

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

Capenhurst Lane, Capenhurst, Chester, Cheshire CH1 6HE

Inspection dates:

12 September 2019

Outcome

Capenhurst 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?

Parents and carers, and pupils value the sense of family at this small school. Staff have a nurturing approach. Pupils feel at ease in the school. They are happy and safe. Leaders and governors use the expertise and skills among the school staff to offer a wide range of opportunities for pupils' personal, social and cultural development. There is a strong commitment to developing pupils' appreciation of culture. This includes theatre trips and watching the Liverpool Philharmonic play live.

All staff follow the school's behaviour policy well. They set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Parents, staff and pupils agree that bullying does not happen at the school. Pupils get on well together. They are pleasant and polite. The size of the school means that pupils know each other well. Staff set a good example for pupils. They work together well as a team by sharing experience and expertise. All staff value the support of the headteacher.

Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They have taken effective steps in the past to improve the teaching of English and mathematics. They have identified the need to further develop the school's curriculum to ensure that pupils achieve highly across different subjects.

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

Teachers think about how to make learning interesting for pupils. Pupils enjoy their work and are keen to learn. Lessons proceed well without any interruption caused by poor behaviour.

Leaders prioritise reading well. They see reading as the key with which pupils can unlock learning in all other subjects. They have invested in a range of interesting texts. Teachers introduce phonics early on in the Reception Year. In key stage 1, teachers have put

support in place for pupils to catch up in their phonics knowledge when they fall behind their peers. This has met with some success. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has improved. However, the books that pupils read do consistently not match their phonic knowledge. This is particularly the case for some of the lowest ability pupils who do not achieve the expected standard. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has led to pupils having to repeat phonics work from early years when they enter Year 1.

In mathematics, there is a mixed picture. Leaders have not set out what they would like pupils to be able to do in different year groups or in each mathematics topic. Teachers do not plan for the small steps that pupils need to take to understand their learning. For example, not all pupils in lower key stage 2 were able to recall their learning about addition calculations, despite the fact that they had been learning this earlier in the same day. In key stage 1 and lower key stage 2, pupils' books show that they do not build well enough on the learning that has gone before. The curriculum hasn't been planned well enough to enable pupils to build on what they already know. Pupils do not have enough practical opportunities to learn difficult concepts. Upper key stage 2 paints a different picture. Pupils are able to talk about their learning and where it fits with other mathematical concepts. They are clear about the value of their prior learning. This is because plans build on what pupils already know and checks are made on their understanding.

Curriculum leaders have not had opportunities to develop their subjects. They have not identified the learning that they want pupils to retain and use in their future learning. As a result, pupils cannot remember what they have learned in their topic work. Pupils' work shows that they learn disconnected facts. As such, learning is lost. For example, in geography, the Year 3 pupils with whom we spoke could not locate the United Kingdom on a world map. This is despite having learned this in key stage 1. The headteacher is clear that the school's curriculum needs to improve. She has planned to start this work soon.

The headteacher has ensured that there is high-quality provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to learn about different faiths. They have a range of interesting trips as well as a range of visitors to the school. There is also a wide range of clubs on offer, ranging from Minecraft to science or fencing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher and governors ensure that pupils' safety is an absolute priority. Staff training is up to date. Any concerns about an individual pupil are followed up swiftly. Pupils learn how they can keep themselves safe and what to do if they have any worries. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. They have frequent lessons on e-safety. Visiting speakers, such as the police, reinforce these messages. Leaders know the school community well. They have put in place training and support for parents, such as online safety training.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

Some of the lowest ability pupils in key stage 1, including those with SEND, do not have reading books that match their phonic knowledge. As such, some of the books they read are too difficult. Pupils then repeat their learning without having opportunities to use their phonic skills. Leaders should ensure that teachers choose texts to more accurately match pupils' stage of reading. These texts should provide pupils with opportunities to practise the phonic work that they have completed in their lessons.

Teachers' planning in mathematics places too much emphasis on overarching aims. They do not break down learning into the small steps that pupils need to understand mathematical concepts. As a result, pupils do not understand their work well enough to apply their mathematical skills. Leaders should ensure that they plan the mathematics curriculum in greater detail. Teachers should break down the aims of their planning into smaller steps in learning. They should sequence the curriculum to build pupils' mathematical understanding. This should include supporting pupils' practical learning when tackling abstract concepts, for example, by using equipment to help some of the youngest pupils to develop their counting skills.

The design of the curriculum does not enable pupils to remember key knowledge well enough. Teachers focus too much on the individual tasks rather than planning pupils' learning carefully so that they can know more and remember more. As such, pupils struggle to apply their learning, particularly in their topic work. Subject leaders need to define the essential knowledge that they want pupils to remember for their future learning. Leaders need to ensure that the content of all subject plans is well chosen and carefully sequenced. Teachers should build pupils' knowledge from topic to topic and from year to year.

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 Capenhurst Church of England Primary School to be good on 17 June 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	111271
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10087753
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Lezley Grimshaw
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Green
Website	www.capenhurstcep.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the averaged-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils has increased since the previous inspection from 61 to 82. The school presently has four classes, one for Reception children and three mixed-age classes for pupils in key stage 1, lower key stage 2 and upper key stage 2.
- A very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above the national average. The school caters for a growing number of pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher and subject leaders throughout the inspection.
- We considered reading, mathematics and geography as part of a deep dive during this inspection. For these subjects, we spoke with the headteacher, met with curriculum

leaders, teachers and pupils, undertook an analysis of pupils' work and visited lessons. We heard pupils read. We also spoke to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils about their work in art, design technology and music.

- We met with groups of pupils from across the school both formally and informally to ask them about safeguarding. We also met with the headteacher, governors, teachers and teaching assistants. We reviewed documentation, which included the school's safeguarding policy, register of the checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.
- We looked at the school's behaviour records, observed pupils at breaktimes, and discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils.
- We spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 37 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. We also took into account the 45 responses to the pupil survey and the 13 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pippa Jackson-Maitland

Her Majesty's Inspector

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