviour in the school is very good. Pupils are highly respectful of each other. They understand that friendships are valuable and should not be taken for granted. Because of this, they are keen to support and help each other. Well-designed, supportive systems help pupils to meet the school's high expectations for behaviour.

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

The school's curriculum is very well planned. The exact knowledge pupils need to learn is clearly identified. Methods for checking what pupils know are precise. The school has a wide range of effective approaches that ensure any pupils who fall behind quickly catch

up. This means that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn quickly and confidently remember what they have been taught. Consequently, pupils achieve highly.

Teachers have very strong subject knowledge. This enables clear and detailed teaching of new ideas. Staff welcome the regular opportunities that the trust provides to develop both subject and professional knowledge. This determination results in highly effective lessons. In addition, all staff strive to know pupils as well as possible, and teachers use this knowledge to consider their lesson planning carefully. Activities are expertly adapted to ensure all pupils can learn the required knowledge. Additionally, the information teachers receive from the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) ensures they know how to help each individual achieve their very best.

Pupils are proud of their achievements and enjoy discussing their learning. Because of the school's focus on accurate use of vocabulary, pupils use technical and subject-specific language fluently. This allows them to express and share their ideas in full. Pupils work together well. These discussions further deepen their understanding of the curriculum. Teachers have made sure that pupils know that learning builds over time. This means that pupils often think about their previous learning and frequently refer to their well-presented exercise books to check that they remember correctly.

Reading is a high priority for pupils of all ages. Phonics teaching is highly effective. Pupils in all year groups read, and are read to, daily. The school's well-stocked library is valued by pupils for its tempting variety of books. Reception-age children diligently help each other to practise their sounds and words. Language and communication are central to the early years curriculum that is in place. Children are keenly encouraged to explore many interesting topics. Their play and learning are brought to life through carefully selected stories and many interesting resources. This helps children immerse themselves and play together in shared activities. They also respectfully listen to each other during circle time activities.

The school has very high expectations for pupils' behaviour, and pupils rise to these expectations. Behaviour in lessons is exceptionally good. Pupils of all ages understand how to work well with each other. Communication and turn taking are a constant focus. This leads to pupils who are articulate and understand the importance of respecting each other.

The school has a highly ambitious approach to pupils' wider development. This is focused on preparing them for life beyond their formal education. The personal development curriculum has been designed with the same care and attention as the school's academic subjects. Many of the additional activities help pupils to know their local community and the opportunities it offers. As a result, pupils see themselves as future community leaders and are keen to contribute as much as they can. The school makes sure that disadvantaged pupils, including pupils with SEND, benefit as fully as possible from these opportunities. Careers activities are embedded into activity days, such as the termly 'Eco Day'. Pupils find hearing about the jobs of parents and community members inspiring.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 third ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Sonning Church of England Primary School, to be good in June 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 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	147379
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10296451
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Horrocks
CEO of trust	Hester Wooler
Headteacher	Philip Sherwood
Website	www.sonning.wokingham.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school joined The Keys Academy Trust in September 2019.
- The school uses no alternative education providers.
- Sonning Church of England Primary School is part of the Diocese of Oxford. The last section 48 Inspection took place in May 2016.
- The school offers a morning breakfast club and after-school club for pupils, both of which are run by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection of the school since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, SENDCo, early years leader, curriculum leaders, and other staff.
- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors, and with trustees, including the chair of trustees. He also spoke to a representative from the diocese.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and design and technology. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read. He also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ed Mather, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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