

Bonnars C of E School

School Hill, Maresfield, Uckfield, TN22 2EG

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The executive headteacher's clear and ambitious vision for the future of the school is understood and shared by all staff. She has been instrumental in securing improvements in the quality of teaching. As a result, good levels of achievement have been maintained.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make very rapid progress in some year groups, most notably in Year 6.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 improved in 2014. More pupils achieved the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is consistently good, with some being outstanding.
- Teachers have increased expectations of what pupils are capable of learning. They expect all pupils to do their best and provide interesting and thought-provoking tasks.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress and rapidly gain confidence.
- Relationships are warm and respectful. The school ensures pupils are safe, behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They are polite, smartly dressed, and eager to talk to visitors about their school.
- Staff morale is high. Every member of staff plays a valued role in the life of the school. The school is a caring and supportive community.
- Governors know the school very well and provide effective levels of challenge and support. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and about the steps taken to ensure that pupils continue to achieve well.
- The school has made a good start in adapting the way subjects are taught in line with national guidance.
- The school's work in partnership with other schools and organisations is a particular strength of the school.
- All those parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) feel that their children are happy in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are small variations between the progress pupils make in different year groups.
- Teachers do not always help pupils to improve their work or give them time to act on advice.
- Opportunities for teachers to learn from existing excellent practice in the school are not yet fully developed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons or part-lessons, including four observations completed jointly with the executive headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils. A meeting was also held with a group of governors, including the Chair of Governors.
- The inspector took account of 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as a number of letters and messages. In addition, she considered the views expressed by parents who spoke with her informally at the start of the school day. The inspector also took account of 15 staff questionnaire responses.
- The inspector observed the school's work and considered a range of policies and documents. These included the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The inspector looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as looking at pupils' work in lessons. She also listened to pupils from Year 1, 2 and 6 read.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. This is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils, pupils who have special educational needs supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in the Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In January 2013, Bonners C of E School established collaboration with Buxted C of E Primary School. The executive headteacher oversees the leadership of both schools, dividing her time equally between the two. The schools have separate governing bodies.
- The head of school works closely with the executive headteacher and is central to the day-to-day running of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning further to secure outstanding achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers give pupils regular advice about how they can improve their work, including through marking in pupils' books
 - pupils are given the time to consider and act on teachers' advice.
- Increase opportunities for teachers to learn from existing outstanding teaching in the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher has skilfully steered the school through a period of change, including a number of staff changes, with quiet determination. She has provided clear direction and effective support for the school community. She has been highly successful in developing a team of effective leaders.
- The executive head works closely with the head of school and they complement each other well. Together, they provide clear and positive direction for the school. The school is now enjoying a more settled phase and is well placed to secure further improvements.
- The role played by subject leaders has developed rapidly. They have clearly defined responsibilities and understand their accountability for pupils' achievement in their subject area. They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and play an active role in the school's development.
- The school knows itself well. Evaluations of the school's strengths and development needs are accurate and planned developments are appropriate.
- Teachers, leaders and teaching assistants regularly check information about pupils' progress. This means that extra help is provided quickly for any pupils who may be falling behind. Adults providing support are clear about pupils' needs.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used successfully to help them catch up with the others. The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- Teachers and leaders have worked together, as well as with other schools, to develop a creative way of teaching subjects in different topics. Subject leaders have checked that the necessary aspects are incorporated and that learning builds appropriately as pupils move through the school. Events and visits are used well to enrich learning and motivate pupils.
- The school prepares pupils successfully for life in modern Britain. The school's curriculum and positive community atmosphere contribute very well to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Themes such as 'be the best you can' and events such as the recent visit by a Paralympian enthuse pupils and strengthen their sense of self-worth. Relationships in the school are strong.
- Improved links with parents mean that they are able to help their children at home more effectively. For example, teachers and pupils recently organised and ran a well-attended mathematics workshop to provide information for parents about how mathematics is taught. The school works very well with agencies to support pupils' achievement and well-being.
- The school plays a very active and highly effective role in partnership work with other schools and organisations. For example, working in partnership with a local university, the school has successfully developed a training programme for newly qualified teachers, which is tailored to teachers' needs and supports their teaching well.
- There are already some opportunities for teachers to learn from existing excellent practice in the school. However, the school rightly acknowledges that it needs to do more in this area, in order to improve the quality of teaching still further. The process for setting targets for teachers is robust. Salary progression is carefully considered and pay awards are linked to pupils' progress and school priorities.
- The local authority has provided effective support during a period of period of change for the school. The current 'light-touch' support recognises improvements made in the school and its effective leadership.
- The school uses sports funding appropriately. Specialist teachers have helped to improve the quality of teaching and more pupils are involved in clubs than previously.
- Robust arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because pupils' achievement is not outstanding. Opportunities for teachers to learn from existing excellent practice in the school are not yet fully developed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works effectively to support school development. Governors provide good levels of challenge to help leaders to secure further improvements. The governing body knows what the school does well and understands the priorities for development. The governing body receives regular reports from the executive headteacher about pupils' achievement. This ensures that governors have a good understanding of the information about pupils' progress, and how it compares with schools locally and nationally
 - Events such as visits to the school, discussions with the school council and meetings with subject leaders contribute well to the governing body's knowledge of the school's work. Governors know about

