



Heartwood CE VC Primary and Nursery School

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Headteacher Mrs Emily McMillen

Deputy Headteacher Mrs Rebecca Starman

Thursday 14th September 2023



Dear families of Heartwood,

Ofsted Report 2023

In July we had our first inspection as Heartwood CE VC Primary and Nursery School, and our first Ofsted inspection since February 2017. We are delighted to share the outcome with you that the school was graded a 'Good' school.

We are delighted that the areas Personal Development and Early Years were inspected as tipping heavily into the Outstanding grading with the school close to getting this grade for them.

The inspectors loved Heartwood, and His Majesty's Inspector left her visit saying:

- She would send her children to Heartwood
- She wishes all communities had a school such as Heartwood for their children

What is it like to attend Heartwood? We have pulled out a few of the quotes for you to enjoy from the report.

Heartwood is a warm and welcoming place. Pupils understand that there are high expectations set for them to achieve well...

Pupils treat each other well. They have positive relationships with staff. Pupils trust staff to notice if they are upset or worried.

Pupils behave well and show excellent manners as they move around the school... pupils feel safe in school... pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Their relationships with each other are rooted in mutual respect.

Leaders work to prioritise phonics and early reading has borne fruit. Staff successfully promote a love of reading.

Pupils with SEND are supported effectively... pupils with SEND learn well across the curriculum and alongside their classmates.

Leaders and staff have pupils' well-being at the heart of their work. They have worked with determination to improve the school.



Artsmark
Silver Award
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Learn to Love – Love to Learn!
'Live life in all its fullness.' John 10:10



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What does the school need to do to improve further?

We are pleased that the areas we had identified, and we are developing as a school were aligned with those from the inspectors. This provides further validation to our work and focus.

During the inspection, the inspectors had a deeper look at the subjects reading, maths, geography, and P.E. In agreement with our self-evaluation the pupils need more practice on retaining key knowledge and vocabulary in geography, which is due to a new curriculum being implemented. This takes time to embed and regular retrieval practice to ensure it stays in the long-term memory - staff have had support and training on this and we continue to see the benefits and impact, which takes time. We continue to plan training and support to ensure that the activities in geography and other subjects, are carefully planned to promote this. Leaders and governors will continue to monitor the implementation of this consistently.

As a school, we have invested training and support in developing teachers to become strong and flourishing subject leaders, this has had a great impact! We will continue to do this to further refine their monitoring and focus now the groundwork has been done with the curriculum. This will be promoted alongside the governing board implementing the monitoring schedule to further measure impact.

I would like to thank the Heartwood community, including the staff, governors, children, parents and carers for their continued support and hard work. Heartwood is a school I am sincerely proud and honoured to lead.

We hope you enjoy reading the report and please do hesitate to get in contact if you have any questions.

Kindest regards,

Emily McMillen
Headteacher



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Inspection of Heartwood CofE VC Primary & Nursery School

White Cross Road, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 7RF

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Heartwood Primary is a warm and welcoming place. Pupils understand that there are high expectations set for them to achieve well and most pupils rise to this challenge.

Pupils are encouraged to be active citizens in the school and beyond. They are given opportunities throughout the curriculum to develop their sense of right from wrong. For example, in Nursery, children learn about how to be a respectful friend and how to understand feelings.

Pupils treat each other well. They have positive relationships with staff. Pupils trust staff to notice if they are upset or worried. They know that staff will help them if they have any concerns.

Pupils live up to the school's motto of 'Learn to love – love to learn'. They learn about different faiths and accept that others may have different opinions to their own. Pupils appreciate receiving recognition awards for examples of exceptional effort.

Pupils are proud of opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as helping in lessons, being a subject ambassador, prayer warrior or member of the eco club.

Pupils behave well and show excellent manners as they move around school. Pupils are confident that if bullying were to occur, staff would sort this out quickly. As a result, pupils feel safe in school.

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

Leaders and staff have pupils' well-being at the heart of their work. They have worked with determination to improve the school. The three golden threads running through the curriculum – making a difference, academic aspirations, and community and living well together – are set to overcome trends and challenges that the community faces.

