

# Netherfield CofE Primary School

Darvel Down, Netherfield, Battle, East Sussex TN33 9QF

## Inspection dates

26–27 February 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- This is an outstanding school. The headteacher has high aspirations for everyone. Under her guidance, staff strive continually to improve all aspects of their work.
- Leaders' ethos of 'no child left behind' is a reality here. Pupils thrive at Netherfield. Their well-being is developed equally as well as their academic knowledge and understanding.
- All staff see themselves as leaders and take their responsibilities seriously. Everyone's contribution is important and valued by senior leaders, although middle leaders have relatively limited opportunities to engage in and learn from the school's work with other schools.
- Classrooms are happy and productive places. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Their hunger to learn new things is fed by high-quality teaching across the curriculum.
- Pupils make very strong progress in a wide range of subjects across all phases of the school. This includes pupils from vulnerable groups, who constantly exceed expectations and achieve very well.
- Safeguarding is effective. The small-school family ethos is valued highly by parents, many of whom bring their children long distances to attend the school.
- The school's curriculum is constantly evolving. Staff are successful in designing imaginative opportunities for pupils to learn through exploration and real-life experiences.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct and engagement in learning. As a result, pupils behave very well both in and out of the classroom.
- Leaders' focus on reducing pupils' absence is highly effective. As a result, rates of attendance compare favourably to most other primary schools.
- Governance is a great strength of the school. Governors take their responsibilities seriously. Collectively, they are successful in supporting leaders to improve the school.
- Leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Development planning is highly effective.
- The quality of provision in the early years is excellent. Children make very strong progress in Reception because staff are knowledgeable, experienced and dedicated to their work.

## **Full report**

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

- Enhance collaborative partnerships with other school settings, in order to develop middle leaders' experience and knowledge, and share more widely the excellent practice evident in all aspects of the school's work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. She leads the school by example and is totally committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils. Her success in motivating staff to improve their practice is borne out by the exceptional quality of education that the school provides.
- The vast majority of parents are very positive about all aspects Netherfield. All parents who talked to inspectors during the inspection had nothing but praise for the school and the way it is led. One parent wrote, 'It is a small school with a big heart.' Despite their relatively short period of time in the school, both inspectors strongly agree with this sentiment.
- Staff work collectively as a highly efficient team. Everyone plays their part fully and understands the importance of their roles. Although the headteacher 'leads from the front', other leaders 'walk alongside' her in their constant efforts to improve the school further.
- The school is exceptionally well resourced. This is partly due to the headteacher's success in generating additional funding and also because leaders and those in positions of governance have clear priorities regarding the allocation of funding. This includes providing for the professional development of staff.
- The school's curriculum is developing continuously. It meets the needs of pupils exceptionally well. Leadership of the curriculum is the collective responsibility of all teachers. Middle leaders have the ultimate responsibility for their specific areas, but work in close partnership with other staff to enhance the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school because they like learning about new things every day. Trips out of school to enrich learning are the norm. Pupils are excited about the topics they study because teachers plan learning that is relevant and fun. This includes in the arts and sport, where much of the teaching is delivered by staff with specialist subject knowledge.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities such as after-school clubs and taking part in joint events with other schools. These include singing and dancing in local theatres for instance, which build confidence and self-esteem. The school's Christian distinctiveness and values also have a positive impact on pupils' well-being. As a result, their social and emotional development is strong.
- Additional funding to support physical education (PE) and sport is used wisely. Specialist sports coaches support PE lessons delivered in partnership with staff. The school is very well resourced to encourage pupils' participation in physical activity.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain and their eventual transition to secondary school. The school's curriculum provides pupils with knowledge of other cultures and traditions, including the main religions of the world. Pupils understand the importance of rules and laws.
- Additional funding to support pupils from vulnerable groups is used extremely

effectively. Leaders and governors attach high priority to the quality of education for these pupils. Consequently, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do very well at Netherfield.

