

# Forest Row Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Hartfield Road, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5EB

## Inspection dates

9–10 October 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have successfully addressed the weaknesses evident in pupils' achievement in 2017. Provisional results for 2018 show that the proportions of pupils who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above the national figures.
- Most pupils currently in the school make good progress across a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders and governors work effectively together and have a good understanding of the strengths of the school. There are secure plans in place to make further improvements.
- Leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and provide effective feedback to teachers. As a result, the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and continuing to improve.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. This is a very welcoming, nurturing school in which pupils feel safe.
- Good-quality teaching in the early years ensures that children make good progress.
- Lessons are well planned, and teachers set tasks that usually meet pupils' needs. However, at times, teachers do not match activities to pupils' abilities precisely enough, particularly for the most able pupils.
- While many teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge and extend pupils' learning, this is not consistently strong across the school.
- Pupils benefit from an exciting curriculum. However, the curriculum is not fully consistent in extending and deepening pupils' knowledge and skills across a range of different subjects.
- Leaders and governors have effective strategies in place to improve the attendance of pupils. However, although attendance rates have improved, the attendance rate for some pupils remains too low.

## **Full report**

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that teachers:
  - pitch learning more precisely to pupils' needs, especially for the most able pupils
  - refine their use of questioning to challenge and extend pupils' understanding.
- Strengthen the curriculum so that it more effectively deepens pupils' skills and knowledge across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve pupils' attendance.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The determined leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by her deputy, has got the school back on track following the dip in results in 2017. There is a clear drive for continuing improvement.
- Staff share the high expectations of leaders. Morale is high, and all staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey are rightly proud to work at the school. Leaders provide frequent developmental feedback to teachers as part of the school's monitoring process. Teachers welcome this support and act positively to improve their practice.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school's work. The very large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, or who spoke to inspectors, said that their children are happy at school and making good progress. Typical comments included 'A supportive environment in which children learn, develop and grow' and 'Hugely impressed by the school and teachers'. These views are endorsed by the inspection findings.
- There has been a complete overhaul of the way in which leaders and teachers check how well pupils are achieving. Frequent meetings provide a sharp check on the progress each pupil makes. Additional support is provided where necessary and evaluated to make sure that it makes a difference. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Strong leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities ensures that funding is spent effectively to meet the wide range of their needs. As a result, pupils who need additional support in school receive it. As well as promoting the academic development of pupils, leaders place an appropriate emphasis on helping pupils' personal development. For example, less confident pupils benefit from sessions in the 'forest school' and the 'thrive' club.
- The curriculum makes good links across subjects, which helps to make learning memorable. For example, pupils in Year 1 were seen developing their writing skills by listing materials needed to build a house after reading the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'. Year 6 pupils learned how to create tension in their stories about Pompeii as part of their history topic. Year 4 pupils were excited to explain how archaeologists had calculated the age of a person whose bones dated from over 3,000 years ago.
- A wide range of visits, including residential journeys, make a good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils enjoy the after-school clubs, but say that they would like even more.
- The curriculum provides a variety of exciting learning experiences across a range of subjects. There are times, however, when the learning is not demanding enough to enable the most able pupils to fully deepen their understanding.
- British values are promoted effectively through the school's Christian values. Pupils learn about the importance of contributing to the community. For example, during the inspection, pupils collected materials to make scarecrows as part of a community project. Pupils are respectful to adults and to each other. Assemblies are used well to reinforce important values, for example the need for compassion. Older pupils happily

take on responsibilities around the school. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about the role of the head boy and head girl, and the need to be good 'ambassadors'. Leaders have created an environment that strongly encourages a sense of respect and kindness.

- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively. PE coaches work alongside teachers to improve their practice and confidence in teaching PE and games. Pupils take part each day in running the 'golden mile'. This is improving their fitness, with pupils running further and in faster times than previously.
- Leaders and governors have taken effective action to improve pupils' attendance. Although this has resulted in reducing absence rates, this is an aspect of the school's work which remains a focus.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school and are clear about the improvements they would like to make. They have rightly identified, for example, the need to increase further the proportion of pupils who reach the higher standards.
- Governors show commitment to the school and play an active role in the school's continuing improvement. They provide good support to the headteacher, as seen, for example, during the school's restructure of staffing levels due to falling pupil numbers.
- Governors make frequent visits to talk to staff, parents and pupils to find out about everyday school life. They receive good information about how well groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, are learning. They make good use of this information to provide leaders with effective challenge and support.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is a calm, well-organised environment. Pupils are well supervised at playtimes. Staff and parents agree that pupils are kept safe in school. Pupils feel safe. They feel fully confident that adults will deal with any concerns they may have.
- Leaders have established clear systems to safeguard pupils. Staff receive regular training, as well as weekly updates. As a result, staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Leaders make effective links with external agencies to provide tailored support where it is needed.

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

**Good**

- Classrooms are bright, with displays which provide hints and prompts for pupils' learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers have welcomed the recently introduced strategy to improve the teaching of mathematics and use it to good effect. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to use practical resources to support their learning. There is an appropriate focus on securing pupils' number fluency and basic skills. Pupils are increasingly able both to explain their thinking about how they have solved mathematical problems and to justify their answers.

- The teaching of reading is effective. Most pupils enjoy reading and make good use of the well-stocked library. Pupils are encouraged to read books which are appropriately challenging as well as being enjoyable. Adults provide good support to less confident readers, and this helps them to catch up quickly.
- Pupils think carefully about their writing, which is often linked to the topic. Pupils' early reading and writing skills, including phonics, are taught well. The current emphasis on 'non-negotiables' is helping to improve pupils' accuracy in spelling. For example, pupils know which spellings they need to know, and are encouraged to check their work for spelling errors.
- Teachers usually use the good information they have about how well pupils are learning to set tasks which provide appropriate challenge. However, at times, teachers do not make sure that activities are matched well enough to pupils' needs. On occasion, this prevents pupils, especially the most able pupils, from making the strong progress they should.
- Many teachers have developed good questioning skills and use these to check pupils' understanding. However, some staff do not routinely question pupils well enough to fully deepen their understanding.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils demonstrated mature attitudes when editing and improving each other's writing about Pompeii.
- Strong relationships across the school help to ensure that pupils feel safe. Pupils know that there is always an adult who will help them if they have a worry or concern. Pupils quickly develop self-confidence in this supportive environment.
- Pupils also develop a good understanding about how to keep safe. They know the importance of keeping safe online. Pupils understand that there are different kinds of bullying. School records show that the very few incidents of bullying are dealt with appropriately when they do occur.
- The breakfast club provides a friendly, welcoming place for pupils before school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite to adults and friendly to each other. The impact of the school's values is evident in the sensible way pupils move around the school and how well they play together at playtimes and lunchtimes. School records confirm that this good behaviour is typical. Pupils endorse this positive view. This good behaviour makes a positive contribution to the harmonious atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and respond quickly to instructions. Occasionally, in some

lessons, pupils lose concentration when activities are not matched well enough to their needs.

- Attendance rates have been too low over time. In particular, the proportion of pupils with persistent absence has been high. School leaders have put in place a raft of appropriate measures to support pupils' good attendance, including subsidising the cost of the breakfast club for disadvantaged pupils who attend. As a result, attendance rates have improved and there are fewer persistent absentees than in the past. Nonetheless, too many pupils are absent from school too frequently.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In 2017, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in writing and mathematics was well below age-related expectations. Progress in mathematics and writing was also below national figures.
- As a result of the effective actions by leaders, provisional 2018 results at the end of Year 6 indicate a marked improvement in outcomes, both at the expected and the higher standard. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national figures.
- In 2018, provisional results show that the proportion of pupils in key stage 1 reaching age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics was higher than seen nationally.
- A successful focus by leaders on improving the teaching of phonics resulted in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the 2018 Year 1 phonics check being in line with the national average. This reversed a downward trend over the previous three years.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's assessment information show that, typically, most pupils currently in school make good progress. Leaders recognise the importance of making sure that more pupils reach the higher standards by the end of Year 6.
- In 2018, all disadvantaged pupils attained age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. This represented good progress from their starting points. As a result of effective teaching and carefully targeted additional support, disadvantaged pupils currently in school make increasingly good progress.
- Pupils who join the school midway through their primary education are made to feel welcome by staff and pupils. As a result, they settle quickly into school life. Work in their books shows that they make good progress, often from low starting points.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress overall, typically from lower starting points. This is because they are given effective support, carefully tailored to their needs.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is mostly good. However, at times, their progress is hindered because teaching does not consistently provide an appropriate level of challenge.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 who spoke to inspectors reported that they were being prepared well for secondary school. They spoke confidently about the benefits of having

