

# Ninfield Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Ninfield, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9JW

**Inspection dates** 18–19 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Under the effective leadership of the headteacher the school is improving rapidly following a dip in attainment in 2013. He has a clear passion for learning and leads by example, motivating his staff to do their best and continuously improve.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics rose significantly in 2014 so that it was much better than the national average.
- Since the last inspection pupils have continued to make good progress through Key Stage 2. In the last two years the proportion of pupils making accelerated progress has improved further, especially in reading.
- From historically low starting points pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 to attain standards at the end of Year 2 that are broadly average.
- Children make an excellent start to school life in the outstanding early years provision.
- Leaders including the deputy headteacher and subject leaders for English have had a positive impact on improving teaching and achievement throughout the school so they are both now good.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They challenge school leaders to make improvements and support leaders to use limited resources wisely.
- The interesting curriculum makes good use of the school's locality, meets the needs of pupils and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school ensures that all pupils are kept safe. Parents are confident that their children are safe at school and pupils say that they feel safe.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful and take pride in their school.
- Parents, including those of pupils with additional needs, are complimentary about the work of the school.
- Attendance is above average.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils have not performed well in the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) check in the last two years.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their high-level problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- There are some occasions in lessons when tasks are too easy for more able pupils or less engaging for other pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in a total of 10 lessons, visiting all seven classes. Four of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. An inspector also made shorter visits to four different phonics (the sounds that letters make) groups.
- Inspectors held meetings and discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors and also had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of pupils and held informal discussions with various groups of pupils throughout the inspection, including at break and lunchtime. An inspector also heard some pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors examined various school documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, the quality of teaching, the achievement of pupils and teachers’ performance. The lead inspector looked at the minutes from governors’ meetings. Inspectors also received a letter from a local nursery.
- Inspectors considered two letters and a telephone message from parents and the responses of 57 parents to the Parent View questionnaire.
- Inspectors also analysed the 16 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Lee Selby, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bruce Waelend

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are no pupils currently on roll who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils entitled to additional funding through the pupil premium is just over half of the national average. However, this varies by year group, for example there were no disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 last year. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than that found nationally.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Early years provision is full time in one Reception class.
- The school operates a daily breakfast club.
- The school is part of the Active Battle Cluster.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be typically outstanding so that pupils' achievement continues to rise further by:
  - always providing interesting and engaging activities that are suitably challenging, especially for more able pupils
  - ensuring that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to develop their higher-level problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
  - continuing to allow the most skilled teachers to share their practice with colleagues, especially in the teaching of phonics.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides the school with strong leadership that is helping to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. He has developed a strong culture among the staff of working together to achieve the best for all pupils.
- Staff whole-heartedly enjoy working at the school and rightly describe it as a caring community. They appreciate the development opportunities they have to improve their skills and knowledge.
- Leaders ensure that relationships are positive throughout the school and as a result there is a great sense of equality of opportunity and it is very clear that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have led improvements in the quality of teaching so that standards have recently risen at the end of the early years provision, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This is because improvement plans are sharp, well focused and have clear actions to be completed in agreed timescales.
- Middle leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching in their subject areas and the impact it has on pupils' learning and progress. They give colleagues useful guidance to help them improve their teaching and this has had a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The inclusion manager ensures that the provision for those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is effective and this leads to them making good progress.
- Together with other leaders, the inclusion manager also ensures that pupil premium funding is used wisely, basing spending decisions on sound research. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils also make good progress.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. School leaders ensure that procedures to keep pupils safe are clearly established and much good practice is adopted in the day-to-day management, care and protection of children.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that is interesting, promotes the development of writing in different subject areas and makes effective use of the school's location near to the events of 1066 and significant geographical features such as the River Cuckmere. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strong and ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary physical education and sport premium has been used wisely to employ a sports coach who in addition to enthusing pupils and improving participation rates in sport has also given teachers renewed skills and confidence in the teaching of physical education.
- The local authority provides light-touch support to the school as the school is already acutely aware of its own strengths and development needs.
- Despite all of these strengths, leadership is not yet outstanding because leaders have yet to ensure that pupils' achievement is rapid and sustained in all key stages.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very knowledgeable and active in the life of the school. They have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and effectively challenge leaders to make necessary improvements. They know which groups of pupils are making the best progress and understand how this is linked to the quality of teaching. They use performance management and pay progression procedures well to reward the best teachers and support the headteacher well when he tackles any underperformance. They diligently fulfil their statutory duties around safeguarding pupils.
  - Governors manage the finances of the school well, including the well-targeted spending of additional government funding through the pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils and the primary sports grant. They are aware of the limitations of the school site, especially as the school is currently so oversubscribed. However, a lack of clarity about future pupil numbers makes forward planning difficult. Governors have forged good links with other governing bodies in the Active Battle Cluster which allows expertise to be shared.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in the playground, corridors and in the hall during breakfast club, assembly and at lunchtimes is of a high standard. They show great respect for their peers and the school environment. Pupils are polite to visitors and show good manners. Pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities such as being members of the school council.
- School records show that incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare. Parents, pupils and governors are uniformly complimentary about behaviour.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and they generally demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and work hard. Pupils take turns and share resources well, for example when Year 1 pupils sensibly shared out and played musical instruments in a lesson about Easter.
- When teaching does not fully engage pupils there can be a few instances of off-task behaviour. Some older pupils take less pride in their work when they are working with a different adult to their normal teacher.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying but explain that it does not happen in this harmonious environment. They know how to keep completely safe in different situations including when using the internet and when cycling on the road.
- The school provides a positive and entirely safe environment for pupils, making very effective use of the limited space. Even the youngest pupils understand risk and manage it well.
- Leaders and managers have robust systems of risk assessment, and clear procedures for admitting visitors to the school ensuring that pupils are kept safe.
- Regular training ensures that staff are well informed about keeping pupils safe from harm in and out of school.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Inspectors agreed with the school's self-evaluation that teaching over time is good. School leaders know this by systematically visiting lessons and regularly checking pupils' work and the progress they are making.
- Teachers create a positive atmosphere for learning. They command the respect of their pupils and make their expectations very clear. Pupils work hard to live up to these high expectations.
- The skilful teachers have good subject knowledge and carry out frequent and accurate assessments to plan new challenges. The marking and feedback they provide to pupils are strong and this helps pupils to make good progress.
- A dedicated team of teaching assistants is used effectively to support learning in the classroom and to lead smaller group work to help pupils who are falling behind to catch up.
- The teaching of early reading skills to younger children has improved and is now good. Year 2 pupils are making faster progress in developing their phonic skills. They now read frequently but would like more choice about what they read. Teaching in some phonics groups could be improved so that it matches the best practice in the school. In Year 6, teaching enthuses the most-able pupils to become highly accomplished readers who are able to show deeper understanding of a range of texts.
- Teachers plan extensive opportunities for pupils to write including in different areas of the curriculum and for different purposes. These opportunities, such as writing historical recounts with empathy and taking part in the governors' cup competition for poetry, allow pupils to apply their literacy skills well. This is contributing to the rapid progress many pupils are now making in writing.
- Mental mathematics skills are taught very well so that from an early age pupils are able to demonstrate a good level of fluency when carrying out calculations. Older pupils are especially confident when using the school's preferred diagonal method of multiplication; however, school leaders recognise that other standard methods of multiplication and division will need to be taught to meet the requirements of the

