

# Inspection of a school judged Good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Sutton-At-Hone Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Sutton-At-Hone, Dartford, Kent DA4 9EX

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Inspection dates:

23 and 24 April 2025

## Outcome

Sutton-At-Hone Church of England Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Karen Trowell. This school is part of Aletheia Academies Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Stephen Carey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Till.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision threads through school life. Pupils demonstrate their ability to 'learn together' through highly effective collaboration. They share ideas, find solutions and value each other's views. The school's curriculum ensures pupils build knowledge and skills over time. Typically, pupils achieve well. Leaders have secure ambition to ensure pupils achieve the best they can.

High expectations for behaviour are evident throughout the school. Pupils show respect for each other and value their differences. When this is not the case, staff are quick to respond. Pupils trust that staff will support them if they have any worries or concerns. They feel safe in school. Playtimes are a delight to see with pupils planning and organising games and playing well together. Older pupils support younger peers. For example, Year 6 pupils read with Year 1 and 2 pupils at lunchtime.

The wide range of clubs and enrichment opportunities enable pupils to develop new interests. Pupils are thrilled to represent their school at sporting, music and speaking events. A wide range of leadership roles give pupils the opportunity to develop confidence and responsibility. Pupils are very proud of the impact they have on the school community. For instance, 'eco warriors' look after the school pets and encourage pupils not to litter.

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

The school has considered carefully what that they want pupils to know and remember. Teachers check pupils' understanding throughout lessons and address misconceptions swiftly. For instance, in Reception, staff repeat sentences back to children to support them to use the correct vocabulary. Staff have clear subject knowledge and model examples effectively. Most pupils remember what they are taught and use this to support new learning successfully. For instance, Year 6 pupils recall their knowledge of the water cycle in science to support their learning about rivers.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. However, there is variability with the support pupils with SEND receive. Sometimes, the adaptations that teachers make in lessons do not meet the needs of pupils with SEND well enough. When this is the case, these pupils struggle to learn the intended knowledge as well as they could.

Reading is a priority. Pupils make a strong start in their reading through consistent phonics teaching. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly. They then provide targeted support and books matched closely to pupils' reading levels. Across the school, pupils love reading. The school has developed enticing incentives to develop pupils' reading. Pupils share favourite genres and authors happily. In some cases, pupils' writing skills are not developed as consistently well, including spelling and handwriting. Sometimes, pupils do not form letters correctly and develop fluency in writing.

The school has rightly prioritised helping pupils to attend school more regularly. Some pupils do not attend as regularly as they could. However, the school has introduced new, effective systems to help families where this is the case. This work is already having an impact which need to continue to see pupils' attendance get back in line with national averages.

Pupils respond positively to the high expectations of behaviour insisted upon by the school. This is shown in their keenness to support each other to behave well. The school teaches pupils to support and learn from each other effectively. Pupils with SEND value working with peers to discuss their work. For instance, in maths, pupils share their individual knowledge and work through potential solutions to problems. Strong routines start in Reception. Children work collaboratively to identify insects on mini-beast hunts.

Pupils understand other people's faiths and beliefs. For example, year 5 pupils deepen their knowledge of Hinduism by visiting a temple. Pupils enjoy the range of trips to enrich their learning, including visiting local castles to enhance their understanding of the Tudors. Across the school, pupils apply to be school council representatives. They value the opportunity to visit and meet with local schools. They are proud to have an impact on school life, including helping to change the school menu.

The trust, local governors and leaders have a very clear vision for the school. They have identified accurately key priorities to develop learning in the best interest of pupils. The

school utilises collaborative opportunities with the trust to develop staff professionally, which they appreciate greatly. Useful strategies are used to promote staff wellbeing and support staff when needed. As a result, the school has helped engender a sense of pride to work at this effective school. Parents recognise the school's work to be supportive and nurturing has been effective. This reflects the school's strong work to engage with all members of its community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some pupils' writing skills are not developed consistently well. These pupils do not record information as fluently or successfully as they could. The school should improve how it supports pupils to secure the foundational skills of writing.
- The needs of pupils with SEND are not met fully consistently in lessons. Sometimes, the adaptations made by teachers for pupils with SEND do not meet their needs precisely. The school should make sure that staff adapt learning consistently effectively to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in January 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](#)' 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144910
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10379926
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	394
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mark Till
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Stephen Carey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Trowell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sutton-at-hone.kent.sch.uk">www.sutton-at-hone.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	3 and 4 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school's last statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was in September 2023. It was judged to be good.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders and a range of staff. They also met with members of the local governing body, the CEO, trustees and director of education from the trust.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector checked the school's policies and records, including those related to behaviour and pupils' wider development.
- The inspector considered the responses of parents, pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of 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.
- The inspector held meetings with staff and spoke with pupils during social times. They observed pupils' behaviour across the school, including as they arrived and left school.

### **Inspection team**

Sacha Husnu-Beresford, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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