

Inspection of The Coombes Church of England Primary School

School Road, Arborfield, Reading, Berkshire RG2 9NX

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Luke Henderson. This school is part of The Keys Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Hester Wooller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Horrocks.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils are increasingly inspired to grow in character and confidence. Equal priority is given to pupils' academic, personal and social development.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They feel safe. They have trusted adults they can speak to if they have any worries. Pupils say that if bullying happens, staff take prompt and effective action to help. Pupils are keen to learn, and almost all behave well. Pupils understand and follow the 'Coombes code'. They say the code is fair and is applied consistently. Parents recognise the strengths of the school and appreciate the many improvements that have been made recently.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, this ambitious vision is not yet realised. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should because the curriculum is not yet delivered consistently well across all subjects.

Pupils benefit from many opportunities that broaden their understanding of the world. Pupils are particularly proud of their roles as play leaders, school councillors and worship leaders. They relish opportunities to support younger pupils and make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully redesigned the curriculum to ensure it is ambitious for all pupils. The school has identified the precise knowledge and skills it intends pupils to learn. From Nursery onwards, the curriculum is broad and well sequenced. There is a clear focus on helping pupils to learn ambitious vocabulary over time. However, although pupils' achievement is rising, the new curriculum is not yet enabling them to achieve the success they are capable of.

Leaders are tackling the weaknesses in provision with determination and some success. Nevertheless, more work is needed to ensure that the revised curriculum is implemented consistently well. Not all staff have the expertise or depth of subject knowledge needed to deliver the curriculum effectively. Often, the work given to pupils is not closely matched to the curriculum's aims. This means that some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are achieving less well than they should and are not prepared fully enough for the next stage of their education.

The school's phonics programme is well structured and provides the content required to support pupils in learning to read. However, the programme has not been delivered systematically over time. Expectations are now higher and support is given to pupils who need extra help. These steps have made a difference, particularly in the early years. However, not all staff have the subject knowledge needed to teach the phonics programme rigorously enough. As a result, some pupils do not become fluent readers quickly enough.

Teachers' use of assessment is not always effective. In subjects such as mathematics, art and phonics, teachers gather a clear picture of pupils' knowledge. However, in other subjects, teachers do not check precisely whether pupils understand or retain the essential learning. As a result, pupils' mistakes are not always noticed or addressed. This means that their learning is slowed.

Staff swiftly identify if pupils have any additional needs. Pupils, including those with the most complex SEND, receive compassionate help from staff who want the very best for them. Staff make creative use of resources to ensure pupils get the support required to meet their needs.

In early years, children enjoy practical and purposeful activities, including exploring the interesting environment outside. Staff form strong relationships with children and help them to settle into routines quickly. The early years curriculum is designed carefully and taught well. It gives children the knowledge and skills they need so that they are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

The school provides well for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs and the importance of respecting differences. They learn how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They also learn strategies for staying safe online. Older pupils appreciate the opportunities available through local partnerships such as developing their understanding of finance with a local building society. The school organises a variety of memorable trips and visits that enhance pupils' learning.

The school is successfully addressing the previous underachievement. Leaders are focused on improving the education of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Attendance is improving rapidly, thanks to the school's efforts to identify the barriers for those pupils not regularly attending and subsequently take effective actions. Staff are positive about the recent changes that have taken place in the school. They are proud to work at the school and consider that their workload is manageable. Trustees and governors are well informed and actively challenge and support the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in the teaching of reading for pupils at an early stage of learning to read. Consequently, some pupils struggle to read fluently. The school should ensure that all staff teach the reading curriculum effectively so that all pupils swiftly become fluent and accurate readers.

- Too often, teachers do not design tasks that enable pupils to learn the intended curriculum effectively. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school needs to improve teachers' subject and teaching knowledge to ensure that they can support pupils to learn well across the whole curriculum.
- Teachers do not consistently identify and address pupils' misconceptions precisely. This impedes how well pupils learn and remember key knowledge long term. The school must ensure that assessment routines enable staff to make effective use of information to inform future teaching and help all pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

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	144637
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10322031
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	388
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Horrocks
CEO of the trust	Hester Wooller
Headteacher	Luke Henderson
Website	www.thecoombes.com
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 January 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is a sponsor-led academy and one of 12 schools in The Keys Academy Trust. The board of trustees has delegated many strategic responsibilities to the school's local governing body. The trust has outlined these arrangements in its scheme of delegation. The trust remains the responsible body for this school.
- The school is a Church of England primary school under the Diocese of Oxford and its last section 48 inspection was in February 2023.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision and one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school offers Nursery provision in its early years setting.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's

education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer and the governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, design and technology, art and geography. For deep dives, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to a range of pupils read. The inspector observed catch-up interventions to learn how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also gathered the views of parents, staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, advisory reports, minutes of governor meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

Inspection team

Clare Morgan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Toyne	Ofsted Inspector
James Munt	Ofsted Inspector

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