

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School

Birch Green, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG14 2LR

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud and happy to be part of this warm and welcoming school. They talk fondly about how they celebrated the recent 175th anniversary of the school by spending the day living like Victorians. Older pupils speak about being role models for younger children in the school. They show high levels of respect and care for each other and are outspoken about any form of discrimination. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will swiftly deal with any worries they have.

There are high expectations for all pupils, both in their learning and behaviour. They meet these expectations each day. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from a carefully constructed curriculum and work hard in lessons. They learn well.

Pupils develop their understanding of, and celebrate, different cultures and faiths that make up modern Britain. They explain how all pupils come together to talk about the differences between religions that they have studied.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are clear that as soon as pupils join, staff provide the support they need to learn well and grow in confidence to become well-developed young people.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum. It is designed to build on prior learning in a logical way. Starting in the early years, the curriculum helps teachers to

know what to teach and when to teach it. Training supports all staff to develop their expertise to teach subjects well.

The school ensures that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with SEND. Where appropriate, teachers make adaptations to activities. Well-considered additional resources and adults support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. This helps them to learn alongside their peers and to achieve well. Pupils develop a secure understanding of the curriculum. They explain their learning using relevant subject-specific vocabulary. For example, Year 5 pupils explained their learning in a religious education lesson by talking about justice and tolerance.

Typically, staff make regular checks on what pupils know. When teachers identify gaps in pupils' understanding, they adapt their teaching to address them. However, at times, these checks are not made as quickly as they could be. When this happens, pupils do not know and remember important information as well as they should.

The school puts reading at the heart of the curriculum. Staff immerse children in stories and rhymes as soon as they begin Nursery Year. Well-trained staff teach pupils the sounds that they need to be able to read with fluency. Staff identify pupils who fall behind with their reading. These pupils get the extra support that they need to catch up quickly. This helps pupils to become confident, fluent readers.

Staff establish clear routines from the start of early years. In Nursery and Reception Years, children learn important knowledge in mathematics and English. Children develop their vocabulary through the interactions that they have with adults. Staff know children well. They provide appropriate activities that help to develop children's knowledge and skills. This means that children are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

Pupils behave well. They listen attentively to adults and each other during lessons. Pupils are highly motivated to learn. They are able to explain why coming to school to learn is important. As a result, they attend school regularly.

Pupils learn the values of the school, which underpin the fundamental British values, through assemblies and the curriculum. They have a secure understanding of why values such as mutual respect and democracy are important in the wider world. Pupils learn how to live healthy lifestyles. For example, they learn about the importance of a balanced diet, personal hygiene and getting a good night's sleep. Many pupils engage with the range of clubs on offer. In particular, pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to learn to play a musical instrument, play in the school orchestra or sing in the choir.

The school has made effective changes since the previous inspection, including the development of a new curriculum. The school uses a range of methods to evaluate where it can improve standards further. This reflects the school's drive to ensure that the provision is the best it can be for pupils. Governors have an accurate view of the school, guiding and challenging leaders appropriately. Staff are highly positive about how the school ensures that their workload is managed and well-being is supported. Staff enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, staff do not check what pupils know regularly enough. This means that some pupils, in some subjects, do not secure their knowledge in their long-term memory. The school needs to ensure that all staff quickly identify gaps in what pupils know and remember and adapt their teaching to ensure that pupils consistently build their learning securely over time.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	117563
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345212
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Grubb
Headteacher	Lorraine Gauld
Website	www.hertingfordbury.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2020.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is a Church of England school under the Diocese of St Albans. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of its religious character took place in February 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to a group of teachers.

- The inspector spoke to a range of subject leaders and the senior leaders in the school about aspects such as attendance, behaviour, SEND provision and safeguarding.
- The inspector met with three members of the local governing body.
- The inspector spoke to the school effectiveness adviser and a representative of the local diocese.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- 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 considered the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's online staff survey. The pupil survey was not used in this inspection. The inspector spoke to a wide range of pupils both formally and informally during the inspection.

Inspection team

Wayne Jarvis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024