

Midhurst C of E Primary School

Ashfield Road, Midhurst, GU29 9JX

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2015

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 new headteacher, well supported by other staff and governors, has ensured that the school has continued to improve. This has ensured that teaching and achievement have remained good.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and track pupils' progress carefully.
- The progress of current pupils in all year groups is good. Attainment both at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 is in line with national averages.
- Children in the early years do well. They make good progress from their starting points.
- The quality of teaching is good. Pupils say that lessons are interesting. Learning support assistants provide effective help.
- Behaviour in the school is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils attend regularly. The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe from harm.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They respect those who have different faiths and cultures to their own.
- Governors are knowledgeable and support and challenge the school effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is sometimes limited because teachers do not always have the highest expectations and set sufficiently challenging work.
- There are not enough opportunities for children to develop their writing skills in the early years, particularly in the outside area.
- Action plans to bring about further improvements are too broad ranging and have no clear measurable criteria against which to measure success.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 13 lessons and part lessons. Some were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors heard pupils reading in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils and school staff. There was a discussion with the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and four other members. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 45 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Other sources of parental views that were considered included discussions with parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a large range of documents and policies, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress and documents checking the quality of teaching and learning. They also examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The views of staff were analysed through the 26 responses to the staff questionnaire

Inspection team

Elizabeth Bowes, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Kevin Parfoot

