

Inspection of Walsh CofE Infant School

Ash Street, Ash, Surrey GU12 6LT

Inspection dates:	10 and 11 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Pete Bailey. This school is part of The Good Shepherd Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Kennedy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Yvonne McLeod.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Walsh CofE Infant School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Walsh Memorial CofE Controlled Infant School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Walsh CofE Infant School as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this caring and ambitious school community. They feel safe, happy and confident that staff support them well. They know and are proud of the school's values of peace, love, community and resilience. Behaviour is mostly positive, and pupils who need help managing their emotions receive the support they require.

Pupils take on responsibilities that encourage positive contributions to school life. Safeguarding ambassadors take their role in promoting safety very seriously. The 'Busy Bees' playground friends help ensure that no one is left without something to do at lunchtime.

The school has a culture of high ambition for both academic achievement and personal development. These are realised through the curriculum that pupils learn as well as in the wide range of enrichment activities they take part in. Reception children visit local canals and create anti-litter posters, while older pupils learn about Samuel Cody's impact on the history of travel at a nearby museum.

During 'aspirations week', the school buzzes with excitement as pupils hear from speakers such as authors and scientists. They then express their own dreams and goals for their future through creative art and dance activities. Parents and carers are highly positive about the opportunities their children receive and the supportive environment the school provides.

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

The school has a clear vision for what pupils should know in all subjects by the end of Year 2. In the early years, learning builds on children's starting points and nurtures their curiosity. Staff interact with children with skill and care. They also know when to step back to encourage children's independence.

As pupils move into key stage 1, they continue to learn a well-structured curriculum that builds on prior learning. Staff have strong subject knowledge and explain new ideas clearly. Pupils are taught the correct vocabulary for each subject. They complete well-designed tasks, supported by practical resources such as manipulatives in mathematics and creative tools in art. The curriculum is designed to revisit key content regularly so that pupils remember what they have learned. Staff check pupils' understanding often and use this information to give extra help where needed.

In recent years, the number of pupils who passed the phonics screening check was lower than the national average. The school has reviewed and improved the teaching of early reading. Phonics is now taught consistently well. The school has a detailed knowledge of how pupils are progressing and quickly identifies any pupils who fall behind. They receive strong support to catch up. As a result, pupils are learning to read with fluency.

The school has also strengthened its systems for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are well trained to meet

learning and pastoral needs. Some have specialist training to help pupils with greater needs. This provision enables pupils with SEND to succeed.

Pupils enjoy learning and take part in lessons with enthusiasm. Most behave well in classrooms and around the school. Positive behaviour is also seen at breaktimes, which are well managed and resourced. In the early years, children learn to share, take turns and play cooperatively. These skills continue to develop as pupils move through the school. A small number of pupils at the school need extra help to manage their emotions. Staff respond with care and sensitivity to ensure they are well supported.

Promoting good attendance is a clear priority for leaders. They track absence closely and use this information to identify and respond to emerging issues. Staff work effectively with families, offering personalised support to help overcome barriers to regular attendance. These actions have led to improvements for some pupils. However, absence remains too high for others, including some who are vulnerable.

The school offers rich personal development opportunities. Pupils learn how to stay safe, build friendships and be healthy. They say kindness helps them feel happy. Pupils make 'golden promises' about how they will work and behave. These promises show them why rules matter. The school values and celebrates its diverse community. Visitors share their cultures and beliefs, helping pupils develop respect for others. Pupils think that it would be 'super boring' if everyone was the same.

Leaders have a high and inclusive ambition for pupils. Improvements to early reading and SEND provision reflect this. The school is expanding its support more widely, providing services to help the community. Governors and trustees understand the school's priorities and challenge leaders to make further improvements. Staff are proud to work at 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)

- The school's processes to improve attendance are not having the desired impact for some pupils who are absent too often. This limits their access to, and opportunity to benefit from, important learning and wider opportunities at school. The school must maintain its high expectations and refine its systems to improve attendance for all pupils.

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	150588
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10341931
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne McLeod
CEO of the trust	Paul Kennedy
Headteacher	Pete Bailey
Website	www.walshschools.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Good Shepherd Trust. The school has joined the trust since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023. There has been a significant number of other staff and leadership changes at the school since the previous inspection.
- The school is located in the Diocese of Guildford. Its last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) took place in June 2023, when the school was judged to be good for this aspect of its work.
- The school currently uses two unregistered alternative provisions.

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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust and two members of the local governing committee.
- The lead inspector also met with the CEO and a senior education officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. For each deep dive, the 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 looked at curriculum information for a range of other subjects, including pupils' work. They reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness and priorities for improvement. They also looked at information relating to behaviour, attendance and SEND.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lunchtimes.
- The views of staff and pupils were gathered through both formal and informal discussions. Staff also completed an Ofsted survey.
- The views of parents were gathered through the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The team inspector also spoke to parents during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.

Inspection team

Katie Hancock, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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