

Inspection of Sonning Church of England Primary School

Liguge Way, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6XF

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 July 2025

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Early years provision **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Good

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 (CEO), Hester Wooller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Horrocks.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils excel at this highly ambitious and nurturing school. The school has exceptionally high expectations for all pupils. Staff inspire pupils to become lifelong learners. Pupils achieve extremely well across the curriculum. They leave the school with remarkable maturity, self-motivation and a deep knowledge of what they have learned. Pupils are prepared impressively well for their next steps.

This school is a joyful place where pupils embody the values of 'love, courage, respect, aspiration and curiosity'. They behave with habitual kindness and care for each other. Pupils love to learn and play together. Their behaviour in lessons is excellent. Classrooms are industrious places where pupils, including children in the early years, demonstrate impressive focus and oracy skills. Pupils relish opportunities to discuss, debate and ask questions.

This remarkable school provides all pupils with a rich set of experiences to ensure that everyone 'builds strong foundations for the years ahead'. Pupils become responsible young people who are proud to make a difference in the school and the wider community. Elected pupil leaders are passionate about their meaningful roles. They organise events, gather the views of peers and present information to staff to influence change in the school.

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

The school's curriculum is impressively ambitious. This has been designed to ensure that pupils develop a deep understanding in all subjects. Literature is embedded thoughtfully throughout the curriculum. Pupils love reading the carefully chosen range of high-quality texts. They enjoy the challenge of reading increasingly sophisticated articles, poetry and extracts. The extensive opportunities to read, write and think deeply support pupils to become skilled and confident communicators.

Reading is prioritised from the early years. Phonics is taught with precision so that pupils become fluent readers as soon as possible. Pupils who need additional support receive expert help so that they keep up with their peers. In the early years, children receive exceptionally effective support to develop their knowledge of early number, sounds and letters. The environment is carefully designed to develop children's curiosity, vocabulary and social skills. Children flourish here. They work together to explore activities and solve problems with perseverance and excitement.

Staff have excellent subject knowledge. They explain concepts and connect new knowledge skilfully to what pupils already know. Staff check pupils' understanding rigorously and correct misconceptions rapidly. The school's agile approach to adapting learning and building knowledge means that every pupil achieves impressively well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have excellent support when they need it. Their needs are identified quickly when they join the school. The school's consistently expert support for these pupils means that pupils with SEND also achieve extremely well.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are impressive. They enjoy the process of learning, as well as the satisfaction of achieving as highly as possible. This is due to the consistently high expectations and nurturing environment that staff provide. Pupils love coming to a school where they are challenged to try hard and to become community-minded citizens. Pupils' attendance is high because pupils and their parents and carers understand the value of each school day. The school is central to the community. Parents are rightly full of praise for the excellent start that pupils have here.

The school's exceptional personal development programme provides pupils with skills and knowledge to prepare them for the outside world. Pupils have a deep understanding of British values, such as individual liberty and democracy. They discuss moral dilemmas in depth, considering different perspectives and possible solutions.

The school is unwaveringly inclusive. Staff are determined for every child to get the best start in life. They know the needs and backgrounds of each pupil very well. Pupils, therefore, benefit from a wide range of opportunities to help them develop as individuals. These experiences ensure that every pupil leaves the school with the confidence to explore new interests and to communicate their needs. Pupils understand very well how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider world. They appreciate the family environment of this village school, while knowing that they are ably equipped to thrive wherever they go next.

The trust and governors are extremely well informed about the strengths of the school. There are clear structures in place to ensure that high standards are maintained. This school is noteworthy, not just for the provision currently in place for pupils, but for its continued drive to keep improving. Staff's well-being and workload are managed very well. Staff are highly invested in providing the best possible education and opportunities for pupils and children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	10379933
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Horrocks
CEO of the trust	Hester Wooller
Headteacher	Philip Sherwood
Website	www.sonning.wokingham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Keys Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and senior leaders. The inspectors also met with some curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust, the CEO, members of the local governing body and a representative of the diocese.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in art, and design and technology and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to some parents before and after school. The inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Alexandra Aldridge-Gibbons, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Lenny Williams Ofsted Inspector

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