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Midhurst Church of England Primary School is a little smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium is lower than the national average. Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs on the school roll is around the national average.
- The early years provision consists of a full-time Reception class.
- In 2014, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher became acting head in April 2014 and was appointed to the substantive role of headteacher in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding, so that more pupils make excellent progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers have the highest expectations and always set work that is sufficiently challenging for all groups of pupils
 - teachers in the early years provide more opportunities for children to develop their writing skills, especially in the outside area.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that action plans to bring about further improvements are concise and include clear measurable criteria against which to measure success.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- This is an improving school. Under the leadership of the new headteacher, progress has improved and attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has also increased. Unpublished data for 2015 suggests that this trend of improvements is continuing.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the continued development of the school. Good behaviour flourishes and there is strong leadership of teaching. Leaders regularly visit lessons and look in pupils' books. Clear feedback and advice are given to teachers about how they can improve, and possible additional training needs are identified. Teachers have clear targets for improvement. Pay awards are closely linked to the progress of pupils. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and staff feel valued.
- Staff have created a positive and welcoming atmosphere in the school. Parents are pleased with how their children are taught. They appreciate the fact that teachers are often available to discuss any concerns. The school fosters good relations with parents. There are also strong links with other schools in the locality.
- Additional funding, called the pupil premium, is well used to ensure that pupils make good progress in the different year groups. Any pupil who is identified as falling behind is provided with additional support. The impact of that support on a pupil's progress is regularly checked.
- Middle leaders are effective and fulfil their roles with care. Following a period of staff absence the headteacher and other senior leaders have taken on many of the responsibilities of middle leaders who are not in school. This has ensured consistency and contributed to the smooth running of the school.
- The school has a large number of actions in the plans designed to bring about further improvements. However, these are too wide ranging. They are not concise and there are no clear criteria in order to measure how successful the action has been.
- Equal opportunity is integral to the school's ethos. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective of the needs of others. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils learn a broad range of subjects. They say that they like the variety of trips and visits, such as the trips to the local church and residential visits to France. These opportunities effectively develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils said how much they enjoyed Forest School. They enjoyed learning about the natural environment. Pupils said that they enjoyed seeing the link between learning how to construct a shelter in the woods and their topic on houses and homes.
- The school ensures that British values such as democracy and the rule of law are effectively taught. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Primary physical education and sports funding is well used. Some of the funding is spent on hiring qualified sports coaches to work with teachers. The school ensures that all pupils, whatever their level of activity, are all encouraged to participate. As a result of the funding, pupils can now enjoy a broader range of sporting opportunities such as netball, athletics, cricket and dancing. Involvement in local sports tournaments such as the Rother Valley Football League enables pupils to develop their skills in competitive games.
- Leaders and managers are diligent in ensuring that safeguarding meets statutory requirements. The arrangements for ensuring the protection of pupils are good.
- The local authority has provided effective support to this school. For example, it has helped the new headteacher in developing her role.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective in understanding how the school is doing compared with other schools. They understand the data relating to the school's performance.
 - Governors have a clear awareness of the quality of teaching and how performance is managed. Governors know that pay awards are only given to those staff who demonstrate a positive impact on pupils' progress. All governors who were spoken to understand the procedures to follow should they need to tackle any teacher's underperformance.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In the majority of lessons pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They listen carefully to the teacher and quickly act to follow out any instructions. Behaviour is not outstanding because in a few instances pupils are not fully focused on the task, for example when working on computers outside of the classroom.
- Pupils behave well around the school. During lunchtimes pupils are polite and respectful to each other. At playtimes pupils were seen to be playing happily together.
- School council members take their responsibilities seriously and enjoy gathering information from other members of the class so that the views of all are heard. They have recently been considering establishing a place in the playground for those who sometimes have no one to play with.
- The school's detailed records regarding behaviour show that incidents of any inappropriate behaviour are rare.
- Attendance continues to be above national average and punctuality is well monitored.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All pupils when questioned said that they felt safe and that they have been well informed about how to stay safe, both in and out of school. Pupils have learnt about the dangers of fires from local fire officers who have visited the school. All pupils know about the dangers of the internet and how to stay safe by not giving out personal information.
- Pupils and parents told inspectors that bullying of any kind is rare. They were confident that if there were any concerns staff would be able to handle it appropriately. Pupils know about the different types of bullying such as cyber-bullying and racist bullying.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good-quality teaching ensures that pupils are given activities that are interesting and motivating. Teaching is not outstanding because teachers do not have the highest expectations.
- In mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils use their calculation skills confidently. Pupils say activities such as solving real-life problems make the subject relevant to them. Pupils enjoyed the whole-school mathematical investigations, for example the investigation into shape and space.
- Pupils are given a range of different books to read, both fiction and non-fiction. Early reading skills are effectively taught and throughout the school pupils are encouraged to read widely.
- In writing, pupils write at length in English and in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to write for a real purpose; for example, in Year 5 pupils had written to a local environmental group after they had visited and planted reeds in the pond.
- In many lessons work set by teachers is at the right level of difficulty. However, in some classes pupils are given work that is either too easy or too hard for them. This affects the progress pupils can make.
- Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously. Pupils said that helpful comments help them to improve their work.
- Additional teachers to support learning, for example in mathematics, have a strong impact on pupils' progress. This is because they know exactly where each pupil is in their learning and what they need to learn next.
- Learning support assistants are well trained and effective. They work confidently with groups of pupils in lessons. They ensure that pupils can quickly catch up.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The progress of current pupils is good and improving. Although published data for 2014 indicates that progress was not strong, inspectors agree with the school's analysis regarding the good progress for those pupils currently on roll.
- Progress is improving for those who are most able. In 2014 at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportions of pupils gaining the higher levels in writing were below national averages. However, as a result of targeted additional help, unpublished data for 2015 indicates that nearly half of the pupils in Year 6 have gained the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014 the scores in the Year 1 phonics (the link between sounds and the letters they represent) screening check were higher than the national average. As they move through the school pupils apply their reading skills well to find out useful information. An example of this was seen in Year 4, where pupils had completed extensive projects on snow leopards.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with the national average. In Key Stage 2 attainment is steadily improving from around the national average. Unpublished data for 2015 indicates that nearly all pupils obtained at least the level expected of them for their age.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. Staff regularly monitor improvements in their work and ensure that the education they receive meets their needs well.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils in the school and those nationally. In 2014, at the end of Year 6 in reading they attained in line with other pupils in the school and were a term behind other pupils nationally. In writing they were a term behind other pupils in the school and over two terms behind other pupils nationally. In mathematics they were two terms behind other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. The school has focused on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are given the support they need to make good progress. In every year group the majority of disadvantaged pupils now make good progress and gaps are narrowing between other pupils nationally and other pupils in the school. For example, they make better progress than other pupils in the school in reading in Years 2, 4 and 6, in writing in Years 4, 5 and 6 and in mathematics in Year 4 and 6.

The early years provision is good

- The new leadership of the early years is good. Staff know the children well and plan carefully to provide a range of activities that capture children's imagination. Effective routines have been established which enable children to behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. Progress is carefully monitored and any child identified as falling behind is quickly given the help they need to catch up.
- As a result of good teaching children make good progress. Adults take every opportunity to develop children's speaking and listening skills. As a result, children are confident and happy to engage in role play and other activities.
- Children arriving in the early years have skills typical for their age, although their skill levels are lower in writing. Inspectors found that the majority of children reach a good level of development by the end of the year and that they are well prepared to move into Year 1. However, children's skill levels in writing are lower. This is because evidence seen both in lessons and 'learning journeys' (information from ongoing checks on progress) shows that there are too few opportunities for children to practise their writing skills, particularly in the outside area.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were very supportive of the induction arrangements when their child started school. They liked the welcoming and caring atmosphere. They praised the fact that staff were very approachable and that their children were happy and felt safe in school.

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	125988
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	456221

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edward Roberts
Headteacher	Sally Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2011
Telephone number	01730 813526
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