

Northiam Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6NB

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2019

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders sustain a good standard of education for pupils. They have significantly developed strong and helpful links with parents and carers and the community. Parents are very supportive of leaders.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of the world around them. They are confident individuals, well prepared for life in a modern society.
- Teachers know the individual needs of pupils very well. They plan interesting and challenging activities to engage pupils. Pupils are passionate about their learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. They make good progress towards their appropriate personal targets.
- Leaders spend the pupil premium funding wisely. Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils with similar starting points.
- Leaders use the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium very effectively. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils behave well. They conduct themselves appropriately in lessons and around school.
- Pupils' writing and reading outcomes are very good. Pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Transition between year groups, and from and to school, is highly personalised and supports pupils well. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular learning opportunities. They value these highly. Pupils feel very safe and happy in school.
- Children in the early years receive a good education. Teaching in the early years is planned thoughtfully so that children learn well together and independently. Children achieve good outcomes in the early years.
- Governors work closely with leaders to develop the school's provision. However, they do not have a secure understanding of the impact of leaders' work to improve the school.
- Pupils achieve well in a wide range of interesting topics across many subjects. Nevertheless, for a few pupils, their subject-specific knowledge and skills, in subjects other than English and mathematics, are not well developed.
- Some teaching does not always challenge pupils to achieve as well as they could.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils learn the subject-specific knowledge and skills they need in subjects across the curriculum other than in English and mathematics.
- Develop governors' awareness of the impact of leaders' work to improve the school.
- Ensure that all teaching challenges pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have led with a passionate determination through some challenging times over recent years. They have responded to issues, which were often not within their control, very efficiently and ensured that pupils' education has not been adversely affected. They have securely maintained the good standards of education across the school.
- Leaders' work to engage the local community in the day-to-day life of the school has been highly effective. A recent summer fayre has helped revitalise community engagement in school life. Leaders work very closely with local businesses to provide support for the school. As a result, they have developed a highly respected and valued small school community that is central to local life.
- Pupils benefit from the strong community links. Initiatives such as the farm school and forest school enthuse and excite pupils. They talk energetically about these opportunities and enjoy them greatly. Pupils are developing a wide range of useful skills that support and complement their subject learning closely.
- Staff feel highly valued in this school. They work faithfully with leaders. Staff share their ideas and expertise regularly with each other and rise confidently to the responsibilities that they are given by leaders, sometimes early on in their careers. Staff enjoy working at the school.
- Leaders ensure effective provision for pupils with SEND. They know the pupils' needs very well. They work very closely with teaching staff, parents and external agencies. They hold regular meetings with relevant people to ensure that all involved know the needs of the pupils and how well the pupils are achieving. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress.
- Leaders use the additional funding that they receive to support vulnerable pupils wisely. They have made useful staffing appointments to support and nurture the development and learning of vulnerable pupils. They have trained key members of staff to advise and develop teaching staff on the best strategies to support vulnerable pupils. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils with similar starting points.
- Leaders' use of the PE and sport premium is very effective. Well-attended breakfast sessions, paid for through this fund, have impacted positively on pupils' punctuality and attendance at school. Pupils enjoy the wide range of sporting activities on offer during this time. Leaders have ensured that PE subject expertise is shared well with staff, via this provision.
- Leaders have developed a wide range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities for pupils. Specialist modern foreign language teaching for all pupils helps pupils learn about different cultures, as well as learn another language. All pupils receive specialist music teaching and often enjoy engaging singing sessions. Pupils' work shows how they learn about many different thought-provoking, age-appropriate topics. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders' work to develop the curriculum has been effective. Pupils learn about a wide range of interesting topics in many subjects. Most develop their subject-specific skills

and knowledge well. However, some pupils do not have such a secure subject knowledge and understanding across all subjects.

Governance of the school

- Governors are well trained. They are up to date with current legislation on how to keep children safe in education. They make regular checks to satisfy themselves that the appropriate processes are in place to keep children safe.
- Governors fulfil their legal responsibilities well. They visit the school to inform themselves of the work leaders do to improve the school. However, governors do not have a confident and secure understanding of the impact of leaders' work on school improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a culture where the safety of pupils is of the highest importance. Staff are very well trained and know their legal duties well. They report any concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to leaders. They know that these will be dealt with swiftly by leaders.
- Parents say that their children feel safe at school. Parents value highly the support that children and families are given when needed. One parent spoke for others when they said that the school staff 'go above and beyond' when considering the safety and welfare of pupils.
- Leaders keep accurate records to do with safeguarding. They work incredibly well with other agencies so that vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate advice and guidance. Vulnerable pupils and their families are very well supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know the pupils' individual needs well in this small school. They plan interesting activities that engage pupils in learning. Classrooms are purposeful learning environments. Pupils enjoy learning.
- Teaching allows pupils to think creatively about their learning. For example, in Year 6, pupils think about writing an informative menu for a healthy meal, while in Years 2 and 3, pupils write as if they were Neil Armstrong training for his moon landing. Pupils make good progress in writing.
- Staff plan learning activities which enable pupils to make links across the subjects that they study. For example, pupils used the historical knowledge they had acquired about the Victorians when they were interpreting a painting from the Victorian era. As a result, pupils make some helpful links across subjects to deepen their subject-specific knowledge.
- Questioning probes pupils' understanding effectively. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to ask questions that identify and quickly address any gaps in pupils' understanding. They adapt learning well to ensure that pupils do not fall behind.

However, sometimes teaching does not always challenge pupils enough to ensure that they are achieving as well as they could.

