

# Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Primary School

Steellands Rise, Ticehurst, East Sussex TN5 7DH

**Inspection dates** 24–25 February 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school is improving. Since the previous inspection, senior leaders and governors have successfully driven improvements in the quality of teaching.
- All groups of pupils make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have risen steadily over the last three years and pupils' outcomes are now good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers plan interesting activities which engage pupils. Teaching assistants provide good support.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception and are prepared well for Year 1.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust. There is a strong sense of care within the school. As a result, pupils feel safe.
- Pupils behave well. They play happily together. Good relationships mean that pupils feel confident and secure.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has made sure that pupils have continued to learn well, despite some turbulence in staffing.
- Subject leaders, particularly for English and mathematics, are knowledgeable and contribute well to the improvements in their subjects.
- Governors work closely with the headteacher and provide effective challenge, together with strong support.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- The level of challenge in lessons is not always precise enough to make sure that pupils of different abilities make the rapid progress that would lead to outstanding achievement.
- Pupils do not always respond to the guidance given by teachers in their feedback. This sometimes slows the progress pupils make.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding by ensuring that:
  - teachers focus more sharply in lessons on what pupils of different abilities need to learn and do to make rapid progress
  - pupils have sufficient time to act upon teachers' feedback so that they can improve their work and deepen their understanding
  - teachers have good opportunities to observe outstanding practice in other schools as part of their own professional development.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is determined to move the school forward and has managed the changes in teaching staff effectively.
- Leaders at all levels have worked tirelessly and successfully over the past two years to improve the school. Staff share the headteacher's high expectations for pupils and there is a shared commitment to improve further.
- There is a good system to monitor the school's effectiveness. School leaders frequently check the work of other teachers. They visit classrooms and look at pupils' work. As a result, leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Underperformance is tackled promptly. Where needed, leaders put into place a programme of support and coaching to improve teachers' skills. Leaders make sure that teachers' pay is linked with their performance. Although there are plans to enable teachers to improve by observing outstanding practice in other schools, this has not yet taken place.
- Comprehensive systems are in place to check the progress of pupils. Teachers have frequent meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to discuss how well pupils in their class are learning. Action is taken quickly where pupils are in danger of falling behind. The deputy headteacher monitors the additional support that these pupils are given to make sure that it is leading to better progress. As a result, no group of pupils is doing any less well than others. This reflects the school's good promotion of equal opportunities.
- The deputy headteacher has lost no time in reviewing special needs provision. She is passionate about making sure that every pupil does as well as possible. She gives good support to staff so that they understand pupils' needs and are able to provide effective teaching to pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- The pupil premium funding is used wisely. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are closing. In 2015, for example, the gap closed completely at KS1.
- The school has used the additional funding for primary physical education and the sport premium well. For example, it has funded support from a specialist teacher from a local secondary school who has worked with teachers to improve their practice. It has also been used to fund additional sports clubs. Pupils' participation in sports has increased as a result.
- The school offers a broad range of subjects, many of which are taught in themes to make learning meaningful. This means that pupils can apply their writing and mathematics skills when learning other subjects, such as science and history. Focus weeks add interest. For example, a very recent 'Maths Week' gave pupils opportunities to measure fruit and vegetables, interpret information about parents' and pupils' favourite foods, draw graphs and write conclusions about what they found. Extra-curricular clubs and visits to local places of interest as well as a residential trip help to build pupils' self-esteem and motivate them to explore personal interests.
- Assemblies are used well to promote the school's values. During the inspection, parents attended an assembly led by a class. Pupils acted short scenarios showing the need to forgive and read their writing about times when they had forgiven someone. Other pupils had time to think about times when they had been forgiven. Assemblies such as these contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school promotes British values effectively. Pupils learn about democracy by voting for their school councillors and 'House Captains'. Volunteer pupils make an application and are then interviewed to become 'Play Leaders'. Activities such as these, together with debates about whether Britain should stay within the European Union and whether migrants should be allowed into Britain, prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- A few parents spoken to at the start of the school day and who responded to the online survey showed concern about how well the school communicates with parents. However, the inspection found that communication with parents is good. Parents receive weekly newsletters and regular reports on their child's progress. There is an 'open door' policy where the headteacher is available to discuss issues with parents if necessary. In addition, the headteacher and class teachers are on the playground most days and are available to talk to parents. The school has also recently introduced 'open afternoons' where parents can see their child's work and talk to the teacher at the end of the afternoon.
- Parents are given good information about how to help their child learn. Recent sessions include helping

