

# Inspection of Peacehaven Heights Primary School

Hodder Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex BN10 7QY

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Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Standards have fallen since the school's previous inspection, and pupils at Peacehaven Heights have not achieved well. As a result, many pupils have not been well prepared for secondary school. Since her appointment, the interim headteacher has tackled the significant areas for improvement in the school. This is already making a difference. Staff now have much higher expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. Despite this, the school is still not providing a good standard of education.

Pupils say that, since September, behaviour has improved. Most pupils understand the newly introduced 'core values' of resilience, compassion, respect and courage. They are keen to be on the 'golden table' at lunchtimes as a reward for demonstrating one of these. However, some pupils still struggle to behave well. Pupils understand that bullying is wrong. They say that it is rare, and that staff stop any bullying that does happen straightaway.

This is a happy school where pupils feel safe. Teachers are kind, and so pupils feel valued. Pupils usually enjoy their lessons and try their best. However, leaders need to do more to make sure that pupils catch up with their learning and have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to be successful.

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

Standards have been too low for the last two years. There have been several changes in leadership. However, the interim leader, together with the interim executive board, has brought a clear sense of direction to the school. As a result, the school is improving.

In the past, teachers have not taught the full curriculum. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders have now made sure that pupils are taught all the subjects required by the national curriculum. Some subjects, for example mathematics and physical education (PE), are well structured so that they make it clear how teachers' plans can build on, and deepen, pupils' knowledge over time. For example, pupils in Year 5 build on their learning in Year 4 to multiply large numbers. In Reception, children extend their number skills by counting passengers on a bus and ordering numbers 0 to 20 on a washing line. In PE, Year 6 pupils use the skills learned in bench ball to pass the ball accurately when playing netball.

Not all subjects are coherently planned and sequenced. This is because the development of the curriculum is in its early days. For example, in science, pupils have many gaps in their knowledge. They lack the vocabulary they need to describe their science experiments and make conclusions about what they find. Leaders need to make sure that all subjects are structured in a way that enables all pupils,

including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to build on their knowledge so that they understand and remember more over time.

Despite recent training, some teachers still do not have the skills needed to ensure that pupils learn well in all subjects. When this happens, some pupils start to misbehave.

Leaders have introduced a phonics programme with clear expectations for what pupils should learn term by term. Pupils take home reading books which match their phonics knowledge. However, some staff lack the expertise to teach early reading effectively. As a result, some pupils struggle to keep up with the school's programme and do not catch up quickly enough. While most younger pupils say they enjoy reading, this is not the case for some older pupils.

Children play and learn happily in the bright, inviting environment of the early years. They play cooperatively, taking turns with others, for example when playing in the role-play area. As in the rest of the school, leaders need to make sure the curriculum builds children's learning progressively and that all staff have the skills they need to teach well.

Leaders know that pupils with SEND have been let down in the past. Leaders have now made sure that the correct pupils are identified. Staff have received appropriate training. Leaders make good use of the external expertise available. As a result, pupils with SEND are now accessing learning and experiencing more success.

The growing sense of community in the school was summed up by one pupil who said: 'Fairness is everyone getting the things they need to learn.' Leaders' high expectations are helping most pupils to behave well, so that learning is not disrupted. Pupils have opportunities to develop as confident young citizens, such as being school councillors or house captains. Leaders have plans in place to provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their responsibilities to keep children safe very seriously. They make sure that all staff are kept up to date with guidance about how they should keep pupils safe. Staff are vigilant. They know what to do if they have a concern about a child. School records show that leaders are meticulous in quickly following up any concerns. There are robust systems in place to care for pupils' safety. Leaders make effective links with external agencies to support pupils' care. The interim executive board regularly checks safeguarding procedures.

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

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

- Leaders have made sure that all subject content is in line with the national curriculum. However, the sequencing of some subjects does not enable pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills they need in order for them to learn more and remember more. This is the case in early years as well as in the rest of the school, where learning in Nursery does not build progressively into Reception. There is also not enough thought about how children's learning in early years will enable them to learn well in key stage 1. Leaders need to complete their work to develop the curriculum, so that it is well planned and sequenced in all subjects and in all areas of learning in the early years.
- Leaders have prioritised the improvements in the teaching of reading, especially the teaching of phonics in early years and key stage 1. However, the planned reading improvements have not yet been implemented consistently across the school. Phonics is not taught well enough. Pupils who have fallen behind are not catching up quickly. Too many older pupils have not developed an enjoyment of reading. Leaders should extend their work to improve reading, so that all staff have the necessary skills and expertise to help pupils to read fluently and develop a love of reading.
- There have been shortcomings in leadership in the past. Teachers have not received the support they have needed to develop and improve their practice. As a result, pupils have underachieved. Although leaders have done much to provide focused training, often using the skills of consultants, there remain inconsistencies in teaching across year groups and the school. This is because not all teachers have the subject-specific knowledge or pedagogical skills to use the curriculum plans to best effect. Leaders need to make sure that teachers develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects, so that they can ensure all pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well across the curriculum.

## 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 the school and 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>	138426
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111229
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	446
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	Jonathan Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gemma Roxburgh (interim)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.peacehavenheights.co.uk">www.peacehavenheights.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27–28 April 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has had several changes of headteacher since the last inspection. In September 2019, the local authority arranged the interim appointment of a headteacher, a deputy headteacher, and the support for two days each week of a consultant headteacher. An interim executive board was established to replace the governing body.
- Recruitment is under way to appoint a substantive headteacher and two deputy headteachers from September 2020, or earlier.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the interim headteacher and interim deputy headteacher on several occasions throughout the inspection. We met with the consultant headteacher and a representative of the interim executive board.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. Each deep dive involved talking to subject leaders; visiting

lessons with senior and/or subject leaders; talking to pupils about their learning; looking at pupils' work; and talking to teachers.

- To inspect safeguarding, we checked the single central record of recruitment checks. We talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding as well as to staff and pupils.
- We met with a group of teaching assistants. We attended an assembly and spoke to pupils at playtime and lunchtime.
- We considered the 33 responses to the staff survey as well as three letters from staff received during the inspection. We spoke to parents before the school day and took account of the 48 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the 16 responses to the free-text facility.

### **Inspection team**

Joanna Toulson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Martin-O'Donoghue	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Rome	Ofsted Inspector

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