the quality of teaching and take account of leaders' evaluations when considering salary progression. They keep a careful check on the budget and monitor and evaluate the impact of additional government funds. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. There is a strong caring atmosphere in the school. Pupils look out for each other and are quick to offer each other help where needed, both during lessons and at break times. They demonstrate high levels of respect for each other and for all adults in school. Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) feel that pupils are well behaved and safe in school.
- Roles of responsibility, such as serving on the school council and making more choices about the level of work they tackle in lessons, help pupils to develop an appreciation of personal responsibility and British values.
- Pupils say that they are taught to respect different religions and beliefs. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they are extremely responsible and mature individuals who are well prepared for secondary school.
- The school has developed a more robust approach to monitoring pupils' attendance. As a result, attendance has improved and is above average. Leaders work closely with parents and agencies to ensure pupils attend well. Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day. Their good behaviour ensures that lesson start on time. Pupils enjoy the rewards given to the class with the highest attendance.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because a few pupils sometimes become restless during lessons and find it difficult to concentrate on their work, so that their progress slows.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils work and play sensibly and say that they feel very safe in school.
- Pupils know about bullying and the different forms it can take, such as racism. They are confident that bullying rarely occurs. For example, pupils reported that they are given plenty of helpful reminders about the harm bullying can cause. One pupil added, 'There's no bullying in this school though – it's just in case.' Pupils' views are confirmed by the school's behaviour logs and records. A few parents expressed concerns about bullying and the school's response to any incidents that may occur. School records indicate that any concerns are dealt with appropriately.
- Pupils appreciate the advice given by visitors such as the police liaison officer about how to keep safe and are clear about what they can do if they have a concern. They have a sensible view about how they can help to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, whatever their starting points. Teachers set work for the most able pupils that is sufficiently challenging and builds firmly on their knowledge and understanding. For example, the school works closely with a local secondary school to ensure gifted mathematicians in Year 6 are working at an appropriately high level.
- The work set for pupils is at the right level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities. Pupils commented that this has not always been the case and until quite recently, it was sometimes too hard or too easy. Pupils say that this has now changed because they are given more responsibility for deciding whether the tasks set are at the right level.
- Subjects are taught in an interesting and often thought-provoking way, so that pupils are enthused about learning and want to find out more. Pupils learn how to write for a wide range of purposes and in different subjects.
- Reading is taught effectively. Regular sessions enable pupils to practise and improve reading skills. The work in their reading books is good quality and well presented. Teachers incorporate good-quality texts into topic work. This helps to make learning more meaningful, introduces pupils to a wide range of texts and increases their desire to read.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved. Effective whole-school training means that teachers in all year groups are more confident about teaching phonics, and there is a

consistent approach across the school. Teachers cover the phonics knowledge and skills needed to support pupils' reading and writing skills more quickly than before. This means that pupils are much further ahead at an earlier stage in the school year.