children at home with their reading and writing. The school works well with parents to help keep pupils safe, for example by providing information about how to use the internet safely.

- The local authority has worked closely with the school since the last inspection. This support has included coaching for the headteacher and deputy headteacher, reviewing the arrangements for safeguarding, reviewing governance and moderating assessments of pupils. This support has contributed well to the improvements in the school's effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governing body has responded well to a review of governance. Governors carry out their roles effectively. They provide good support to the headteacher, especially when dealing with complex staffing issues. They ask searching questions about the school's performance, for example about the performance of teachers. They hold leaders to account. They work alongside senior and subject leaders to learn more about how policies agreed in meetings are carried out in practice. They check what they have been told by leaders by making frequent visits to the school. In this way, they have a good understanding about what the school is doing well and its areas for improvement. They are knowledgeable about how the school is performing, compared to others.
  - Governors attend training to make sure that they are well informed about current guidance, including that for safeguarding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A thorough review of safeguarding has recently been carried out. Records are detailed and show that leaders follow up concerns about children promptly. Staff receive up-to-date training.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Classrooms are well organised. Teachers have created bright learning environments. Displays, both in classrooms and in corridors, are of good quality.
- Teaching assistants have received good training and work well with pupils. The good support they give to disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability contributes well to the good progress these groups of pupils make.
- Writing is taught well. Pupils make good use of their 'Magpie Word Books' and dictionaries, for example to help them write about sailing to the South Pole as part of their topic on Shackleton. Clear teaching about different parts of a sentence helps pupils develop a good understanding of grammar. Pupils learn to take notes when using laptop computers, for example to research the European Union.
- Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of number in mathematics and this is ensuring that pupils develop an increasingly secure understanding of basic skills. Regular mathematics homework, completed on the computer, also helps to reinforce skills.
- The teaching of reading is good. The school is well resourced for books, and pupils are encouraged to read every day. The library is a welcoming space and there are plans to make it even more child-friendly so that its use can be maximised.
- Where teaching is most effective, there is a sharp focus on what pupils of different abilities should learn. However, when pupils are given a choice of activities, they sometimes choose one which is too difficult or too easy and this slows the progress that they make.
- Teachers usually follow the school's marking policy and give good guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Sometimes, however, pupils do not respond and so opportunities are lost for them to deepen their understanding or extend their learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe. Most parents who completed the online survey agree that the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils know how to stay safe. The importance of using computers and mobile phones safely is emphasised through assemblies, reminders during computing lessons and the 'E-Safety Weeks'. As a result, pupils have a good understanding about how to keep safe when using technology. Pupils say they can talk to an adult in school if they are worried or upset.

- Pupils learn how to be good citizens. 'House Captains' take their responsibilities seriously. As one said, 'We are the eyes and ears of the headteacher.' They support other school leaders and encourage all pupils to look smart in their uniform and move around the school sensibly. 'Play Leaders' are well trained and help to organise football and parachute games at lunchtime.
- Looking after the school's chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs supports pupils' good personal development. They learn to take responsibility for the welfare of animals as well as learning about how animals can help humans. One pupil spoke about how looking after the chickens helps her to calm down when she is cross. In this way, the school supports the development of pupils' self-confidence and emotional well-being.
- The breakfast club provides a safe, calm start to the day for those who attend.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in class. Playtimes are harmonious. Pupils particularly enjoy playing with the good range of equipment provided. Playtimes are well supervised.
- Pupils say that bullying does not happen. School records show that incidents are very rare but are dealt with appropriately when they do occur.
- Pupils enjoy school. Attendance has improved over the last year and is currently average for all groups.

