

# Inspection of a good school: Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Halstead

Beridge Road, Halstead, Essex CO9 1JH

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

## Outcome

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Halstead continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this warm and welcoming school, which is 'like its own little community'. Pupils know and understand their 'learning powers'. They use these throughout the school day. Pupils show perseverance and resilience in their lessons. This helps them to reach the high expectations staff have of them. Pupils learn and achieve well. They are prepared well for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils behave very well during their lessons and when they are playing together on the school playground. They listen carefully to adults and to each other. Pupils show high levels of respect towards adults and each other. Older pupils like to help younger pupils. They are proud to be peer mentors, for example. Younger pupils appreciate this support. The lunchtime well-being hub provides pupils with a quiet space should they wish to use it. On the very rare occasions bullying happens, staff are quick to deal with it.

Pupils appreciate the many opportunities leaders carefully plan for them. A range of visitors to the school, for example a local sculptor, inspire and introduce pupils to possible future careers. Pupils also enjoy the chance to attend clubs and represent the school in sporting events.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that clearly identifies the important knowledge that pupils will learn. They have identified how the early years curriculum leads into Year 1. This helps children in Reception to be ready for their learning in key stage 1. Subject leaders provide detailed guidance and support for teachers. This helps teachers to order knowledge into lessons that build on what pupils have already learned. Teachers do this well. They have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum effectively.

Teachers present information clearly to pupils. They regularly check what pupils have learned and remembered. They use these checks to revisit and recap important knowledge. This helps pupils when they begin new learning as they build on what they already know. Teachers complete these checks particularly well in English and mathematics. There are, however, some inconsistencies in how effectively teachers check how well pupils are faring and adapt their teaching in some subjects. This means that, while pupils achieve well, they do not always secure as deep an understanding of the planned curriculum as leaders expect them to.

There is a culture of reading that leaders have developed across the school. Staff in the early years support children to use rich vocabulary. They teach children to blend sounds together. Children use this knowledge to help them to read. Leaders have systems in place to identify and provide support for any pupil who finds reading difficult. They have matched reading books to the sounds pupils know and can read. This helps to give pupils the confidence they need to become more fluent. Pupils across the school love reading. They experience diverse and high-quality texts and stories. They especially like it when teachers and other pupils recommend books to them.

Leaders provide training and clear guidance for all staff in how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers make careful and precise adaptations to the curriculum for these pupils. Staff use well-chosen resources to support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Leaders thoughtfully plan a wide range of exciting opportunities for pupils' wider development. They enrich the curriculum through events, such as the recent 'fantastic flights to faraway places'. Trips to places such as Colchester Castle help pupils to develop their understanding of what they have learned during lessons. There are many opportunities for pupils to experience things, people and places they might not otherwise have the chance to. This includes enterprise days and newly established links the headteacher has developed with schools in China, France and Canada.

Governors know the school well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education pupils experience in school. They ensure that leaders support staff to manage their workload. Staff are very appreciative of the support they receive and the professional development leaders provide them. They have confidence in the leadership of the school and are proud to work at Holy Trinity. Leaders work proactively to engage the parental community. Parents are very positive about the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn how to keep safe, including when online. They have a secure understanding of this. Pupils know there are trusted adults they can talk to if they need to. Staff have a clear understanding of the training and regular updates leaders provide on how to keep pupils safe. Staff record concerns about pupils following the agreed procedures. Leaders use all the information they receive to provide support for pupils and families who require it. This includes pastoral support within school but also through seeking help from

external professionals when they need to. Governors ensure leaders follow the latest safeguarding guidance.

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

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

- In some subjects, teachers do not use consistent techniques to check how well pupils are faring. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not have opportunities to revisit and secure prior learning. Leaders must ensure they provide teachers with the guidance and support they need, so they effectively check and, where appropriate, revisit learning. This is so that pupils can better link prior learning to new learning and, so secure a deep understanding of the planned curriculum.

## **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 July 2013.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115066
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255248
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Matthew Londesborough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Rowe
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holytrinityhalstead.com">www.holytrinityhalstead.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 and 4 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school's most recent inspection of its religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, was in May 2016. It will receive its next inspection within eight years of that date.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Curriculum plans and work produced by

pupils in science and history were also considered. The inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school's record of background checks of adults at the school, and a sample of child protection files. He also spoke with governors, the designated safeguarding lead, the deputy designated safeguarding leads and staff about safeguarding practices at the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, staff, governors and pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, pupil records, minutes of governing body meetings, school improvement visit notes from the diocese and local authority, school development plans, and school policies.
- There were 54 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered.
- There were 23 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. The inspector spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- There were 41 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. The inspector also spoke with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

### **Inspection team**

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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