Inspection of a good school: St George's Church of England Infant School

White Lion Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP7 9HX

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2022

Outcome

St George's Church of England Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St George's enjoy school. They are keen to learn and relish the positive experiences through the extra opportunities such as the clubs for science, football and dance. They are very proud of their school and say that it is a friendly place where everyone is welcome. The headteacher knows and understands the school community well. She greets everyone in the morning with Roxy, the school dog. This is appreciated by all.

Pupils know the importance of treating everyone fairly and with respect. They talk confidently about the school's ethos and values and how these help them to learn. Daily collective worship is an important part of the school day. Pupils who are 'worship leaders' play an active role in assemblies, acting as positive role models for younger pupils. On Fridays, pupils are eager to celebrate the 'Golden Box' achievements of their classmates.

The school's Christian values are central to the actions of leaders and staff. Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. This means that pupils play and learn well together and that they feel safe. Bullying and unkind behaviour are not tolerated. Pupils value the school's 'friendship bench' which encourages everyone to be kind.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious and well planned. This begins in early years. Pupils enjoy learning about the carefully chosen topics. Leaders have thought about the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this to help pupils make links in their learning. What pupils remember is checked through effective questioning. For example, in a geography lesson, teachers ensured that pupils could remember key landmarks in the United Kingdom before moving on to identifying and recognising these in aerial photographs.

In mathematics, pupils achieve well. They know how to use resources such as counters and draw representations to help them solve number problems. Children in Nursery can recognise numbers in the games they play. In Reception, children count out the correct number of bricks to match the number rolled on a dice. They can extend their thinking and add one more when supported by an adult.

Most pupils learn to read well. This starts in Nursery, where the youngest children experience lots of opportunities to help them learn different vocabulary. This includes listening to stories, songs and poems. Teachers are skilled at teaching phonics because leaders have made sure that they are well trained. Teachers check regularly how pupils are getting on, and pupils who fall behind get extra help to catch up. Most pupils take home books that match the sounds they know. However, teachers are not checking this closely enough, and some pupils change their books too quickly. This means that they do not have enough practice in re-reading their books to secure their phonic knowledge. Leaders know that pupils need more time to talk about the stories they read to reinforce their understanding and to further develop their language.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their needs are identified appropriately. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to make sure that these pupils get the extra help they need in order to learn. Pupils with SEND are well supported by adults to learn, and overall, many achieve well. However, at times this is variable. This is because the support provided is not always as precisely matched to pupils' individual needs as it could be. The newly appointed special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator is taking action to address this.

Pupils behave consistently well. They are kind and respectful towards each other in class and in the playground. Pupils enjoy answering questions and working together to solve problems. They help each other to learn and support each other in paired activities. Pupils say 'well done' when their classmates get the right answer. The weekly class reward of 'George the Dragon', for the class with the most playground points, is important to them.

The whole school community understands how the school's vision and values, 'Inspire, believe, achieve, with God all things are possible', are important in everything they do. Pupils learn about different faiths and British values through the taught curriculum and daily collective worship. For example, during the inspection, the headteacher explored with the pupils the similarities between different faith celebrations such as Diwali and Advent, as well as the importance of kindness and treating friends and family well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has very clear systems that keep pupils safe. Governors make regular checks to ensure that the systems are working well. All staff understand their role in safeguarding because leaders provide the right training and regular updates. The headteacher works well with external agencies to ensure that families get the help they need. She knows pupils and families well and follows up when they are not getting the right support.

Pupils understand road safety and how to keep safe when using computers. They also know that they can talk to any adult in school if they are upset or worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, pupils do not have enough opportunity to read and practise the sounds they know. This sometimes limits how quickly pupils develop their fluency and comprehension. Leaders need to make sure that teachers are carefully checking the books the pupils take home and make sure that they are getting enough practice in reading together in school.
- In some lessons, adaptations to the curriculum for pupils with SEND are variable. When this happens, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the right training and support to provide suitable adaptations to the curriculum that will help them learn independently.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

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' 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	110424
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10241722
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Tippins
Headteacher	Beverley Accastello
Website	www.stgeorgesamersham.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In September 2022, the school opened a pre-school, currently with 12 children on roll.
- The headteacher started at the school in 2015, and was appointed as headteacher in 2017.
- The school is a Church of England school and is in the Diocese of Oxford.
- The school received its Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools in July 2017.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and four governors, including the chair. She had phone calls with a representative of the diocese and a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, listened to pupils read and looked at some samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school during lessons, in collective worship, at lunch and at playtimes. The lead inspector also met with groups of pupils to hear their views.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector spoke with staff and pupils. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review their knowledge, records and actions and also reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- The inspector considered the views of those parents and carers, pupils and staff who had completed Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Charlotte Wilson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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