regular homework and being given responsibilities in order to develop their self-esteem.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has been consistently above the national figure for the last three years. This represents good progress from their starting points and prepares children well for Year 1.
- The headteacher works closely with the early years teacher to lead the early years provision effectively. As a result, the early years provides a good, and improving, quality of education.
- Parents are highly appreciative of the way their children are welcomed into Forest Row School. Parents were keen to tell the inspector how valuable they found the home visit. One parent summed up the views of many: 'Teachers have gone the extra mile to make my child's start to school a positive experience.'
- Teaching in the early years is good. Early reading and writing skills are taught well. Children use their skills to practise combining sounds together and forming letters. For example, during the inspection, children enjoyed hunting for words with the 's' sound, using clipboards and pens to record their work. One boy showed great excitement when he noticed that the curl in the tail of a mouse looked like an 's'.
- Children benefit from exciting and well-planned activities, both inside and outdoors. Resources are chosen carefully to promote children's imagination and curiosity. For example, children use tyres and maps to plan their 'journey', while playing happily together.
- Adults use skilful questioning to promote children's learning. This was seen during the inspection when adults sensitively prompted and questioned children who were making 'Inky' the mouse, using scrap materials. High-quality interactions helped all children, especially those with weaker language skills.
- Adults make frequent checks to make sure that children learn well. However, at times, learning time is lost when activities do not sufficiently challenge the most able children.
- Strong relationships with adults help children to feel safe and well cared for. Adults are good role models, and children quickly learn to take turns and behave well.
- Leaders use extra funding wisely to provide good support to the few disadvantaged children. Effective partnerships with external agencies mean that children who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported. It is very evident that children settle quickly and are safe in this nurturing, happy environment.

## School details

Unique reference number	114504
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10052991

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Sharpe
Headteacher	Ann Williams
Telephone number	01342 823380
Website	<a href="http://www.forestrow.e-sussex.sch.uk">www.forestrow.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@forestrow.e-sussex.sch.uk">head@forestrow.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	2–3 July 2015

## Information about this school

- Forest Row is a Church of England school within the diocese of Chichester. A section 48 inspection took place on 1 March 2016.
- In the past, pupils were taught in a combination of single- and mixed-aged classes. Pupils are currently organised into one class per year group. Following a consultation process, and with a falling roll, the school will formally convert to having one form of entry from September 2019.
- Children in early years are taught in one full-time Reception class.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Most pupils are White British. A significant proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the beginning of the school year.
- The school runs a breakfast club.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors evaluated pupils' learning across the school. Most lessons were visited jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a large sample of pupils' books across a range of subjects to evaluate pupils' learning in English, mathematics and across the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning to find out what it is like to be a pupil at Forest Row. Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed assembly, lunchtime and playtime.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders and a group of governors. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents gathered from the 23 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the 22 free-text responses. Inspectors also had conversations with parents at the start of the school day, during a parent-consultation meeting after school and during an early years meeting during the day. Inspectors took account of the nine responses to the staff online questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including documentation relating to governance and the school's development plan.
- A review of safeguarding records and procedures was also carried out.

## Inspection team

Joanna Toulson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Hogarth

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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