- This is a small school with a big reach. Both the local authority and diocesan board recognise the school's unique strengths, but also the challenges in sustaining this. The headteacher is utilised to support other schools very well, but less use is made of this work to develop the expertise of middle leaders.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance of the school is highly effective. The chair of governors, who is a national leader of governance, is extremely experienced. She leads a dedicated and enthusiastic team of governors who know the school well. Collectively, the governing body provides leaders with the support, guidance and challenge required to ensure that the school provides an outstanding quality of education for its pupils.
- Governors take their responsibilities seriously. Each has a specific role in monitoring different aspects of the school. This includes working in partnership with leaders to identify strengths and areas that need to be developed further, as well as monitoring the impact of improvement planning.
- Although governors are very involved in all aspects of the school, they understand that their role is strategic in nature. As a result, the working relationship between school leaders and the governing body is efficient and effective. Relationships are extremely positive, and time, which is seen as a precious resource, is used wisely.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The culture to keep pupils safe is well developed. Staff know what to do if they have concerns, and are constantly updated about potential issues concerning the safety and welfare of pupils.
- Day-to-day routines and key policies to keep pupils safe are constantly assessed and reviewed. Training is up to date. Systems to recruit staff and to check the suitability of adults visiting the school are robust.
- All parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection were very positive about the care afforded to their children by staff. Parents' free-text messages submitted to Ofsted were also very complimentary about the nurturing culture in the school. Children told inspectors that they feel safe in school. The very large majority of parents who replied to Ofsted's online parent survey thought that their children feel safe in school.

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

## **Outstanding**

- Classrooms are happy and industrious places where pupils enjoy learning. Teachers and support staff work hard to make learning as relevant as possible. As a result, pupils understand what they are learning and why, and little time is lost on unnecessary explanations.
- Inspectors' visits to classrooms revealed a consistency in practice across the school.

Pupils benefit from well-established routines. They know what is expected of them, are keen to tackle the work that teachers plan, and are pleased to take on additional challenges when they are ready.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They put this to good use when planning learning across the curriculum. Their subject specialisms and interests are exploited well. For instance, pupils in key stage 2 benefit from high-quality teaching in French, art and music due to the expertise of key staff.
- All staff have very high expectations of pupils' engagement in learning. This is the case for pupils of all abilities. This is also true of those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with SEND. Because of this, pupils are motivated. Their aspirations are high. They work hard because success is celebrated, even if the steps to success are small.
- Pitching learning at the right level is given a high priority by staff. Additional staff are highly effective in supporting pupils in their learning. They know when to step back and let pupils work things out for themselves. They also know when to intervene where pupils are losing focus or are struggling to understand.
- Staff use questioning well to confirm pupils' understanding and to move learning on. Pupils' reading comprehension is particularly well developed because staff understand the importance of immersing pupils in rich language. Group discussions and explanations of key words are common and not just restricted to lessons that develop pupils' literacy skills.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are extremely positive about coming to school. Their thirst for knowledge is deep. They are supportive of each other, enjoy learning, and are keen to celebrate success when it comes.
- The school's curriculum helps develop pupils' understanding of the importance of keeping healthy and staying fit. The school environment, including the outdoor area, is very well equipped to support this aspect of pupils' development. Pupils enjoy their 'daily mile' and using the recently purchased outside gym equipment.
- Pupils' social and emotional development is served well by the school. Parents who talked to inspectors highlighted the strengths in pastoral care and the nurturing environment of the school.
- Older pupils understand that e-safety lessons are important and relevant. One told an inspector that he understood that the knowledge he was learning now would help him stay safe in the future, especially as he moved into secondary school.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and not tolerated. They told an inspector that the school feels like 'one big family' and that people are friendly and kind to each other.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Poor behaviour is rare. Pupils agreed with each other that behaviour was 'amazing' when talking to an inspector. They insisted that there is never any behaviour that has an impact on their learning. Inspectors' visits to classrooms and observations of pupils' conduct as they moved around the school confirmed this to be the case.
- Pupils have a highly developed sense of right and wrong. They understand the rules, are keen to abide by them, and expect others to do the same.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent. It compares very favourably with the national average for primary schools. Rates of absence have continued to fall over time, including those for pupils from vulnerable groups. Persistent absence is very low.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Outstanding

