

# Inspection of a good school: Horton Kirby Church of England Primary School

Horton Road, Horton Kirby, Dartford, Kent DA4 9BN

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Inspection dates:

3–4 March 2020

## Outcome

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

However, the inspector has some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like school and behave well. They are polite and well mannered. The school's values of 'respect, responsibility, resilience and reflection', known as the 4Rs, are at the heart of all the school does. Pupils enjoy responsibilities. The 'leading lights' guide the school in prayer. The eco team are committed to Horton Kirby playing its part in improving the environment. For example, they regularly check for any lights left on by mistake.

Pupils told me that bullying is rare. When it does happen, it is sorted out the second they tell staff. Pupils understand the role of the bystander in stopping bullying. They inform an adult if they see bullying happening.

Pupils feel safe in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe online. For example, pupils know to take screenshots of mean comments and show a trusted adult if it were to happen. Staff support pupils well. The lunchtime nurture club provides pupils with a safe space to share any worries they may have. However, leaders have not ensured that all safeguarding requirements are met. Leaders' expectations of what pupils will learn are not always high enough. Pupils learn better in some subjects than others.

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

Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Leaders have organised the curriculum into topics which interest pupils. In some subjects, such as in physical education, leaders are clear how pupils' skills are developed. Teachers know precisely what to teach pupils in each year group in a wide range of sports, such as cricket, netball and football. However, leaders have not checked carefully enough that the learning in some subjects is as ambitious as the national curriculum. For example, there are gaps in learning in key stage 1 science, with no planned learning about plants. Leaders have not checked thoroughly enough that all teachers follow the plans they have in place. Some pupils have gaps in knowledge, while others struggle to remember what they have learned in the past.

Leaders have started to address this by mapping out precisely what pupils are going to learn in all subjects, including the key knowledge they want pupils to remember.

Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils learn a range of reading skills. Pupils use these reading skills well in different subjects, such as in history and science lessons. Pupils enjoy reading. Teachers ensure that there is a sharp focus on improving vocabulary. For example, in a mixed Year 5 and 6 class, pupils were using the word 'heroically' while describing a character's actions.

Leaders have secured improvements in the teaching of phonics, which is taught well. Teachers are quick to spot if any pupils are not keeping up and provide extra support. Pupils practise sounds they have learned through reading books that match their phonics knowledge.

In the early years, teachers plan activities that engage children. Children concentrate well while learning because they are interested in what they are doing. Adults encourage children to think for themselves. For example, a group of children were creatively building a rocket to fly to the moon, working well together to solve problems. Leaders have made sure that there is a sharp focus on developing children's reading, writing and mathematics skills. I observed many children using their phonics knowledge to independently write words and sentences.

The quality of education that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive is variable depending on the subject they are learning. Teachers know how to adapt the curriculum in English and mathematics well for pupils with SEND. This is not the case in other subjects. Teachers do not use the information they have about the needs of these pupils well enough to adapt teaching in all subjects.

Leaders have reviewed the systems to improve pupils' attendance. However, rates of absence remain high for disadvantaged pupils and too many pupils are persistently absent from school. They miss out on important learning.

Most pupils work hard in lessons and follow class rules. Nonetheless, the rate of exclusions has been high in the past. Leaders have not followed policy robustly. They have not planned how to support pupils who have difficulties managing their behaviour well enough. These pupils do not always receive the expert support that they need to learn well.

Leaders effectively enhance pupils' learning. They have planned '100 things' they want pupils to experience while attending the school. For example, pupils visit different places of worship and learn how to cook healthy meals. Pupils know how to live healthy lifestyles.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are alert to any changes in behaviour in pupils which may suggest that something is wrong. They report any concerns swiftly. Leaders keep detailed safeguarding records and

report immediately to social care when they need to. Staff receive bespoke training. They are knowledgeable about many aspects of safeguarding.

However, leaders have not ensured that all statutory pre-employment checks on staff and checks on governors are fully in place. These oversights were rectified during the inspection. Trustees and governors have accepted too readily leaders' assertions that the single central record is complete.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not made sure that all statutory checks have been recorded in the single central record. They have not helped staff responsible for this piece of work to have a precise understanding of which checks are needed for different roles in the school, such as teaching staff and governors. This means that sometimes checks are not carried out or are carried out unnecessarily. Leaders must ensure that there are better procedures in place to ensure all statutory pre-employment checks are carried out swiftly and that these procedures are monitored robustly.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum for English and mathematics is well sequenced and taught. However, this is not always the case in science and the foundation subjects. There is some lack of clarity in exactly what is to be taught and when. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge because they have not learned and remembered everything that they should. Leaders must make sure that the plans for all subjects are coherent so that all pupils learn and remember more.
- Teachers do not have the skills to fully adapt learning in the foundation subjects for pupils with SEND. This means that, in some subjects, pupils with SEND do not learn well enough. Leaders need to help teachers plan activities that are well matched to the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as often as their classmates. These pupils miss out on learning because they are not attending school regularly enough. Leaders must ensure that the attendance of these pupils improves.
- In the past, exclusions have been too high. As a result, some pupils' learning has suffered. Leaders have had some success in reducing exclusions recently. Nevertheless, they must continue their efforts in this. Leaders must ensure that they follow policy precisely, plan effective support and improve the skills of staff in meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils.

## 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 non-exempt outstanding school. 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Horton Kirby Church of England Primary School, to be good on 25–26 February 2015.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144099
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122239
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	269
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Anthony Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Glenn Pollard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hortonkirby.kent.sch.uk">www.hortonkirby.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Alethea Anglican Academies Trust in April 2017.
- As a school with a distinctive Christian ethos, the school was last subject to an inspection of its religious denomination under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2016, when it was judged to be good.
- Classes are organised each academic year depending on the number of pupils on roll. Currently, some pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, while others are taught in same-age groups.

## Information about this inspection

- As part of this inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. Discussions were also held with teachers and support staff.
- I did deep dives in: reading, physical education and science. These subjects were considered closely to evaluate the quality of education. This involved speaking to subject leaders, teachers and pupils. I visited lessons and looked at a range of pupils’

work and leaders' planning, as well as hearing some pupils read. In addition, I looked at leaders' plans for history and geography.

- I met with the chair of the governing body and five other governors. I met with the chief executive officer from the Alethea Anglican Academies Trust.
- I considered a range of school documentation, including the school's own evaluation and improvement planning. I scrutinised published information about pupils' achievement and looked at the school's website.
- To inspect safeguarding, I met with the school's designated safeguarding leaders, spoke to staff, governors and pupils, checked recruitment procedures and looked at safeguarding records and policies.
- I considered the 114 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 63 free-text comments. In addition, 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff were considered, as were 91 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire. No pupils from Year 3 and below responded to the pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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