

# Inspection of a good school: Felbridge Primary School

Crawley Down Road, Felbridge, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 2NT

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Inspection dates:

22–23 October 2019

## **Outcome**

Felbridge Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

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

Weaknesses in the quality of education mean that pupils do not always learn the things they need to know to be successful learners. This is particularly so in mathematics and in early years. Gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills mean that they sometimes struggle to complete tasks successfully.

In the past, leaders have not set sufficiently high expectations for pupils' learning. The work set is not demanding enough, particularly for the most able pupils. Sometimes pupils are allowed to complete poor-quality work without challenge.

The school gives reading a high priority. Reading is taught well. Many pupils are avid readers. They enjoy using the school's cosy, well-stocked library, located at the heart of this historical school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors. By the end of Year 6, most are confident and successful readers.

The school's calm, orderly atmosphere means that everyone can get on with what they need to do. Pupils are keen, attentive and well-behaved learners. They are eager to get started in lessons and work hard.

Pupils feel safe. They chat and play happily in the school's attractive tree-lined grounds. Adults take good care of pupils and sort out any problems quickly. Bullying is not tolerated.

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

Leaders and governors have not kept a sufficiently close eye on the school's work. Unreliable assessments of how well pupils achieve at the end of each key stage have given them an over-generous view of the school's performance.

Weaknesses in the way that subjects are planned mean that teachers are not always clear about what pupils have learned in previous years, or about which skills they should be teaching. Pupils do not acquire the knowledge and skills they should as they move up through the school. This is the case for all groups of pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Some pupils have gaps in learning, particularly in mathematics. For instance, the older pupils sometimes struggle with arithmetic tasks which they should be able to complete with ease, such as doubling numbers or using times tables. This makes it hard for them to complete straightforward tasks successfully.

Leaders have not planned the teaching of early skills well enough. Children in Reception Year do not learn as well as they should, particularly in the development of early mathematics skills. They have too few opportunities to practise and improve number skills. Some children, particularly the most able, are not as far forward in their learning as they should be by the time they move into Year 1.

The school's successful approach to teaching reading means that pupils become proficient readers. Most pupils learn how to use phonics skills successfully by the end of Year 1. They go on to explore high-quality texts with increasing confidence during key stage 2. Teachers use well-chosen questions to help pupils to think more deeply about books. In the past year, leaders have strengthened support for those pupils who have fallen behind in phonics and reading. Pupils are now catching up more quickly as a result.

Very recent work by the deputy headteacher and national leader for education (NLE) has had an immediate effect on the school. They have drawn up a clear and sensible plan of action to improve the school's work and have shared it with staff and governors. Staff know what the priorities are, and everyone is now heading in the same direction. Members of staff told me that they feel well supported by the deputy headteacher and NLE. They enjoy teaching and are ambitious for the school's future. Staff morale has improved substantially.

Staff build strong relationships with parents. Parents are unwaveringly supportive of the school, despite some unease about its performance in recent months.

The school uses a wide range of activities well to support pupils' learning. Trips, visits, visitors and clubs help pupils to learn about themselves, as well as the world around them. For instance, during the inspection pupils talked with interest about artists' lives while making their own thoughtful works of art.

Pupils behave well in lessons and usually get on well with their work, free from any bullying or harassment. They respect adults and they are kind and considerate to each other. For instance, during the inspection an older pupil sat and chatted with one of the youngest children who was finishing his lunch in the dining hall.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are fully trained in safeguarding procedures. Well-established procedures help pupils to feel comfortable and secure. The deputy headteacher and the business manager play a central role in making sure that staff have the information and support they need to report any concerns.

Strong staff teamwork ensures that pupils are safe and sound. Staff know pupils well and pay close attention to their welfare. They take pupils' safety very seriously and follow the school's safeguarding policies consistently.

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

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

- In the last few weeks, the local authority has put a raft of measures in place to support the school. For instance, urgent reviews of early years and governance are under way and an NLE is working closely with the deputy headteacher. Leaders should make sure that these reviews are used to refine and focus plans for development.
- The deputy headteacher and NLE have lost no time in starting work needed to make improvements. They have formulated a plan of action which accurately identifies priorities for development. The plan provides clear direction for the school. Staff and governors should build on the initial steps they have made in putting the plan into action.
- Leaders recognise weaknesses in the school's curriculum, particularly in mathematics and in early years. They know that pupils are not achieving as well as they should as a result, including the most able. Leaders now have sensible action plans in place to support improvements in these subjects. For instance, they plan to review and update the school's calculation policy so that everyone is clear about what, when and how key mathematical skills are taught throughout the school. Leaders should continue with work to review and overhaul the curriculum, so that all pupils learn as well as they should in all subjects, and particularly in mathematics.
- Unreliable end of key stage assessments, combined with weaknesses in monitoring procedures, have frustrated leaders' and governors' efforts to evaluate the school's work accurately. Leaders should ensure that staff are well trained in assessing pupils' learning, and that there are processes in place to check this, to improve the accuracy of assessments at the end of each key stage.
- In the past few months, the chair of governors has worked with single-minded determination to scrutinise the school's work. However, governors have had an over-generous view of the school's performance until very recently. Their roles in holding school leaders to account should be strengthened. Leaders should establish reliable, realistic and manageable systems to enable both them and governors to monitor the school's work and to gauge the impact of improvements.
- In the past, the school's approach to staff training has been too haphazard. Training has not been matched well enough to school priorities or to individual professional development needs. This means that staff sometimes lack the up-to-date subject knowledge needed to teach the school's curriculum well. Leaders should improve procedures for identifying suitable staff training so that training contributes more

effectively to school development.

## 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged Felbridge Primary School to be good on 15–16 December 2015.

## 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>	124971
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111249
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	211
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jenna Duffett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Yasmin Ravandi
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.felbridgeprimary.com">www.felbridgeprimary.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 December 2015

## Information about this school

- The deputy headteacher is currently overseeing the school on a daily basis.
- The local authority has recently commissioned an NLE to support the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The headteacher was not in school at the time of the inspection.
- I met with the deputy headteacher, senior and subject leaders. I also met with the early years leader.
- I held meetings with the NLE and with the local authority's director of school improvement. I met with two governors, including the chair of governors and a national leader for governance. I also met with teachers and other members of staff.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and physical education (PE). I discussed the curriculum and its delivery with leaders, visited lessons and looked at pupils' books. I spoke with pupils, teachers and teaching assistants about these subjects.
- I evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing leaders' knowledge, records and actions. This included looking at the single central record. I met with the

designated safeguarding lead and with the school's business manager. I also spoke with pupils and staff.

- I took account of the views expressed by parents, pupils and staff during the inspection. I considered 74 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including 38 free-text responses. I also considered 64 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 19 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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