

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

Church Lane, Huxley, Chester, Cheshire CH3 9BH

Inspection dates:

15 October 2019

Outcome

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

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a tiny school with a big heart. Every pupil gets lots of attention from staff. Pupils are lively and bubbly. They are eager and keen to learn. They have a great time with so much space in which to play. They make good use of the playground equipment. Pupils are helpful, caring and kind. They show respect for everyone and everything. They try their best and listen in lessons. There is very little name-calling or bullying. If there is, there is a good system to quickly solve any issues. Pupils feel safe and most are happy.

The new headteacher makes sure that all staff have high expectations for every child. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has not always been the case. In recent years, there have been a lot of staff changes. This has affected how well pupils have achieved.

Staff develop pupils' social skills by mixing with pupils from other schools. For example, they go on residential visits, sports and other competitions with other schools. Pupils work well together. They made the autumn art display in the foyer and the healthy eating display in the library. They also decided together what the school's values should be.

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

Standards at the end of 2019 were low and too many pupils did not achieve as well as they should. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils was low.

The new headteacher has started to rebuild. The school has now turned the corner. We saw no disruption to lessons because of poor behaviour. Pupils are keen to learn.

The headteacher has revamped the curriculum. Older pupils have a rolling programme over four years. In geography, for example, pupils in key stage 2 learn about the

rainforests together. Pupils' work is very similar. The activities are the same for younger as they are for older pupils. However, older pupils learn more complex geography skills than the younger pupils. Teachers develop pupils' memory of geography well. At the start of a lesson, for example, pupils revised the features of a map of the world. They remembered where the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn are. They named the oceans, rivers and the continents. Staff help pupils with SEND to learn about rainforests at the same level as other pupils. Younger pupils develop a good understanding of the world. They planted conkers, and apple and wheat seeds. They talked about growth and the functions of a tree. Through lessons, all pupils learn to respect wildlife. They discuss moral issues such as saving the rainforests.

Leaders know that reading is a subject that needs to improve so it has a high priority. Standards in reading have been low. Adults read books to pupils throughout the day. They encourage pupils to read and try to give them a love of reading. The long-term plans show a progression in the assessment of reading skills. The match of books to the reading age of the pupils is not as close as it should be. Books are in colour bands. However, the bands do not match pupils' reading abilities. Leaders have not identified disadvantaged pupils' barriers to learning in reading. Some disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress. Staff support pupils with SEND well. Adults work well to help pupils to catch up to where they should be for their age. The youngest children pick up reading skills from the start of Reception.

Leaders have made long-term plans in mathematics that build pupils' number skills well. In the past, standards have been low, but there are signs of improvement. Pupils learn the same mathematical idea at the same time but older pupils at a more demanding level. Teachers thread problem solving throughout the lesson. They take their time to make sure each pupil has understood before moving on. Teachers develop pupils' memories, which is particularly successful for pupils with SEND. Younger children's work shows some good examples of their understanding of comparing different measures.

The school is now a much more settled place. The new headteacher is making a real difference. Governors know that it is important to look after their staff as well as pupils. They are beginning to look at how they can improve staff's work-life balance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority. For example, there are posters and signs around the school for charity telephone lines and whistleblowing policies. There is a good system in place to train staff along with other staff at Tarporley Primary School. Staff identify families that may need help, and work with other agencies to get them the help that they need. There is a good system in place to track any incidents and link them together to get a full picture of the child.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' achievement in reading has been low. The books that they read are not matched as well as they could be to their reading abilities. Leaders have not identified precisely enough what disadvantaged pupils need to do to improve their reading. Leaders need to address these issues so that pupils' achievement in reading improves.
- Leaders have developed a progressive scheme of work in geography. The activities in lessons, however, are very similar for the older and younger pupils. Leaders should ensure that teachers refine the work in class so that older pupils complete more demanding work than the younger 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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the 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 school to be good in July 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 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	111286
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10110990
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Ratledge
Executive headteacher	Kerry Forrester
Headteacher	Cathy Davies
Website	www.huxleyprimary.cheshire.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2015

Information about this school

- The school has been through significant disruption. Almost every member of staff and most of the pupils left in the summer. The previous headteacher, who is also the headteacher at a neighbouring school, resigned. The informal federation with Utkinton St Paul's Church of England Primary School came to an end in May 2019.
- The headteacher at Tarporley Church of England Primary School became the executive headteacher at Huxley in September 2019. Mrs Davies, the new headteacher at Huxley, took up her post from September 2019. She was previously working at Tarporley Primary School.
- The school is a Church of England, voluntary-controlled primary school. The last inspection of religious education and other religious aspects was in October 2017. The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder, those with emotional and/or behavioural needs, and those who have difficulties with cognition.

Information about this inspection

- We looked at three subjects in detail: geography, reading and mathematics. In doing so, we met with the curriculum leader, looked at pupils' work, spoke with the teachers, spoke with pupils and visited lessons. We also heard some pupils read.
- We met with three representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. We spoke on the telephone to one of the part-time teachers and to a specialist in the teaching of English who is helping the school. We also spoke with the executive headteacher, who is the headteacher at Tarporley Primary School.
- Seven members of staff completed Ofsted's online survey. We took their views into account. No pupils completed the survey, but we did speak with pupils at breaktime and as part of the in-depth look at mathematics and geography. Fewer than 10 parents completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, so we looked at the seven survey responses completed on paper.
- To look at how well the school safeguards pupils, we looked at the school's checks on staff's clearance to be able to work with children. We also looked at the security of the school site and met with the headteacher.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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