Leaders' work to prioritise phonics and early reading has borne fruit. Staff successfully promote a love of reading. Daily story time ensures that pupils in all classes read high-quality texts. Books are chosen to match pupils' ability and interests. Phonics teaching starts soon after pupils join in Reception Year. Skilled teaching staff help pupils to become fluent readers. Teachers provide activities that allow pupils to practise using their phonic knowledge so that they can use it accurately when reading. Timely checks on what pupils know mean that those pupils who struggle to learn to read receive the support they need to keep up.

Currently, pupils do not always learn as well as they could across the whole curriculum. Leaders are supporting staff to ensure that all subjects are delivered as leaders intend. However, there is more work to be done. In some subjects, pupils' recall of prior learning helps them progress well. In a few subjects, opportunities to

retain and retrieve information are not always planned into lessons. Pupils are not able to remember some key vocabulary and knowledge in these subjects. While routine checks of how well pupils are remembering their learning are not yet embedded in some subjects, staff generally use assessment well to spot if pupils have gaps in knowledge.

In the early years, leaders have identified the important knowledge and skills children need to know to be ready for learning in key stage 1. Children are curious, happy and keen to engage with adults. They respond very well to adults' consistently high expectations. Adults teach the skills of early reading, writing and mathematics effectively. They thoughtfully plan activities in all areas of the curriculum that grasp children's interests and support their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively. A small number of pupils benefit from a well-designed nurture provision. This provides them with the help they need to access the curriculum. Staff are trained to use strategies that support pupils with SEND to complete work appropriate to their stage of learning. This ensures that pupils with SEND learn well across the curriculum and alongside their classmates.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Their relationships with each other and the adults are rooted in mutual respect. Teachers establish routines and expectations early on and pupils follow these diligently.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is based on the values leaders promote. Pupils learn about how to form safe, respectful relationships. Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular clubs that contribute to their personal development and add to what they learn in lessons. These are popular and accessible to all, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Trips enrich pupils' learning. All pupils have a firm understanding of difference and the need to treat everyone equally.

Leaders have a clear, shared vision for the school and a determination to realise it. They are supported by a committed and experienced governing body whose members know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Staff are proud to work at Heartwood. They feel valued and appreciate leaders' efforts to consider their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders' systems for keeping pupils safe are rigorous. Leaders work collaboratively with external agencies and specialists to make sure that pupils get the support they need quickly.

Staff know the potential safeguarding risks to children in the local community. They know the signs that indicate a pupil may be at risk of harm and how to report concerns promptly. Leaders record all information carefully so that they can manage support for each pupil effectively.

Leaders carry out all the necessary employment checks on staff and safeguarding on visitors to the school meticulously.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teachers do not provide activities that help pupils to practise using the knowledge they have been taught. This means that pupils sometimes struggle to remember and apply important subject knowledge. Consequently, pupils do not consistently learn as well as they could across the entire curriculum. Leaders should ensure that staff consistently make appropriate choices about the activities they provide so that they support pupils' learning effectively.
- Leaders' and governors' oversight of some aspects of the school's work is not as sharp as it is for others. This means that actions to improve the school are not always as precise as they could be. Leaders should refine their monitoring processes so they can evaluate the full impact of their actions effectively.

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](#)' 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	121059
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10268019
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kim Stabler
Headteacher	Emily McMillen
Website	www.heartwood.norfolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 February to 1 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is a breakfast club and after-school club for pupils on site that is run by the school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian religious character. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in January 2020. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of

lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors viewed a range of curriculum documents for other subjects and spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about several other subjects and aspects of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, governors and a representative working on behalf of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 29 free-text comments. The 32 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were also considered. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of school documentation, including policies and development plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors conducted meetings with leaders to discuss policy and procedure and to review records, including the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The lead inspector also held discussions with governors, staff and pupils to gather further insights into the culture of safeguarding.

Inspection team

Bridget Harrison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lorraine Ratcliffe

Ofsted Inspector

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