

Inspection of Stanton Harcourt CofE Primary School

Main Road, Stanton Harcourt, Witney, Oxfordshire OX29 5RJ

Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love being part of their 'small school with a big heart'. They can explain that this motto describes how they all work together and help each other to learn and grow. They feel safe. A nurturing culture shines through the work of all involved with the school.

Behaviour is strong. From Nursery to Year 6, pupils interact well with each other. Pupils recognise that some of them might need extra support with their learning or their choices. Pupils are thoughtful and make sure that everyone is included. Bullying is rare, and staff deal with it well if it happens.

In recent years, pupils have benefited from increased academic expectations. Pupils have caught leaders' ambition. They engage in all activities with a sense of joy and anticipation, and they take pride in their achievements. They are also very precise about how to make the school even better. They have contributed very specific targets to the school development plan, such as suggesting that girls need to speak up more in lessons and boys need to encourage this. Early indications are that this is having success; we saw hard-working, respectful, well-behaved pupils throughout the inspection.

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

Leaders have strengthened the quality of education throughout the school. Along with teachers and governors, they have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and how to best make this happen.

Teachers work well together to make sure that pupils develop their learning throughout the curriculum in a structured way. This is stronger in reading, mathematics and science than it is in 'topic' subjects such as history. Science is particularly strong because all teachers took part in a science professional development project. The impact of this is clear in science and has had a knock-on effect in mathematics. Here, teachers are systematic in the way they develop pupils' learning. They make sure that pupils can remember previous learning and then build on that knowledge. Plans for learning in other subjects are also logical, but not as well developed.

Reading is high priority. All pupils follow a structured reading programme from the word go. One pupil told me that she liked reading to staff because she got better every time and would be able to 'read anything one day'. Most pupils develop a love of reading and are ready for secondary school by the end of Year 6. However, some pupils find reading tricky and a few fall behind in key stage 1. Staff give these pupils extra help but do not act with enough urgency to help them to catch up quickly.

Leaders have made sure that staff know how best to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The ongoing training has increased staff skills and their determination to be fully inclusive. All staff know pupils' specific

needs and how best to support them to learn. This has helped all pupils to do well.

Pupils embrace the concepts of equality and inclusivity. They are proud of their school's 'CREATE' values of 'care, respect, equality, achieve, trust and excellence'. Leaders use these values as the backbone of the school's work to make sure that pupils develop as global citizens who are confident and respectful. The recent introduction of philosophy has helped to channel pupils' fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them. Pupils relish asking questions such as 'What is beauty?' Leaders use links with a village in Uganda to help pupils to understand life beyond the school and different cultures.

Children in the early years enjoy a wide range of exciting activities. Staff are well trained at drawing learning from play. For example, when the tall tower that children were building fell down, the teacher invited them to work out why it fell and how to make it stronger next time. Children develop their early mathematics, communication and problem-solving skills to a high standard.

Leaders have strengthened communication with parents and carers of children in the early years. However, this is in the early stages. Sometimes, children receive mixed messages, including about reading, from school and home. This is confusing.

Leaders have supported staff well, especially over the past few years of raised expectations. Staff are extremely positive about the professional development they have received from the headteacher and the multi-academy trust (MAT). However, they do not totally share leaders' urgency for improvement. Leaders are under no illusions that there is still work to do, especially with topic subjects, but their well-considered plans are well under way.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All adults at the school are clear about their duties and how to keep pupils safe. They know what signs to be alert to and how to share any worries. They routinely build in learning about safety when planning lessons. Consequently, pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Leaders work well with external experts, when needed, to make sure that pupils and families get any help they require. Leaders have made sure that all staff are well trained. Recruitment processes are followed carefully, and records are kept well.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Recently, leaders have improved engagement and communication with parents of children in the early years. This needs to develop further so that children benefit from a more joined-up learning experience, including when learning to read.
- Phonics is taught well from the word go and most pupils learn to read well over their time at school. However, support for the small proportion of pupils who fall behind early on needs to be more deliberately planned and monitored to help them to catch up as quickly as possible.
- The trust, governors and senior leaders have a strong ambition for the quality of education at the school. They have raised standards over the past two years and provided effective staff training. Now, leaders need to ensure that staff have a greater understanding of the purpose of improvement actions and implement them swiftly and as intended, without creating extra workload.

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	140871
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10111440
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Foster
Headteacher	Rachel Crouch
Website	www.stantonharcourtschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Stanton Harcourt CofE Primary School converted to become an academy school and joined Eynsham Partnership Academy, a multi-academy trust (MAT), on 1 May 2014. When the predecessor school, also called Stanton Harcourt CofE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2008, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The current headteacher took up the role from Easter 2017. Prior to her arrival there was an interim headteacher for a year.
- The MAT is currently undertaking consultation to increase the size of the school. It currently takes a maximum of 15 pupils every year. It is proposed to increase this to 20 pupils in each year group from September 2020.
- The school received its last statutory inspection of its religious character in June 2018.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator, teachers, teaching assistants and administrative staff.
- I met with the chair of the local governing body and another governor. I also met with the chief executive officer from the MAT.
- We spoke to pupils from every year group about the school.
- We took account of the 42 responses by parents to Ofsted's Parent View and spoke to two parents at the school.
- We evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of reading, including early reading, mathematics, science and history. We discussed the curriculum design and delivery with staff, carried out lesson visits, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils, teachers and teaching assistants about the subjects.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing leaders' knowledge, records and actions. This included looking at the school's single central record and a sample of case files. I met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke to pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jon Hills

Ofsted Inspector

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