

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

School Road, Charing, Ashford, Kent TN27 0JN

Inspection date: 20 October 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have returned to school keen to learn at the start of the new school year. They are very happy to be back in school as the pandemic restrictions begin to ease. Pupils are enjoying the opportunity to meet up with old friends and make some new ones. Children in Reception have quickly settled into school routines. They delight in all that school has to offer. During the inspection, for example, they watched and listened with intent concentration as they talked with an adult about a butterfly which had flown into the classroom.

Adults have high expectations of all pupils. They expect pupils to do their best and to be kind to each other. Pupils told inspectors that they love school. One parent told inspectors that the school's values, 'living and learning with faith, friendship and fun', 'are not just words on the wall', but make a real difference to the pupils – and the inspectors agree. Pupils want to do well. They work hard in lessons, play sensibly during break times and treat each other with respect. Leaders take any concerns about bullying seriously. Pupils say that they know that their teachers will keep them safe.

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

The head of school and his team of senior leaders have secured significant improvements in the school's work since his appointment in 2018. For example, they have established notable improvements in the English and mathematics curriculum during the past few years. The quality of pupils' learning in these subjects has improved significantly as a result. Leaders subsequently turned their attention to improving the curriculum in some of the foundation subjects, such as geography. They introduced curriculum plans which ensured that pupils were taught more securely in these subjects. Some of the school's plans to develop the foundation subjects were hampered by the pandemic. Leaders are now keen to get planned developments back on track. Subject leaders have resumed work to review and enhance curriculum plans, with further staff training scheduled for the coming year.

The mathematics curriculum is carefully planned and well established. It ensures that pupils become increasingly proficient mathematicians as they move up through the school. Children in Reception have plenty of opportunities to learn early mathematics skills using a wide range of appealing resources. For example, during the inspection, one child enjoyed practising counting with coins. Adults use questions such as 'What's one more than nine?' well to explore and develop children's knowledge of number. Meanwhile, pupils in the older year groups enjoy the challenge of solving tricky calculations. They are rightly proud of the progress they are making and talk enthusiastically about what they have learned.

Leaders introduced a new phonics programme prior to the pandemic. Effective staff training ensured increased consistency in phonics teaching. Pupils' early reading skills improved markedly as a result. Skilful teaching ensures that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) develop reliable early reading skills. Effective phonics teaching in the Reception class ensures that the youngest children make a strong start in learning to read. However, leaders have identified some inconsistencies in phonics teaching in other year groups. They have scheduled training to ensure that phonics teaching is taught consistently well across the school.

Teachers continued to teach phonics remotely during the pandemic lockdowns. Most pupils joined the sessions, either in school or online. Regular phonics practise meant that few pupils fell behind in their reading during this time. Some, including a small number of disadvantaged pupils, are currently benefiting from extra practise to reinforce how to blend sounds together to make a word.

Teachers assess pupils' learning as a routine part of their practice. Leaders use regular meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress. Teachers use assessment to identify any pupils who are finding it hard to keep up, as well as those doing well. The inclusion leader provides teachers with high-quality advice about support for pupils who need extra help, including those pupils with SEND.

Leaders' determination to improve pupils' learning has brought a new confidence and optimism to the school's work. Staff morale has improved dramatically during the past few years. Strong relationships and effective teamwork contribute to the school's positive atmosphere. Leaders, governors and trustees are mindful of staff workload issues. They always consider the implications of new initiatives carefully.

Pupils behave well in the classroom so that no lesson time is wasted. Occasionally, a few pupils lose concentration and so get less done in the lessons than their classmates. Adults are quick to notice when this happens. A quiet reminder is usually sufficient to refocus pupils on the work in hand.

The school's values and religious ethos provide a secure framework for pupils' spiritual development. During the inspection, for example, pupils offered some thoughtful and perceptive insights into Jesus's life during collective worship. Opportunities to promote pupils' personal development are threaded throughout the curriculum. For example, they are encouraged to cooperate when working with others, listen to different points of view,

and keep going when the work gets tricky. The school's varied and popular clubs contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are suitably trained in safeguarding procedures. They supplement annual training with regular opportunities to revise and reinforce staff knowledge through staff meetings, as well as other activities such as quizzes. Staff are clear about what to do if they are worried about a pupil. They understand the importance of reporting the smallest of concerns so that the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) can identify any underlying patterns. The DSL makes sure that any concerns are recorded and followed up promptly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the past, curriculum plans in some of the foundation subjects were not sufficiently well designed. This led to inconsistencies in the teaching of these subjects and gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders had begun to rectify weaknesses in curriculum planning prior to the pandemic. They had developed secure plans to support teaching in subjects such as geography. However, these plans lacked the detail needed to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they could. Leaders have now reinstated plans to secure further improvements in the coming months, including staff training.

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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Charing Church of England Aided Primary School, to be good in November 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.

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	144835
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10200857
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	114
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Richardson
Headteacher	Tom Bird
Website	www.charingschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Charing Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy in July 2014. When its predecessor school, Charing Church of England Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Almost all members of staff have been appointed since the predecessor school was inspected.
- The school is a Church of England school with a Christian ethos. The last statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) took place in November 2017. The next SIAMS inspection is due to take place in November 2022.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with the head of school, assistant headteacher, the inclusion leader and other members of staff. They also spoke with three governors, including the chair of governors, the education adviser for the trust, and the trust's chief executive officer.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, held a discussion with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central register. They also met with the DSL and reviewed the school's safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered pupil, parent and staff responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including 11 staff responses provided in the form of paper questionnaires. Inspectors visited the playground and spoke with pupils during the morning break. They also spoke with a group of staff.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gareth Flemington

Her Majesty's Inspector

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