

Inspection of a good school: Dewhurst St Mary CofE Primary School

94, Churchgate, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 9ND

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 March 2023

Outcome

Dewhurst St Mary CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy in school. They learn in a calm, interesting and safe environment. They respond very well to the high expectations that staff have of them. They become independent, interested and well-behaved learners very quickly. Pupils leave ready for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils feel safe and cared for. They understand what bullying is and how it is different to arguing with friends. They know adults in school are there to help. If they have any worries there are lots of adults they can share concerns with. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve issues quickly and ensure they do not happen again.

Pupils value their friends and how they help them and are there to listen. They are respectful of each other's differences. They work and play well together. Pupils learn about a wide range of people, cultures and families. This helps them understand life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy the roles they have in school and are proud when adults make them responsible for their own choices. This makes them feel trusted and 'grown up'.

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

Leaders have constructed an interesting and aspirational curriculum. They aim for pupils to achieve highly, enjoy learning and be eager learners. Leaders' curriculum thinking is clear in most subjects. In these subjects, they set out precisely what pupils should learn and when. It shows teachers the most effective way to teach important knowledge. This helps pupils to remember what they are taught. Then pupils remember their learning and build on it well over time. Teachers use assessment well to check what pupils know and can do. They are knowledgeable and confident in the subjects they teach.

In a few subjects, leaders' thinking is not as precise. Teachers are unclear what the most important knowledge is for pupils to learn. At times, important steps get missed out. For example, teachers do not always recap previous learning or pupils do not routinely

practise using knowledge for long enough. Occasionally, new learning is introduced before previous learning is secure. This means pupils are less secure in their understanding and progress is more variable.

Staff have the expertise to teach early reading well. Pupils start learning to read as soon as they begin school. Teachers know which pupils need extra help with their reading. These pupils receive more time to practise their reading and keep up. Staff discuss books containing ambitious vocabulary before pupils read independently. Books contain the sounds that pupils are familiar with. This helps pupils to read accurately and with understanding. They become confident readers quickly.

Leaders have high expectations of children's learning in the early years. Children develop positive attitudes to learning. They learn the knowledge that they need to help them become confident learners in Year 1. They are ready for the next stage of their learning.

All staff have the same high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly. Appropriate and precise plans are in place to ensure pupils with SEND receive the help they need. Pupils with SEND work alongside their classmates in all lessons. They work confidently and independently. Pupils with SEND make strong progress.

Teachers receive regular training to help them teach the curriculum well. They value the support they receive from school and subject leaders. This helps teachers with their workload.

Teachers have consistent expectations and routines that pupils understand and follow. Pupils are attentive and eager to learn. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school, so little learning time is lost.

Leaders want pupils to be able to 'dream, believe and achieve.' They ensure that pupils have opportunities to see others' uniqueness through stories, trips and visitors. Pupils read about and listen to stories from different places and times. A wide range of trips and visitors raise pupils' aspirations and support pupils to believe in themselves and others. Leaders provide many clubs, including dance, choir and sports clubs, so that pupils can follow and develop their interests.

Governors are experienced and trusted leaders. They know the school well. They use information about the school to have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development. They work effectively with school leaders, the local authority and the diocese to support the school to improve further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders train staff to identify the risks that pupils may face. Staff understand their roles in keeping pupils safe. They report and record their concerns about pupils accurately.

Leaders act on concerns promptly. They provide a range of appropriate support for pupils and their families.

Leaders undertake the required checks on staff before they are employed at the school. Leaders and governors regularly check the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

Pupils learn to keep themselves safe through the well-planned curriculum. They know how to avoid risks when using the internet and how to have healthy and happy relationships with their friends.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not provided enough clarity about the important knowledge that pupils should learn and how to teach it. This means important aspects of learning are missed. Teachers do not always help pupils build well on their previous learning. Pupils then do not make the progress through the curriculum that leaders want. They develop some gaps in their knowledge and their understanding is less secure. Leaders must ensure that all curriculum planning clearly identifies the important subject knowledge that pupils should learn and support teachers to teach this knowledge effectively.

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 school to be good in July 2013.

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	117415
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255238
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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Robinson
Headteacher	Natalie Ranson
Website	www.dewhurst.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils.
- The most recent inspection of the school's religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in November 2021. The next section 48 inspection will take place within eight years.

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 this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders and members of staff, including the special educational needs coordinator.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each of these subjects, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and teachers and looked at pupils' books.
- The inspector observed adults reading with pupils and looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work in other subjects.
- The inspector met with safeguarding leaders to examine the single central record and leaders' records of safeguarding. She also spoke with teachers and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke with leaders and pupils about behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector also considered 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including 20 free-text comments
- The inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of St. Albans.

Inspection team

Debbie Rogan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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