

SONNING CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ligugé Way, Sonning, Berkshire RG4 6XF

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Headteacher

Mr P Sherwood

Friday 05 September 2025

RE: OFSTED INSPECTION 08/09 JULY 2025: REPORT PUBLISHED

Dear staff, parents/carers/guardians and other community members,

I am delighted to share with you the outcome of our recent graded Ofsted inspection, held on 08 and 09 July 2025. This report is now available [on the Ofsted website](#) (and available via a link on our school website). Please do take time to read the report in full, as it highlights some excellent examples of what Ofsted describe as our “remarkable school”.

Our overall gradings for each of the five areas are as follows:

- Quality of Education: **OUTSTANDING**
- Leadership and Management: **OUTSTANDING**
- Personal Development: **OUTSTANDING**
- Behaviour and Attitudes: **OUTSTANDING**
- Early Years: **OUTSTANDING**

As I have said to you all many times, any Ofsted grading we achieve is not the goal, but the by-product of our high standards, hard work and commitment to providing the very best for our pupils. That being said, this is an exceptional achievement for our whole school community and we are very proud of the outcome. It is particularly important to note that an Outstanding judgement in Quality of Education is difficult to attain, and reflects the consistent dedication, expertise and ambition of our staff and leadership team, supported by our Trust, governors, parents and other community members.

The report highlights many strengths of our school, and the inspectors’ words capture the very heart of what makes Sonning special. They describe how “pupils excel at this highly ambitious and nurturing school” and note the “exceptionally high expectations” we hold for every child. This recognition is significant because it reflects not only the academic success of our pupils but also the culture of aspiration and love that underpins everything we do. The inspectors praised our staff who “inspire pupils to become lifelong learners”, recognising that our teaching goes beyond preparing children for tests – it equips them with the curiosity, resilience and love of learning they will carry forward into secondary school and beyond.

Sonning Primary is described as “a joyful place where pupils embody the values of love, courage, respect, aspiration and curiosity.” To see our values so clearly lived out by the children – and recognised by Ofsted – is an achievement we should all be proud of.

The inspectors also praised our pupils’ attitudes and behaviour, their oracy and confidence, and the rich opportunities they enjoy both inside and outside the classroom. They recognised the strong partnership between school, Trust, governors and parents, which enables us to keep moving forward.

The inspectors also highlighted our “impressively ambitious” curriculum, noting how pupils leave us with “remarkable maturity, self-motivation and a deep knowledge of what they have learned.” This is something I am particularly proud of, as our curriculum work over the past three years has been transformational with regard to our foundation subject offer.

Perhaps most heartening of all is the comment that “children flourish here... they work together to explore activities



Building strong foundations for the years ahead (Matthew 7:24-25)



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and solve problems with perseverance and excitement.” This captures the spirit of our Early Years and the foundation it provides for the rest of school life. To “flourish” is more than to succeed academically – it means to grow in confidence, creativity, and joy. We are also proud of the recognition that our school is “unwaveringly inclusive” and has an “exceptional personal development programme”.

It is also worth noting that there were no areas for development identified in the report. However, as part of our continued desire to improve, grow and provide even more for our pupils, we will continue to develop and enhance our provision. We all remain firmly committed to providing the very best education and overall school experience for your child/ren, and have already begun work on new exciting new initiatives and ideas to move our school forward.

As part of this letter, we would like to extend our thanks to a few groups: firstly, our pupils for once again embodying our vision and values. Secondly, to our staff for the exceptional effort and skill they put in to all aspects of school life. This passion for providing the best for the pupils of Sonning happens every day and is inspiring to see. Next, we are very thankful for our governors for their constant commitment to supporting the strategic direction of our school. Also, to our TKAT leaders/trustees for their strategic oversight and support for our school leaders, staff and pupils. Finally, to our incredible families and community members for their continued support of Sonning and our ethos for pupil development and helping build strong foundations for the years ahead. We felt the support of our parent body last year, but have felt this even more acutely this year and we look forward to this continuing into this academic year.

We are sure you will agree that the report emphasises a number of our strengths and is excellent validation for our work. This report, coupled with our best-ever Year 6 SATs results, highlights an incredible year for Sonning Primary. Rest assured that we will continue working our hardest to provide the very best for your child/ren, academically and pastorally, and we are excited about the future for Sonning.

Please see the infographic poster at the end of this letter, which highlights some of the key comments from our report.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Phil Sherwood
Headteacher

Mrs Gemma Walton
Chair of Governing Body



Building strong foundations for the years ahead (Matthew 7:24-25)





SONNING PRIMARY

A remarkable school - Ofsted, July 2025

Following our recent Ofsted inspection, we are pleased to share a few of the key comments from the report. We are very proud of our pupils, staff, governors, families and wider community.

