

Forest Row Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Hartfield Road, Forest Row, RH18 5DZ

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Teachers' expectations across the school have risen and all groups of pupils currently in the school are making good progress.
- The headteacher has led extremely effective action to improve the quality of teaching.
- The deputy headteacher and middle leaders carry out their duties effectively and have made a substantial contribution to the rapid improvements.
- Teaching in now consistently good in all key stages.
- Achievement in reading is a strength. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) has improved.
- Parents are very positive about the care and guidance the school provides, especially for the most vulnerable pupils.
- The school has excellent policies and procedures in place to keep all pupils safe from harm.
- Pupils behave well both in class and around the school.
- Children have a good start to their education in the early years provision because of good teaching and well-developed links with parents and pre-school providers.
- Governors carry out their duties diligently and with appropriate rigour to help lead the improvements being made.
- The school's interesting curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education and for life in modern Britain.
- The school has an attractive and stimulating environment to promote learning both indoors and outdoors.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in English. Leaders are now rightly focused on developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- The new school policy for marking pupils' work and giving feedback is not yet being applied consistently.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Teachers do not always have high expectations about the quality of presentation and the accuracy of spelling and grammar in subjects other than English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in all eight classes and made additional shorter visits to classrooms to observe the teaching of phonics. They also carried out a detailed scrutiny of pupils’ work books from the last year. The majority of the observations and the scrutiny of pupils’ work books were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held a number of discussions with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of pupils from Key Stage 2 to discuss their views of the school and held other informal discussions with pupils around the school. Inspectors heard pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors examined various school documents relating to pupils’ achievement, the quality of teaching, safeguarding and behaviour and performance management. They also reviewed minutes from governing body meetings and the outcomes of a review of the school leadership commissioned by the local authority.
- Inspectors considered three letters received from parents and the responses of 80 parents to the Parent View questionnaire. An inspector also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed the 15 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Elson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Over three quarters of pupils are of White British heritage. Just over one fifth of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest of these groups is Other White backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils entitled to additional funding through the pupil premium is much lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children. In the 2014 Year 6 cohort there were only two children from this group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school did not meet the government floor standards in 2014 which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A significant proportion of pupils join the school later in their education, typically from other alternative provision or from having been educated at home.
- Pupils are taught in eight classes. There is a combination of single and mixed-aged classes. Early years provision is in one full-time Reception class that also accommodates four Year 1 pupils.
- Two new teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school works closely with other local schools in the Ashdown Alliance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and progress by ensuring that:
 - pupils have more opportunities to write at length in topic work
 - high expectations about spelling, grammar and presentation are applied equally well in all areas of the curriculum
 - teachers apply the new marking policy consistently and pupils act upon the guidance they receive
 - all pupils have the opportunity to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have accelerated the pace of improvement since the previous inspection.
- The calm and purposeful leadership of the headteacher has led to rapid improvements and greater consistency throughout the school, most notably in the quality of teaching in the early years provision and in Key Stage 1 and in pupils' good behaviour.
- Leaders have fostered good relations with parents and staff who have happily engaged with the improvements being made. The vast majority of parents feel that the school is well led and managed.
- The school's values underpin the positive relations throughout the school and ensure there are equal opportunities for all. Discrimination of any kind is extremely rare and never tolerated.
- Pupil premium funding is used well. The appointment of an additional teacher to work on an individual basis with disadvantaged pupils has led to accelerated progress and improved attainment for these pupils.
- Middle leaders, such as the new subject leader for mathematics, are starting to have a more measurable impact on raising standards throughout the school. This is because they are now engaging in a full range of monitoring activities and giving feedback to colleagues to improve performance.
- The curriculum has been planned appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils. It makes good use of the attractive school building and outside environment and promotes learning well. Carefully considered topics and projects provide opportunities for pupils to thrive in their diverse local community as well as preparing them well for life in modern Britain. For example, older pupils are able to apply formally for positions of responsibility in the school and contribute to democratic decision-making through membership of the school council.