## **Outcomes for pupils are good**

- Pupils' progress has accelerated since the previous inspection, and pupils now make good progress across the school. As a result, standards in assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have risen steadily and in 2015 were the highest for at least three years. Pupils are prepared well for their secondary school.
- In 2015, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development (GLD) when they left Reception was above the national average. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was similar to the national average. Pupils who did not reach the expected standard are catching up in Year 2. When the inspector listened to these pupils read, it was evident that they are making good progress in their ability to sound out unknown words, using their developing knowledge of letters and the sounds they make.
- The school's assessment information, as well as work in pupils' books, shows that all groups of pupils currently in school, on the whole, make good progress from their starting points.
- The most-able pupils make good progress overall. In 2015, they attained well above the national average in the assessments of reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. They also attained well above the national average in these subjects at the end of Year 6, as well as in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test.
- The support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective and so these pupils make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is because leaders check their progress carefully and frequently to make sure that extra support is given where needed and is of good quality.

## **Early years provision is good**

- Leadership of early years is good. The leader has brought about improvement in the provision for the school's youngest children. Children are prepared well for Year 1. The leader is knowledgeable about the needs of young children and is determined to improve the provision further so that it quickly becomes outstanding.
- Good links are made with the independently run Nursery on the school site. These, together with close links with parents which include home visits, help children to settle quickly into Reception.
- Children are happy playing and learning with each other. They behave well and take turns. Adults make sure that children play safely. Relationships between adults and children are supportive, kind and nurturing. As a result, children quickly feel safe and grow in confidence.
- This year, children joined Reception with levels of skills at least similar to, and in many case above, those expected for their age. They make good progress because of the exciting and stimulating learning opportunities that engage their interest and make learning fun. For example, children enjoy watching how the chicken eggs develop in the incubator and getting muddy in the 'mud kitchen'.

- Teaching is strong. Adults make sure that the activities provided, both indoor and outside, extend children's learning and develop their curiosity. For example, during the inspection, children used a balance to find out which objects are heavy and which are light. They then weighed the guinea pigs and estimated which one would be the heaviest. Children learn about what animals need to survive. They enjoy caring for the guinea pigs. They know that they need to wash their hands after handling them.
- Adults make accurate assessments about children's learning and keep useful records in children's 'learning journeys'. Additional funding is used well to make sure that disadvantaged children do as well as they can.
- Sometimes opportunities to deepen the understanding of the most-able children are lost when the level of challenge is not precise enough.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114524
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002388

This inspection 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>	120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ken Persaud
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Sayers
<b>Telephone number</b>	01580 200344
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ticehurst.e-sussex.sch.uk">www.ticehurst.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@ticehurst.e-sussex.sch.uk">head@ticehurst.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13–14 November 2013

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- There is a Reception class and four mixed-age classes for Years 1 and 2, Years 2 and 3, Years 4 and 5 and Years 5 and 6. The children in the Reception year attend full time.
- There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a deputy headteacher who is also responsible for pupils and have special educational needs or disability. There has been a history of considerable turnover of temporary staff but this is now largely resolved.
- Most pupils are White British. Few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children, is slightly lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils and who have special educational needs or disability is similar to that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- An independent pre-school and children's centre share the same site as the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in nine lessons across all five classes. Six of these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked closely at pupils' work for the current year. Much of this scrutiny was carried out alongside the headteacher. The inspector talked to pupils about their learning and their experiences of school. She listened to them read. She also attended a school assembly and observed pupils at lunch and during playtime.
- Discussions were held with school leaders and several governors. A telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority. The inspector took account of 55 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day to gather their views, as well as with the parents attending an assembly. The inspector took account of the 14 responses from the staff survey.
- The inspector observed the school's work and reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, the school's checks on the quality of teaching, the results of reviews by the local authority, the school development plan and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- A review of safeguarding records and procedures was also carried out.

## Inspection team

Joanna Toulson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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