

Inspection of Henlow Church of England Academy

Church Road, Henlow, Bedfordshire SG16 6AN

Inspection dates: 11–12 September 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly and caring school. They told us that teachers want them to do well and be happy. Pupils are confident that if they need help in any way, they will get it. Staff and pupils help new pupils to quickly become part of the school community. Pupils are polite, mature and considerate towards others.

Pupils get on well with each other and adults. In lessons, pupils work hard and sensibly, which helps them learn. Pupils play good-naturedly with others at break- and lunchtime. Almost all pupils behave very well. Expectations of behaviour are high. Teachers help pupils to make the right choices about how to behave.

Leaders have created a good balance between pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils enjoy learning a broad range of subjects. They also learn about the school's values of honesty, enthusiasm, nurture, love, originality and wisdom. Many pupils take part in the wide variety of clubs and activities held at lunchtime or after school.

All the pupils we spoke to said that bullying is rare. When it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly and well. Consequently, pupils feel safe and happy in school.

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

Leaders want all pupils to achieve their best. However, the information provided to parents and carers on the school's website about what pupils learn each year is underdeveloped. Subject leaders' planning shows what pupils should learn, and in what order, to build on what they already know. This is done particularly well in English, geography and mathematics, although it is not as well developed in French.

Leaders' actions have addressed the issues identified by inspectors when they inspected the school in 2018. In mathematics, teachers give pupils the chance to regularly recap important ideas. In English, pupils read a variety of different text types. Teachers make sure that pupils read and understand increasingly difficult texts as they move up the school. Pupils are encouraged to read at every opportunity. They also get lots of opportunities to write in different styles. This contributes to pupils knowing and remembering more in these subjects. Consequently, pupils achieve well.

Teachers share ideas about what works well in their teaching. They have the knowledge and skills needed to teach a range of subjects. Teachers usually choose activities that give pupils the right level of challenge. Occasionally they do not. Pupils' learning slows when this happens. Teachers adapt activities to meet pupils' needs, so that most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the curriculum well.

The school's curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' wider personal development. Pupils learn about other cultures and beliefs in religious education (RE) and

personal, social and health (PSH) education. Pupils know the similarities and differences between the major faiths. They know why it is important to respect the views of others. Collective worship helps pupils to think about how they should treat others. Pupils are proud that last year they raised over £6,000 for charities that they chose to support.

There is a well-planned careers programme for Year 7 and Year 8 pupils. Pupils can see how what they learn in school helps prepare them for employment.

Leaders use extra money to help pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils play an active part in school life. However, lack of transport means that some pupils cannot take part after school. Leaders are looking at how they can solve this problem so that more pupils can take full advantage of what the school offers.

Staff value the high-quality training and development opportunities provided by leaders. They feel valued and enjoy working at the school. Governors, who are also trustees of the academy trust, know the school's strengths and what could be better. They have worked with school leaders to improve the quality of education since the previous inspection.

Leaders check attendance closely. Their actions have improved the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know which pupils still need extra help to meet the high expectations of attendance and behaviour. They ensure that pupils get this help.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to recognise when pupils may be at risk of harm. They know when and how to report any concerns. 'Nagging doubt forms' build a picture of whether minor concerns are a sign of something more serious. The safeguarding leader passes on serious concerns quickly so that pupils are kept safe from harm. Checks to make sure that adults are suitable to work in the school are thorough. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from different risks. They have a very good understanding of e-safety. This is a regular part of computing lessons, assemblies and newsletters.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although curriculum planning builds on previous learning and prepares pupils for the next key stage, this is less well developed in French. Pupils have had different experiences of learning a language in their previous schools, which has not been accounted for in the school's French curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all

subject plans are of equally high quality to support teachers' planning and take account of pupils' prior learning.

- Occasionally, some teachers do not make the best use of the good-quality shared resources available in the school. All teachers should use their checks on pupils' prior knowledge to choose appropriately challenging activities.
- A minority of parents of pupils with SEND do not feel that the school's provision is meeting their child's needs well enough. This is because leaders have not clearly communicated the actions they are taking to do so. Additionally, information for all parents about what pupils learn each year lacks detail. Leaders should improve these aspects of communication so that all parents know how the school supports pupils' learning.

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're 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	138027
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10087448
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	674
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Perry Huntley
Headteacher	Caren Earp
Website	www.henlowacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2018

Information about this school

- Henlow Church of England Academy is a Church of England faith school located in the Diocese of St Albans. It is a middle-deemed-secondary school.
- The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in July 2017 and was judged to be outstanding.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is increasing. The proportion of current pupils with SEND is above average, particularly for pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school is currently involved in a consultation regarding changing the age range of pupils to provide education until the end of key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the school leadership team, including the leader for SEND. An inspector also met with members of the governing body. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with the deputy director of education for the Diocese of St Albans and the leader of the local authority's attendance and inclusion team.
- The subjects considered as part of this inspection were English, mathematics, geography and French. In each subject, inspectors visited lessons, scrutinised the work in pupils' books, and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed school policies, procedures and records. An inspector met with the designated lead for safeguarding to review examples of actions taken to keep pupils safe. Inspectors also checked staff members' understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- The inspection team observed pupils' behaviour at break- and lunchtimes. They spoke to pupils informally when visiting lessons and in groups to gather their views on the school. Inspectors also considered 162 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed school policies and information about behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered 150 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the 144 free-text comments, and two emails sent to the lead inspector. A complaint made to Ofsted after the inspection was also considered.
- Inspectors met with a group of teaching assistants and a group of newly qualified teachers. They considered the 50 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Pardy	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Herlock	Ofsted Inspector

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