new National Curriculum.

- Pupils have regular opportunities to solve problems but they sometimes have to complete numerous simpler questions first before starting this more challenging aspect of mathematics. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics lessons.
- The vast majority of teaching engages and includes all groups of pupils; however, there are some occasions when work is not challenging enough for more able pupils so their time is not used well. On a very few occasions teaching does not interest other groups of pupils so their behaviour becomes less focused.
- The vast majority of parents rightly believe that their children are taught well. One parent expressed a concern about changes to staffing in one year group. Inspectors found that the school is managing the change well and that pupils are making the progress expected.

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Improved rates of progress through Key Stage 2 over the last two years have led to attainment rising at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics so that it is above that found nationally.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils achieve average standards in reading, writing and mathematics despite making good progress from relatively low starting points.
- In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the previous wide gaps in achievement between girls and boys have narrowed significantly due to the curriculum better meeting the needs of all pupils.
- All groups of pupils currently in the school are making at least expected progress and the large majority of pupils are working at or above age related expectations. Attainment is higher in reading than writing and mathematics but progress in all three areas is similar.
- The most-able pupils make similar progress as others. In a few lessons, these most-able pupils are not always stretched or moved on to harder work quickly enough and as a result in the past not enough pupils have attained the very highest standards (Level 6) at the end of Year 6. More pupils are being given the opportunity to achieve this level this year.
- There were no disadvantaged pupils in the 2014 cohort and only one in the 2013 cohort; therefore, it is not possible to compare the attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2 of disadvantaged pupils in the school with all other pupils nationally.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils nationally has closed in mathematics and narrowed significantly so that it was about one term in reading and two terms in writing.
- Other disadvantaged pupils in the school generally make good progress like their peers.
- The progress of the majority of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is good. This is because well-targeted strategies ensure that these pupils are identified, assessed, receive appropriate provision and are carefully tracked.
- Success in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been low in the last two years. However, pupils retaking the check in Year 2 have had greater success than other pupils nationally because of the better teaching of phonics. School leaders have reorganised the teaching of phonics so that more pupils are on track to meet the required standard this year.

### The early years provision

**is outstanding**

- Effective actions by leaders and improved teaching have dramatically improved children's learning and achievement in the early years provision over the last two years so that provision is now outstanding overall.
- From starting points that were broadly typical for their age, boys and girls made rapid progress in all areas of learning so that a much higher proportion than found nationally achieved a good level of development in 2014. Consequently, these children were extremely well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children currently in the provision are making similarly rapid progress with a high proportion of them on track to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year. As a result of this outstanding achievement, children are well prepared for the Year 1 National Curriculum.
- Teaching in the early years engages all the children and inspires them to achieve very well, learn

effectively and behave superbly.

- The classroom and outdoor area are resourced imaginatively in such a way that children’s curiosity and interest are engaged. This, combined with expert interaction from adults, who suggest, clarify, explain, question and challenge, creates an environment where children flourish socially, academically and emotionally.
- Assessment is rigorous and regular and makes effective use of significant learning from home and strong links with the local pre-school. Parents are effusive in their praise for this provision, especially when their children have additional needs that are met so well.
- Phonics is now taught very effectively and with great precision in the early years provision. Children learn very quickly and make rapid progress and enjoy independent activities to practise these skills. For example, one boy engaged in a sustained activity hunting for hidden pebbles in the sand before carefully and accurately sounding out the word written on it before sorting it in to the treasure chest if it was a real word or the box if it was a made up word.
- Children’s attitudes to learning are strong so that they are highly motivated and keen to join in the many learning opportunities that await them on a daily basis. During the inspection many activities in different areas of learning were skilfully based around the visit from a nurse.
- Although children join in enthusiastically and energetically, their excellent behaviour and thought for others, together with tenacious adult supervision, make this provision a very safe place.
- The leadership of early years is outstanding, with a relentless pursuit of excellence ensuring that children have an excellent start to school life.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114515
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	448771

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	175
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Moffat
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–25 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 892486
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