“the curriculum is impressively ambitious”



“the school is unwaveringly inclusive”



“pupils excel in this highly ambitious and nurturing school”



“the school is the centre of the community”



“the school is a joyful place... children flourish here”



“reading is prioritised”

“behaviour in lessons is exceptionally good”



“Pupils love coming to a school where they are challenged to try hard and to become community-minded citizens”



“pupils achieve extremely well across the curriculum”

Building strong foundations for the years ahead (Matthew 7:24-25)

Love - Courage - Respect - Aspiration - Curiosity

Ligugé Way, Sonning-on-Thames, Berkshire RG4 6XF



Inspection of Sonning Church of England Primary School

Liguge Way, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6XF

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 July 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Philip Sherwood. 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 (CEO), Hester Wooller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Horrocks.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils excel at this highly ambitious and nurturing school. The school has exceptionally high expectations for all pupils. Staff inspire pupils to become lifelong learners. Pupils achieve extremely well across the curriculum. They leave the school with remarkable maturity, self-motivation and a deep knowledge of what they have learned. Pupils are prepared impressively well for their next steps.

This school is a joyful place where pupils embody the values of 'love, courage, respect, aspiration and curiosity'. They behave with habitual kindness and care for each other. Pupils love to learn and play together. Their behaviour in lessons is excellent. Classrooms are industrious places where pupils, including children in the early years, demonstrate impressive focus and oracy skills. Pupils relish opportunities to discuss, debate and ask questions.

This remarkable school provides all pupils with a rich set of experiences to ensure that everyone 'builds strong foundations for the years ahead'. Pupils become responsible young people who are proud to make a difference in the school and the wider community. Elected pupil leaders are passionate about their meaningful roles. They organise events, gather the views of peers and present information to staff to influence change in the school.

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

The school's curriculum is impressively ambitious. This has been designed to ensure that pupils develop a deep understanding in all subjects. Literature is embedded thoughtfully throughout the curriculum. Pupils love reading the carefully chosen range of high-quality texts. They enjoy the challenge of reading increasingly sophisticated articles, poetry and extracts. The extensive opportunities to read, write and think deeply support pupils to become skilled and confident communicators.

Reading is prioritised from the early years. Phonics is taught with precision so that pupils become fluent readers as soon as possible. Pupils who need additional support receive expert help so that they keep up with their peers. In the early years, children receive exceptionally effective support to develop their knowledge of early number, sounds and letters. The environment is carefully designed to develop children's curiosity, vocabulary and social skills. Children flourish here. They work together to explore activities and solve problems with perseverance and excitement.

Staff have excellent subject knowledge. They explain concepts and connect new knowledge skilfully to what pupils already know. Staff check pupils' understanding rigorously and correct misconceptions rapidly. The school's agile approach to adapting learning and building knowledge means that every pupil achieves impressively well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have excellent support when they need it. Their needs are identified quickly when they join the school. The school's consistently expert support for these pupils means that pupils with SEND also achieve extremely well.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are impressive. They enjoy the process of learning, as well as the satisfaction of achieving as highly as possible. This is due to the consistently high expectations and nurturing environment that staff provide. Pupils love coming to a school where they are challenged to try hard and to become community-minded citizens. Pupils' attendance is high because pupils and their parents and carers understand the value of each school day. The school is central to the community. Parents are rightly full of praise for the excellent start that pupils have here.

The school's exceptional personal development programme provides pupils with skills and knowledge to prepare them for the outside world. Pupils have a deep understanding of British values, such as individual liberty and democracy. They discuss moral dilemmas in depth, considering different perspectives and possible solutions.

The school is unwaveringly inclusive. Staff are determined for every child to get the best start in life. They know the needs and backgrounds of each pupil very well. Pupils, therefore, benefit from a wide range of opportunities to help them develop as individuals. These experiences ensure that every pupil leaves the school with the confidence to explore new interests and to communicate their needs. Pupils understand very well how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider world. They appreciate the family environment of this village school, while knowing that they are ably equipped to thrive wherever they go next.

The trust and governors are extremely well informed about the strengths of the school. There are clear structures in place to ensure that high standards are maintained. This school is noteworthy, not just for the provision currently in place for pupils, but for its continued drive to keep improving. Staff's well-being and workload are managed very well. Staff are highly invested in providing the best possible education and opportunities for pupils and children.

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	147379
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10379933
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Horrocks
CEO of the trust	Hester Wooller
Headteacher	Philip Sherwood
Website	www.sonning.wokingham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Keys Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and senior leaders. The inspectors also met with some curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust, the CEO, members of the local governing body and a representative of the diocese.
- 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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 discussed the curriculum in art, and design and technology and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- The inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents’ views by considering the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to some parents before and after school. The inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted’s staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Alexandra Aldridge-Gibbons, lead inspector His Majesty’s Inspector

Lenny Williams Ofsted Inspector

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