Inspection of a good school: Parsons Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Templewood Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 3EZ

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

Outcome

Parsons Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a warm and friendly community that lives out its values of belonging, kindness and resilience. Pupils are happy, and they feel safe. They know that if they are kind to someone, then they will be kind back.

Pupils want to do the best they can. They respond well to the high aspirations that the school has of them even when they find work challenging. Pupils enjoy the learning they do in class. This captures their interest. One pupil, for example, enjoyed learning about rainforests so much that they went home and carried on finding out as much as they could online.

This is an inclusive school where all pupils have access to a wide range of after-school clubs. These include yoga and 'relax and read' as well as a range of sporting opportunities. The school celebrates the different jobs that people in the community have. Pupils enjoy thinking about their future and what they might need to do to achieve these roles.

Pupils behave well. They are clear of the expectations that the school has of them, and they work hard to meet these. Pupils are well supported by staff who know them well.

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

The school has a very clear rationale for the curriculum it has adopted. Staff work hard to ensure that this is relevant for the pupils who attend the school. The school ensures that pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum that sets out precisely the knowledge and vocabulary that they want the pupils to know. Staff are real experts in their subjects, and they help pupils to learn and remember plenty of useful knowledge. However, sometimes

staff present new facts that do not link to what pupils already know. This confuses pupils, and they struggle to remember their learning.

The school prioritises reading so that pupils become confident and fluent readers. The staff receive high-quality training and know how to teach reading well. Books are well matched to the sounds that pupils know so that pupils can practise the sounds that they are learning. Teachers carefully monitor all pupils so that those who need extra help to keep up receive it quickly.

The school promotes a love of reading. The recently introduced story time is very popular with pupils. The learning council chooses the books that teachers read to their classes. Other books by the same authors are available in the class book corner. Reading comes alive when there is a focus on authors for World Book Day. This has included a farm coming into school when reading Dick King Smith books as many of his stories are set on farms.

The provision for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is of a high quality. Teachers adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individuals as they know where they are in their learning and what they need to do next. For some pupils, staff design a personalised curriculum as it is more appropriate. Parents and the school work in partnership to ensure that pupils with SEND make progress.

Staff ensure that pupils behave well. Detailed training on the new behaviour policy has ensured that everyone is aware of the expectations. Staff manage behaviour consistently well. As a result of this, the number of behaviour incidents is reducing. Pupils and adults have strong relationships that are rooted in mutual respect.

The school has a broad personal development programme. Pupils experience new things by completing '50 things to do before you leave the school'. This includes raising money for charity and staying away from home for the first time. Pupils enjoy these activities and working as part of a community to complete them.

The school embraces a positive and open environment for staff and parents. Parents are very positive about the school and the experiences their children have. Parents and the school work together. Staff feel valued and know that their well-being and workload are carefully considered. Governors work collaboratively with the staff to ensure that the vision and values are at the forefront of the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, pupils learn facts and skills in isolation without linking back to their prior knowledge. This means that pupils cannot make links in their learning and, therefore, forget what is taught. The school needs to refine the curriculum so that pupils revisit the most important knowledge and commit this to memory.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

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	115088
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10288443
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gary Sanford
Headteacher	Claire Newson
Website	www.parsonsheathprimary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The most recent statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (section 48) took place in June 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due in the 2023/24 school year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with governors from the Governing Body, including the chair of Governors. She spoke on the telephone with a representative of the Diocese of Chelmsford.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector; 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 inspector gathered the views of pupils by speaking to them during lessons and at breaktime. There were 24 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. The inspector also considered correspondence sent directly to the team.
- The inspector spoke to groups of staff, to gather their views of the school. 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were also considered.
- The inspector considered 47 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Katie Devenport, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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