Inspection of Speldhurst Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Langton Road, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0NP

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since February 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this friendly and welcoming school. They know that staff expect a lot, though give more in return. Expectations of what pupils can achieve in and out of the classroom are extremely high. Children in Reception think that this is a fun place to be. However, they already know that working hard and learning new things is what school is all about.

Pupils behave very well here. They disapprove of any interruption to their studies, including by visitors who ask them questions when they are concentrating on their work. They feel safe in the school's nurturing environment, including being confident to make mistakes. As a result, classrooms are happy places where pupils grow in confidence and are hungry to discover new things.

Everyone is expected to try hard here, then try again if things are not quite right the first time. Pupils know that staff are always there to help. This might be when their friendships are strained, but also when solving mathematical problems or during rehearsals with the orchestra. Consequently, pupils from different backgrounds thrive and achieve very well together across the curriculum, including as budding artists, musicians and scientists.

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

This is a school where aspirations are high and where hard work and achievement are celebrated. Pupils themselves aspire to be the best they can be. Their school's curriculum is rich in opportunities to learn and carefully crafted to open their eyes to the world around them. Because of this, pupils' conduct and attitudes to school are excellent. This is not just because they understand the rules, but because school excites them and provides a myriad of exciting opportunities to make friends and to try new things.

Pupils' personal development is promoted very well here. They have an age-appropriate understanding of diversity, different cultures and lifestyles. They know about different faiths. They understand both the dangers and the advantages that social media and the internet might bring to their lives. Pupils know about the importance of exercise and healthy lifestyles. Sport has a high profile, as do the arts. Drama and music, including an impressive orchestra with a repertoire that includes Rossini and Coldplay, promote character and nurture pupils' talents.

Pupils' social and emotional needs are also given the highest priority. The school's caring ethos, underpinned by its values, impacts positively on pupils' well-being and resilience. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do equally as well as their peers. Their achievements by the end of Year 6 are impressive. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) flourish. Their needs are carefully identified and understood. Importantly, staff have equally high expectations of what pupils with SEND can achieve, while offering tailored support to enable success.

Reading sits at the heart of learning in the school. Staff deliver the phonics programme expertly. Children in early years get off to a flying start because carefully chosen books,

rhymes and songs enthuse them. They want to read. They want to write. Most do so with growing confidence. Those few pupils across the school who struggle to read confidently are identified quickly and supported successfully by experienced and expert staff. They become even more enthusiastic about books on their journey to become fluent readers, because staff make interventions enjoyable and not a burden to be endured.

Staff are knowledgeable and mostly very experienced. Those few who are relatively new to the school or to teaching are supported well by a comprehensive programme of professional development, which impacts positively on classroom practice. This supports staff to be highly consistent in their teaching and their checks of pupils' understanding. Their collegiate work in designing and delivering the school's curriculum is also a key element of the school's success. Purposeful partnerships with other local schools also bring benefits when staff are looking for the additional inspiration to maintain excellence over time.

The school is constantly revising elements of the curriculum, ensuring it flows smoothly from Reception into Year 1 and beyond. Teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils should already know and understand, not just in English and mathematics. The impact of this is clear to see from Reception through to Year 6. Truly inspirational artwork adorns the school. Pupils love physical education (PE), including the additional enrichment opportunities provided before, during and after school. Girls talk enthusiastically about the kickboxing club. Other pupils cannot wait for the weather to improve so that the climbing wall becomes more readily available.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	118607
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341497
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Yates
Headteacher	Stephanie Hayward
Website	www.speldhurst.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 February 2014

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school in the Diocese of Rochester. The school also works closely with Kent local authority.
- As a school with a religious ethos, the school's denominational education and collective worship was last inspected under Section 48 in June 2019.
- Since the last inspection, the school has grown in size to have one dedicated class base for each year group.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with leaders at all levels, as well as teaching and support staff. They met with representatives of the governing body. They also talked to officers from the local authority and from the diocese on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, PE and art and design. For each deep dive, 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of parents, leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. The lead inspector also talked formally to a representative group of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View and accompanying free-text messages. The views of staff were also considered through Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Cattell	His Majesty's Inspector

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