

Inspection of Ashley Church of England Primary School

Ashley Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 1HX

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Jennie Ratcliff. This school is part of the Good Shepherd Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Kennedy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Friend.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has made substantial changes over the past few years, and this has led to clear improvements in pupils' experiences. Children make a bright start in early years. They form positive bonds with classmates and adults. This is because staff know the children well, and understand what they need in order to develop. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy learning and they attend well. The school is ambitious for all pupils, and the curriculum enables them to achieve well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from effective support. Staff are thoughtful in adapting tasks so that pupils with SEND do not feel singled out. This reflects the school's commitment to inclusivity, which is shared enthusiastically by the pupils.

Pupils typically behave with kindness, respect and an eagerness for learning. They are confident that any unkind behaviour will be dealt with by staff. Some classroom routines and expectations are still being embedded, and this leads to variations in some pupils' behaviour. Older pupils act as positive role models within the school. Groups such as the 'reading crew' and 'world caretakers' give pupils the chance to be leaders and to shape their school community.

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

Reading is central to the school's curriculum, and to the successes pupils achieve here. In early years, children rapidly build their knowledge of phonics. This is a result of staff modelling sounds and words clearly, and checking that children can remember them. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading, and they showcase 'recommended reads' at the entrance to their classrooms. Staff make sure that weaker readers are given targeted support. This helps pupils to develop confidence and fluency with sounds that they find difficult. Sometimes, gaps in pupils' recall of words or sounds are not picked up on straight away. This leads to some pupils finding it more difficult to understand the books that they are reading.

Pupils achieve well throughout the curriculum. The school has carefully defined the sequence of what pupils need to know at each stage. Together with the trust, the school ensures that this is taught well. Teachers remind pupils about the 'golden threads' within each subject, such as programming skills in computing. This approach helps pupils to build clear mental models of what it means to think like a computer scientist or a designer. Teachers demonstrate and break down important ideas for pupils. In history, for example, teachers refer back to familiar timelines to help pupils understand when events happened. However, in some subjects, the tasks and activities that pupils complete are not as clearly connected to the intended learning. As a result, pupils do not always apply their learning as fully as they could.

Teachers use assessment to inform them about what pupils know and what they need to learn next. In early years, staff check in detail about whether each child is learning what they need to be ready for key stage 1. This also helps staff to identify

and support SEND needs effectively. In other key stages, there are variations in how well teachers check what pupils understand as they are learning. Where this happens effectively, such as in English, pupils build accuracy in grammar and spelling. At other times when teachers are less systematic in checking that every pupil understands, then gaps in pupils' knowledge can persist.

The school works closely with families to promote attendance. Leaders have a detailed grasp of the barriers faced by some pupils, for instance in attending punctually. Tackling the causes of these issues has helped the school to sustain high attendance and improvements in punctuality. Lessons are generally calm and orderly. There are times when some pupils lose focus on learning. This is a result of some of the school's routines and expectations not being firmly embedded yet.

Pupils of all ages learn about managing their emotions. They are encouraged to take care of their mental and physical health, and even the youngest children learn about what makes a good friend. Pupils are introduced to current affairs and ethical questions, and staff provide scope for them to consider different views on these. During their time in the school, pupils visit an array of places of worship or listen to guest speakers from the major world religions. The school provides a broad and well-considered range of clubs that match pupils' enthusiasms. Pupils also enjoy taking part in inter-school poetry competitions and performing traditional dances from around the world.

Leaders are aware of the pressures faced by staff, particularly as the curriculum has evolved. The school, along with the trust, have struck a careful balance between making necessary improvements, and ensuring that these are sustainable. This has enabled all staff to develop the knowledge and skills they need to support pupils in their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The tasks that pupils complete do not always enable them to apply their learning in ways which match the ambitions of the curriculum. When this happens, the work that pupils produce does not consistently reflect the knowledge and skill that is expected in the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that tasks enable pupils to apply their knowledge consistently and in ways which align with the aims of the curriculum.
- The school's expectations of pupils' conduct are not always upheld consistently. In classes where routines and standards are not as well embedded, some pupils can lose focus and miss opportunities for learning. Leaders must support all staff to

maintain consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour, in line with shared policies and practices.

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	141294
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10296408
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	565
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Friend
Headteacher	Jennie Ratcliff
CEO	Paul Kennedy
Website	www.ashleyschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 November 2021

Information about this school

- Ashley Church of England Primary School is part of the Good Shepherd Trust.
- Ashley Church of England Primary School is a Church of England converter academy. The most recent section 48 SIAMS inspection took place in October 2017. The next section 48 SIAMS inspection is due to take place before November 2025.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with school leaders including the headteacher and senior leaders. The inspectors also met representatives from the local governing board, and spoke with representatives from the board of trustees as well as the chief executive officer of the trust. The inspectors also spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Guildford.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English, design and technology, computing and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also discussed the curriculum and provision for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, governors, trustees, trust leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts the pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Daniel Botting, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Fisher-Pink	Ofsted Inspector
Owen McColgan	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Law	Ofsted Inspector

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