

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

Cob Drive, Shorne, Gravesend, Kent DA12 3DU

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 March 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in this nurturing and inclusive school. Trust leaders, governors and staff are united in their ambition for pupils to achieve their best, both academically and personally. Pupils enjoy their learning and value their friendships. There is a happy and purposeful atmosphere in all areas.

Leaders' expectations are high. This is reflected in pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils have the utmost confidence that staff will quickly help them to resolve any issues or problems. Pupils feel safe and well looked after by encouraging and caring adults.

Children in Reception get off to a flying start. Pupils ably demonstrate the school's values of respect, resilience and community. Leaders provide a wealth of opportunities to enrich the curriculum. Pupils immerse themselves in experiences, such as visiting a gurdwara, going to the Tower of London, participating in different sporting competitions and singing at national and local events.

Overall, parents are very happy with the quality of education and experiences their children receive. They describe the school as 'a wonderful community and learning environment' in which their children thrive.

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

Aletheia Academies Trust and governors have successfully managed the recent leadership challenges. As a result, the current leadership arrangement has brought about much stability and purpose. This is enabling the school to continue to bring about the necessary improvements to the quality of education. For instance, leaders have prioritised reading. Pupils get off to a strong start when learning to read. Phonics teaching starts as soon as

children join Reception. Staff are trained well to deliver the school's phonics programme effectively. They keep a watchful eye on how pupils are getting on. When needed, staff provide extra support for pupils to ensure they catch up quickly. Through the school's popular 'reading toolkit', teachers develop pupils' reading fluency and comprehension well. Leaders make sure that pupils read an interesting and diverse range of texts. Pupils talk confidently about the stories they have read and the authors they enjoy.

The mathematics curriculum is carefully designed and, overall, is delivered successfully across the school. Younger children get a solid grounding in their knowledge and understanding of number. Pupils routinely use mathematical vocabulary when explaining their ideas. This is because staff give suitable attention to pupils' accuracy and fluency in mathematics. Consequently, pupils enjoy and achieve well in this subject.

Pupils follow a broad and interesting curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have put in place a well-considered curriculum designed so that pupils can build on and connect their learning. Staff provide appropriate support and resources to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities succeed in their work. In Reception, activities and resources are well organised. This means that, over time, children become independent and curious learners. However, in some subjects, such as history, science and art, the curriculum has been introduced more recently, and there remains work to do. In these subjects, leaders have not provided teachers with precise enough information about what pupils should learn step by step. As a result, pupils do not learn and achieve as well as they could across the curriculum. Leaders are addressing this. They are also making sure that subject leaders have rigorous oversight of their areas of responsibility.

Pupils listen carefully to their teachers in lessons and want to do their best. Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Leaders have recently put in place effective systems to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence.

The promotion of pupils' wider development is a strength. Leaders make sure that pupils benefit from a well-considered range of opportunities before they leave school. Pupils understand, respect and appreciate each other's differences. Older pupils take on leadership responsibilities, such as house captains. In addition, they buddy with younger pupils or join the active school council. These are meaningful roles where pupils learn how they can make a difference and bring about positive change. One parent, echoing the views of many, explained, 'I admire the way this school focuses on values and personal growth, as well as educational development.'

Trust leaders, governors and senior leaders are ambitious for all staff and pupils. There is a strong culture of mutual support and teamwork among staff. They appreciate that leaders listen to their views and are always considerate of their workload and well-being. Staff feel valued and proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. Adults know pupils and their families very well. This helps them to identify quickly when pupils may be at risk of harm. All staff are well trained in safeguarding matters. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have a concern, including how to record information. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that the necessary action is taken swiftly, including the involvement of external agencies if appropriate.

Governors assure themselves that safeguarding is effective. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Leaders work closely with parents to ensure that everyone works together to help pupils learn how to keep safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not identified with enough precision what pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in all subjects. Leaders should clarify what pupils need to know and remember step by step in all subjects. Additionally, subject leaders need to develop their roles and oversight of the curriculum to ensure that improvements to the curriculum are planned and implemented effectively.
- Increasing pupils' rates of attendance, although improving, remains a school priority. Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough and miss out on important learning. Leaders should continue developing recently implemented systems to ensure that pupils' attendance improves and persistent absence reduces.

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 predecessor school, Shorne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, to be good in October 2012.

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

Unique reference number	141578
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256439
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Till
Headteacher	Sarah Prest (Interim head of school)
Website	www.shorne.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Shorne Church of England Primary School is part of Aletheia Academies Trust (AAT).
- A section 48 inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shorne Church of England Primary School as a Christian school took place in February 2018.
- The school is currently led by two trust leaders: an interim head of school and an executive headteacher. These leaders are also supported by the school's deputy headteacher.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

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 her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at pupils' work in science, geography, modern foreign languages, art, personal, social and health education and religious education.
- The inspector met with the interim head of school, the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher, as well as the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer of AAT and with members of the local governing body, including the chair and the vice chair of governors.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector considered and checked the culture of safeguarding within the school through looking at documentation and talking to leaders, staff and pupils. The single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records was also checked.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including attendance and behaviour information, school development plans and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness.
- The inspector met with a range of teachers, including those new to the profession, to gather their views of the school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. She talked to pupils, formally and informally, about their learning, what behaviour is like and whether they feel safe at school.

Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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