

# Inspection of a good school: Staplecross Methodist Primary School

Bodiam Road, Staplecross, Robertsbridge, East Sussex TN32 5QD

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Inspection dates:

15 October 2019

## **Outcome**

Staplecross Methodist Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. It is a welcoming, happy place, where staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils work well together, do their best and, consequently, are proud of their learning.

Pupils are safe in school. Parents appreciate the care and nurture staff provide for their children. Pupils have positive relationships with teachers and staff. Pupils value this and trust adults in the school to care for them.

Pupils behave very well and know what is expected of them. In class, pupils are keen to answer questions, they show interest in their lessons and listen attentively to adults. On the playground older pupils kindly remind younger children about how they should behave. One pupil expressed the views of many when they said, 'We don't have any naughty children.' Although there have been no recorded incidents of bullying in the past year, leaders are not complacent. Staff teach pupils about bullying in their lessons and pupils trust adults to resolve any issues that might arise.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn beyond the classroom through trips and clubs that enrich pupils' experiences and bring excitement to their learning, for example dance and multi-sports clubs.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Staff provide an interesting curriculum that equips pupils well for their future. Teachers make sure that pupils acquire key knowledge and skills in every subject, checking that no steps in learning are missed. Staff are flexible in their approach so that they fully meet the needs of mixed-age classes. Reading is a priority and the mathematics curriculum is purposeful. Teachers ensure that the topics chosen build pupils' subject skills and interests. As a result, learning excites pupils, so they behave well and are fully engaged in

their work. As a result, pupils achieve well and are ready for their next steps in learning by the time they leave the school.

Since the last inspection, the school has appointed several new subject leaders who have improved the curriculum in the subjects they lead. However, some subject leaders are inexperienced in supporting teachers who are not experts in their subject.

The teaching of phonics and reading is well organised for most pupils. Pupils enjoy the lessons. Teachers give pupils a wealth of reading opportunities. This has developed pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading. Phonics is taught systematically. Children learn to read from their first days in school. They read frequently, and books are matched to their reading ability. Children understand how books work. They sound out simple words and use the pictures to help them read the story. Pupils who fall behind in reading in Year 1 catch up by the time they leave the school, but they could be helped to catch up more quickly. Pupils successfully use and apply their reading skills in other subjects, such as their topic work.

The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school because staff have high expectations. Pupils achieve well by the end of key stage 2. The mathematics curriculum has clear progression and is appropriate for all pupils. One pupil correctly explained that, 'After we learn something, we learn a bit more, then we go back and check we know it.' In early years, mathematics is made meaningful for the children through a wide range of resources and a variety of activities.

Linked to the school's agreed approach, key subject skills are taught through interesting topics. These topics include strong links to reading and literacy through carefully chosen story and non-fiction books. Pupils recall the things they have learned in the past with interest. Teachers bring learning to life through trips to the local area and the wider world, for example a trip to Ypres. In early years, staff are knowledgeable about the seven areas of learning they teach. Teachers check that children are learning and knowing more from the interesting and fun activities on offer.

Parents are highly supportive of the school, but a very few have unfounded concerns about the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND have the same learning opportunities as all others in the school. Staff aim for all pupils to achieve well and plan the support they give pupils with SEND so that they are able to achieve their goals.

The school is well led. Staff appreciate the support they are given to manage their workload and they are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and vigilant about any signs that pupils may be at risk. Leaders make sure that all welfare concerns are acted on swiftly and help is requested for pupils and families. Detailed plans are in place for pupils with medical needs. All the necessary checks on adults working with children have taken place. Parents are confident that their children are safe in school. Pupils know who the staff responsible for safeguarding are. Pupils would go to these adults if they had any concerns and are confident that they would take appropriate action to help them.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Staff have plans and programmes in place to ensure that they identify pupils who fall behind in phonics. Leaders need to ensure that these programmes are implemented promptly so that pupils can make rapid improvement to catch up quickly.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic and keen to develop their subject areas further. Leaders should ensure that they have training to enable them to put their ideas into action effectively and further support colleagues who are teaching outside their main areas of expertise so that teachers can improve how well pupils learn and remember more.
- Pupils with SEND are well provided for socially and academically. However, leaders should do more to communicate well with parents about the provision being made.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Staplecross Methodist Primary School to be good on 1–2 December 2010.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114531
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111284
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair/Chair of trust/Chair of governing body</b>	Ms Gill Atkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Liz Avard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.staplecross.e-sussex.sch.uk">www.staplecross.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 March 2016

## Information about this school

- This is a small rural school which has four mixed-age classes.
- The school is federated with Salehurst Church of England Primary School as part of the Bridge Federation.
- The school has breakfast and after-school childcare for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- This was a one-day section 8 inspection with two inspectors. We met with the executive headteacher, head of school, subject leaders for reading, mathematics and all foundation subjects and the special educational needs coordinator. We also met a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and telephoned a representative from the local authority.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. To gain a clear view of the quality of education in the school, we discussed these subjects with school leaders, subject leaders and class teachers. We made visits to lessons where these subjects were being taught. We spoke to pupils from these classes and discussed their work with them.

- An inspector heard some pupils read. We observed playtime and behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- We considered responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire, the pupil questionnaire and Ofsted Parent View. We also took account of free-text comments from parents and talked with them after school.
- We analysed a range of the school's documents, including leaders' school development plan, minutes of the governing body's meetings, and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.

### **Inspection team**

Lesley Corbett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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