- Music is a particular strength in the school; together with opportunities to complete exciting learning activities about places such as Brazil, it contributes well to the strong provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is very robust. Action points are followed up rigorously and this has led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching over time. The headteacher has correctly identified that she now needs to focus more sharply on the teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and are extremely effective at keeping pupils safe from harm. Even the youngest pupils are taught to recognise potential dangers and were happy to share advice on how to stay safe with inspectors.
- The primary physical education and sports premium is being used effectively. There are more opportunities for pupils to engage in competitive sport and teachers have benefited from the chance to receive extra training and guidance in the teaching of physical education.
- The local authority has provided significant support to the school since the previous inspection. Leaders and governors particularly valued the external reviews of safeguarding and leadership which helped them to pinpoint the most important areas to focus on improving.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have increased their rigour when it comes to checking on the standards and achievement in the school. They have made some shrewd appointments to ensure they have the skills and expertise to carry out their role effectively.
 - They have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and the current performance data for the school. They were forensic in their analysis of previous underperformance and are confident that current pupils are making good progress and will be well prepared for secondary education by the time they leave Forest Row. They have also discussed their responsibility to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, ensuring that the curriculum promotes important values such as democracy and tolerance.
 - The governing body ensures that staff have targets to manage their performance that fit with the school's current priorities and check that decisions about teachers' pay are linked to performance.
 - Governors manage the school's financial resources well, despite the challenge of variable cohort sizes. They ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and to promote primary sport is used effectively.
 - Governors contribute well to the school's excellent systems to keep pupils safe from harm.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Their positive attitudes to learning help them make good progress in their learning.
- The new traffic-light system promotes and rewards good behaviour in the classroom.
- Pupils show respect for the environment, including the school building and grounds. They take on responsibilities such as watering the gardens that not only make a positive contribution to the school but also build friendships between pupils.
- Pupils who have historically found it more difficult to behave well have benefited from a programme to support and nurture their emotional development. Staff who work on this programme are highly regarded and have had a significant impact on improvements in the behaviour and learning achievements of the pupils involved.
- Concerted efforts by leaders have led to persistent absence reducing. Overall attendance is now broadly average and punctuality is improving.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding as the quality of presentation in pupils' books is not yet a strength. Pupils could take more pride in this area.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils state that there is no bullying in the school. There have been no bullying incidents recorded by the school in the last two years. However pupils are aware of different types of bullying, how to prevent it and how to report it. Pupils take an active role in preventing bullying of any kind.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep safe in and out of school and when online using the internet.
- Pupils are allowed to take calculated risks when playing on the various equipment in the playground. They know very clearly how and where to play safely. They take responsibility for keeping each other safe and for organising equipment for playtime safely.
- The school's checks on the suitability of staff, visitors and volunteers are rigorous.
- Staff have up-to-date and relevant training on how to recognise if pupils are at risk of harm and work well with other agencies when necessary.
- School leaders and governors audit the school's safeguarding and health and safety procedures robustly on a regular basis; they assess risks carefully and follow up any required actions swiftly.
- The overwhelming majority of parents believe that their children are safe at school.
- Parents appreciate the relatively new breakfast and after school clubs that provide a safe and healthy start and end of the day for those pupils who attend.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved rapidly and is now consistently good throughout the school. As a result, all groups of pupils are now making good progress.
- Teaching engages pupils well so that they are attentive and have a positive attitude to learning.
- Teachers have high expectations. They clearly explain to pupils what they are learning and what they need to do to be successful.
- Pupils' work books show that they make good gains in their learning because of the good teaching, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers monitor pupils' learning in class and adapt their plans when necessary to meet pupils' needs.
- Teachers ensure that work is set at the right level to allow pupils to make progress. They assess pupils regularly and identify any gaps in understanding that need to be filled.
- Marking is generally effective, especially in English books. However, not all teachers are consistently following the school's new policy and pupils do not always act upon the feedback.
- The contribution of teaching assistants to pupils' learning is good overall, although on a few occasions they are too quick to give pupils' support without encouraging them to think for themselves first.
- The teaching of phonics has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress because of lively and active teaching.