- Most pupils make outstanding progress across the school. This is true of current pupils and those who attended the school in the recent past.
- Pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 is very positive. This is consistently the case in reading and mathematics. Progress in reading by the end of key stage 2 has been well above the national average for primary schools for the last three years. Progress in mathematics has been above, or well above, the national average for the same period.
- The school's outcomes in phonics, and in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1, are consistently strong. Pupils continue to build on their successes in Reception as they move through Years 1 and 2. As a result, attainment at the end of Year 2 compares favourably with that found in other primary schools nationally.
- Progress in writing across the school has been a focus for leaders since the last inspection. Evidence collected during the inspection supports leaders' views that progress in writing is improving rapidly because of their actions. Current pupils are now making much stronger progress in developing their writing skills than in the past.
- The school has a successful track record of supporting pupils from vulnerable groups. As a consequence, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds make accelerated progress as they move through the school. Their outcomes (both their progress and attainment) at the end of key stage 2 are very strong in reading, writing and mathematics. This is the same for the school's few pupils with SEND.
- The school has a laudable aim of 'preparing pupils for life, not just tests'. The headteacher and her staff are successful in making this aim a reality.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- Children benefit from outstanding provision in the early years. Leadership is strong. As a consequence, communication is effective, and staff know what is expected of them and work well together as a team.
- Staff are enthusiastic and well informed about how children learn. The balance between child-initiated and adult-directed learning is carefully considered and takes into account each child's needs. The impact of this means that children make excellent

progress in all areas of learning as they move through their Reception Year. This is also the case for the small number of pupils from Year 1 who are based in the early years provision, who are also making strong progress with their learning.

- Staff are skilled at planning learning that both engages and inspires curiosity in the children in their care. Records of children's progress are detailed and shared regularly with parents. Resources are used well both in and outside the classroom.
- Support staff are a key feature of the success of the early years provision. They are knowledgeable, well trained and guided by the early years lead, and capable of working independently. This builds capacity for leaders at all levels, who manage this small provision very effectively, leading to outstanding outcomes for children.
- Staff use assessment well in Reception. They quickly identify children who are at risk of falling behind. Interventions are planned and monitored well. As a result, individuals or small groups of children are targeted and supported to catch up.
- Children behave well in Reception because routines are well established, and staff have high expectations. Transitions between activities are smooth and conducted in an orderly manner. Children are kind to each other. They work well together and were very keen to show inspectors their work and talk about their learning.
- Parents are very positive about the early years. Some parents who talked to inspectors were particularly grateful for the support they receive themselves, saying that staff go out of their way to guide them when needed. Parents also talked positively about support for children with SEND. Those who talked to inspectors feel that their children are safe and well cared for in the early years.

## School details

Unique reference number	114514
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10058147

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Dudgeon
Headteacher	Barbara Gill
Telephone number	01424 838 323
Website	<a href="http://www.netherfield.e-sussex.sch.uk">www.netherfield.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@netherfield.e-sussex.sch.uk">office@netherfield.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2018

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. As a school with a distinctive Christian ethos, the school was last subject to an inspection under section 48 of The Education Act 2005 in October 2014.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are a very small number of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average for primary schools.



## Information about this inspection

- Classrooms were visited on both days of the inspection. During classroom visits inspectors observed teaching and learning, assessed the quality of pupils' work, and talked to them about the progress that they were making. Some classroom visits were accompanied by the headteacher.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in classrooms and as they moved around the school. This included at the start of the school day and at break and lunchtime.
- An inspector heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, the school's finance assistant, the chair of governors accompanied by five other governors, and a representative group of pupils.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority and the diocesan board.
- Inspectors talked to parents in the playground at the start of each day of the inspection. Inspectors took into account the 107 replies to Ofsted's parent survey and accompanying free-text messages, as well as a letter sent by a parent. Inspectors also considered the online pupil and staff surveys.
- A wide range of policies and records were scrutinised, including those regarding the safety, behaviour and attendance of pupils. The school's self-evaluation, development planning and information about pupils' outcomes were considered. Minutes of governing body meetings and notes of visits from the local authority and diocese were also reviewed.

## Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Hogarth

Ofsted Inspector

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