- Teachers are confident about the teaching of mathematics. Pupils are taught how to use different strategies to solve mathematical problems and mathematical equipment is used well to support their work. They are encouraged to try different techniques and to explain their thinking. By the time they reach Year 6, they are able to confidently tackle mathematical problems and investigations.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers so that support for pupils is timely and effective. At times, support for individual pupils with additional needs is outstanding. When this is the case, pupils flourish. They make valuable and confident contributions during lessons and rapid progress in their learning.
- Teachers mark books regularly, and most give pupils advice about how to improve their work. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking in different classes. For example, in some cases marking is very brief so that pupils have little idea of what they can do to improve their work. In some classes, teachers ask pupils to complete unfinished pieces of work, make improvements to their work or go back and check their answers. The pupils' books show that this advice is not always followed up by teachers or by pupils.
- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding because there are small differences in the quality of teaching between different classes.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Fluctuations in pupils' attainment at both key stages are caused by small and varying numbers of pupils in each year group. In 2013, pupils' overall attainment was above average at the end of Key Stage 1, and average at the end of Key Stage 2. School information indicates that there was a marked improvement in pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated over the past year because teaching has improved. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and some pupils make outstanding progress, for example in Year 6, because of high-quality teaching.
- In the past, pupils have made slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. The school has successfully addressed this by providing good-quality training for teachers and teaching assistants. Increased expectations mean that teachers have the highest expectations of all pupils. Pupils' work books and information about pupils' progress show that pupils are making faster progress as a result. There was a marked increase in pupils' attainment in writing in 2014.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading and talk about books with enthusiasm. They have regular opportunities to choose books in the school library and older pupils talk with interest about their favourite authors. One girl commented that she liked borrowing books from the school library because 'it's not just full of fairy books'.
- The results of the Year 1 phonics check were below average in 2013. Last year the school focused on improving the teaching of phonics across both key stages. While improvements have taken a while to impact on the results of the phonics check in Year 1, developments in teaching are now making a difference. As a result, more pupils are currently on track to achieve expected levels. By the end of Year 2, pupils use language and punctuation skills confidently in their writing, and attainment in reading and writing is above average.
- The most able pupils make good progress and achieve well. In 2014, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 increased in reading, writing and mathematics. These included a few pupils who achieved Level 6 in mathematics (typical of Year 7 in secondary school).
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is because extra help is planned carefully to meet their needs and their progress is checked frequently. For example, a group of pupils receiving extra help with their phonics skills have made excellent progress. This is because the teacher's support has been extremely well focused on gaps in their knowledge.
- Pupils rapidly gain confidence in using different mathematical strategies, particularly in Year 6. This is because teachers encourage pupils to use the most appropriate method available. Pupils' attainment in mathematics was average in 2013 and increased in 2014.
- The small numbers of pupils eligible for additional government funding in each year group make good progress and achieve well. For the past two years this group's attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been at least in line with, or above, the attainment of their peers nationally and within the school. In 2013, their attainment was in line with other pupils' nationally in writing and mathematics and almost eight months above other pupils' nationally in reading. When compared with other pupils in the school,

their attainment was about a year ahead of their classmates in reading and writing, and around four months ahead in mathematics.

- Achievement is not yet outstanding because pupils' progress is not as rapid in some classes as others. This is because, while some pupils make very rapid progress where teaching is excellent, they make slightly slower progress where teaching is not quite as strong. For example, the quality of pupils' work in their books and the progress they make is notably better where marking is consistently high quality.

The early years provision

is good

- Children's skills and knowledge vary when children enter Reception class but, for many children, are lower than those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication skills. They make good progress because teaching is consistently of good quality.
- Children's attainment at the end of Reception Year improved substantially last year, so that the large majority of children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children behave well and are keen to learn. Relationships are very good and adults listen carefully to what children have to say. As a result, children are safe, happy and settled.
- The Reception classroom is bright and attractive. Areas are well organised and activities are planned carefully to appeal to children's interests. Children's work is full of character and displayed with care, so that children feel valued.
- Adults work very well together as a team. They regularly discuss children's progress and effectively plan learning to build on their learning.
- Adults give the teaching of reading and writing skills a high priority. Phonics sessions are lively and well-paced so that children are interested and make good progress.
- The Reception teacher, Early Years Foundation Stage leader and head of school provide good leadership for the early years. Leaders have secured important improvements, including increased use of the outdoor area to support learning, which have successfully raised children's attainment.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114511
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	448760

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Lines
Headteacher	Anne Radford
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 November 2009
Telephone number	01825 762381
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