- The teaching of reading is a strength. Older pupils are part of book groups that get to discuss and enjoy challenging texts together. Elsewhere in the school teachers encourage pupils to read interesting texts in different subject areas. For example, in a geography lesson, inspectors observed Years 3 and 4 pupils reading a range of texts to help them consider whether they would like to live near a volcano.
- Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to apply their skills in writing in other areas of the curriculum because teachers' expectations about the correct use of spelling and grammar are not as high. There are few opportunities for extended writing outside of English lessons. As a result, pupils throughout the school make good progress in writing rather than the more rapid progress they make in reading.
- Teaching in mathematics is accurate and enables all groups of pupils currently in the school to make good progress. This is because teachers have helped pupils to fill in gaps in knowledge from previous weaker teaching. Despite great improvements since the previous inspection, not all pupils are given enough opportunities to apply their problem-solving and reasoning skills frequently enough.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All groups of pupils currently in the school, in every year group, are making good progress.
- The vast majority of pupils are working at or above expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion working above expectations for their age is highest in reading.
- The school has robust systems to track attainment and progress. Teachers carry out assessments six times a year and their judgements are moderated within the school and with other schools in the alliance.
- School data, pupils' workbooks and learning observed during this inspection confirm that pupils are now making considerably more progress than in previous years.
- There has been a significant improvement in the outcomes of the Year 1 phonic screening check in 2015.
- Achievement over time at the end of Key Stage 1 has been broadly in line with national averages. The current Year 2 have made good progress from below average starting points to continue this trend.
- As a result of this better progress, the current Year 6 are on track to achieve significantly better outcomes than their peers in 2014 where achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 was below the government minimum floor standards.
- Leaders evaluated why pupils did not perform so well in 2014 robustly. They have taken decisive action based on their evaluation, where the outcomes were within their control. However, some of the reasons for the disappointing performance in 2014 were beyond the control of the school.
- There were not enough disadvantaged pupils in the 2014 Key Stage 2 cohort to comment on their progress as a group.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are nearly all working at or above expectations for their age and the vast majority of them are making good progress. Teachers use targeted intervention well to help disadvantaged pupils who fall behind to catch up.
- The most-able pupils make good progress from their higher starting points. This is most notable in reading but the good progress of the current Year 6 has led to more of them being entered for the more challenging national tests in reading and mathematics.
- Boys are generally now achieving as well as girls across the curriculum. Where there are gaps in attainment in some year groups, boys are making faster progress to catch up.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have their progress tracked rigorously and this shows that the current provision meets their needs and is enabling them to make good progress over time relative to their starting points.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are all working at or above expectations for their age and are making similar good progress to their peers. This is because teachers have high expectations of all pupils.
- Nearly all pupils from minority ethnic groups are also working at or above the standard required for their age and are making good progress. Where this is not the case it is because the pupils are new to the school.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with levels of development that are broadly typical for their age.
- There are good links with both home and pre-school providers which contribute to a smooth start to

school life at Forest Row.

- The good links with parents continue throughout the Reception year and they are involved in celebrating key moments in learning with their children.
- Pupils make good progress through the early years provision so that both boys and girls achieve a good level of development that is above the national average. There are no significant differences in the achievement in the different areas of learning. As a result, children are ready to start Year 1 with confidence.
- The headteacher provides good leadership for the early years and has worked tirelessly with the early years team since the previous inspection to improve the provision so that it is now consistently good. She knows the community and the needs of Forest Row children well. Her expertise has helped to develop a stimulating learning environment both inside and outside.
- Teaching in the early years provision is consistently good. The teacher's questioning and enthusiasm makes the setting a positive and enjoyable place to learn. As a result, children work well together and thrive on the opportunities to be imaginative, for example when building their own pirate ship out of large wooden blocks.
- Lively and active teaching of phonics helps children to learn quickly and this leads to good progress in the development of reading skills.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to focused activities, including the development of early writing skills.
- Behaviour is good. Children negotiate well when they have different ideas and listen respectfully to each other in whole-class feedback sessions,
- Safeguarding procedures in the early years provision are very robust and keep the youngest children safe from harm.

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	114504
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	449264

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Marke
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Williams
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 July 2013
Telephone number	01342 823380
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