- Pupils with SEND are very well supported. Additional adults in the classroom work together well with teachers to ensure that the needs of the pupils with SEND are met appropriately. Highly personalised strategies help pupils with SEND make good progress.
- Teaching in mathematics is effective. Pupils have good mathematical subject knowledge and understanding. They apply this knowledge and understanding ably to challenging mathematical problems. Pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Phonics teaching is good. Pupils practise different sounds often, in part through well-planned daily learning activities, and through other curriculum activities. They apply their phonics learning well to build words and sentences confidently. They are well placed to apply their phonics skills in reading, writing and other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are often involved in many interesting before-school and lunchtime activities. This offer helps pupils develop their physical fitness, their social skills through team activities, and their mental and emotional well-being through sessions such as yoga. These are popular with pupils. Pupils' welfare is catered for very well.
- Pupils say bullying is rare in school. On the few occasions it happens, pupils say it is dealt with quickly. Pupils treat each other with respect. Some pupils reflected the views of the other pupils when they said, 'It is fine to be different in our school.'
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are proud of their school and the opportunities that are given to them. They enjoy coming to school. They feel safe at school. Most parents agree with their children's views.
- Pupils know how to stay safe online. They are taught about the dangers of using technology in an age-appropriate way. They know when and how to report any concerns that they have with using technology, if these arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is good. They are polite to each other, to adults in the school and to any school visitors.
- Lunchtimes and breaktimes are well supervised by adults. Children play well together during their breaks. They are respectful of the school environment and keep their school clean and free from litter and graffiti.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders work very closely with pupils and their families to ensure that pupils attend school. Pupils' attendance is in line with the average for primary schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils across all year groups have very good writing skills. Pupils can apply these skills well to express their learning in the topics and subjects that they study.
- Pupils read well and confidently. They choose challenging and interesting books to help improve their reading. They enjoy reading in school.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve good outcomes. They make as good rates of progress as other pupils with similar starting points, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Pupils with SEND are challenged well to learn and develop the skills that they need to achieve to the best of their ability. They make good progress towards the targets that they are set in their highly personalised plans.
- Pupils are able to apply their mathematical knowledge effectively to solve challenging mathematical problems accurately. Pupils use their mathematical reasoning skills ably to describe how they answer these problems. Mathematics outcomes are good and improving.
- Pupils achieve good phonics outcomes. The very few pupils who need extra assistance to apply and use their phonics knowledge and skills better are supported to quickly catch up.
- A wide range of trips and visits help pupils to learn and remember interesting facts and consolidate their subject learning. For example, some pupils enthusiastically shared with the inspector a number of trips and visits in which they had taken part, linked to the science and history topics that they had studied in classes.
- Leaders' work to support all Year 6 pupils as they move from one stage of their education to the next is effective. Year 6 pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils are assisted well in this transition with suitable support and guidance. As a result, Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Pupils make useful topic and subject connections that help deepen their subject-specific knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils' work shows how they link their learning across history, and design and technology. Nevertheless, a few pupils do not make as much progress in developing their subject-specific skills or knowledge in subjects across the curriculum as they do in English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years receive a good education. They are happy and confident. They play and learn together well. Children make good progress in the early years.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Well-planned activities are matched to children's individual needs. Children are attentive and listen to their teachers' instructions because they are interested in the learning planned for them.
- Teaching supports children to develop their independence and explore their own interests while learning. Adults ask appropriate questions to probe children's understanding. They quickly identify what children know and what they can do. They promptly adapt learning activities to challenge children to learn more. Consequently,

children make good progress through self-initiated and adult-led activities.

- Children's outcomes at the end of the early years in 2018 were above average. Current children in the early years are achieving as well as those in recent cohorts.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. Leaders work well with staff in the early years. They have regular meetings to review the effectiveness of the provision and the impact on children's learning. For example, leaders redesigned the outdoor space and indoor space and invested in purchasing extra resources to support children's learning. Children learn purposefully in well-considered learning spaces.
- Early years staff work closely with local nurseries to ensure that the transition from Nursery to Reception is smooth. Parents are very much involved in this process. As a result, children settle quickly into their new school. They are well prepared for the move from Nursery to Reception Year.
- Safeguarding procedures in the early years are effective. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable. They have very positive and caring relationships with the children in early years. Children in the early years are safe and well cared for.
- Children with SEND are well supported. Staff know individual children's needs well. Effective teaching assistants support the learning of pupils with SEND. Children with SEND make good progress towards their appropriate personal targets.
- Children get off to a good start in developing their reading and writing skills in the early years. Children learn to pronounce sounds accurately, blend words and write simple sentences with confidence. They make good progress in phonics.

School details

Unique reference number	114516
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10088005

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	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Crouch
Headteacher	Julia Bray
Telephone number	01797 252141
Website	http://www.northiamcep.e-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	northiamoffice@quercusfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2018

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school. It has four mixed classes from Reception to Year 5, and one Year 6 class.
- It has a strong Christian ethos. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in June 2016. The school was graded outstanding.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- There is a breakfast club and some after-school activities run by the school.
- The school is a member of the Quercus Federation, which is composed of two primary schools with co-governance. There is a partnership in place with another primary school under separate governance.
- The Quercus Federation has been led by two executive headteachers since April 2017. The school is led by a head of school.

- Pupil mobility in the school is higher than average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out several learning walks, jointly with senior leaders. The inspector looked at pupils' work in books and in lessons, jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector spoke with pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. He also met with a group of pupils and heard several read. No pupils completed the Ofsted pupils' survey.
- The 30 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, were considered by the inspector. He also met with parents on one morning of the inspection. The inspector considered eight responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- The inspector met with senior leaders and other staff, and with a group of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority and met with a representative of the Diocese of Chichester.
- He considered the published information and the school's documentation relating to pupils' achievement, and leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness.
- The inspector reviewed some minutes of the governing body's meetings and reports from the local authority's school improvement partner.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures and policies

Inspection team

Dylan Davies, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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