

# Inspection of a good school: Northlands Wood Primary Academy

Beech Hill, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3RX

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Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

## **Outcome**

Northlands Wood Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils are happy at this school and run eagerly into class each morning. Parents and their children told me this is because they enjoy learning here. Pupils love the many exciting opportunities the school offers.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils learn how to get along with others and do their best. They work hard and respect the views of others. This means that they fulfil the school's mission statement, 'Together we learn and grow.' Older pupils have valuable opportunities for leadership in a wide range of roles. They develop important personal qualities such as resilience. They also support other pupils' learning in roles such as digital ambassadors.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. They experience a wide curriculum alongside their classmates. Leaders have gone to great lengths to ensure that lessons are adapted carefully to pupils' varying needs.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They listen with care and are sensible and responsible. Pupils say that there is rarely any bullying in the school. If there was, they have confidence that leaders would make it stop quickly.

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

The headteacher has created a clear and inclusive vision for the school. School and trust leaders support him well. Together, leaders have developed the breadth of education for all pupils and ensured that they learn skills for life. Trust leaders and governors know the school well and offer effective challenge and support.

Leaders want every child to have a love of reading. Throughout the school, pupils and staff talk about books. Teachers use this to inspire pupils' work in other subjects. Leaders have prioritised learning to read. They have made sure that staff are well trained. Teachers and teaching assistants across the school are consistent in their approach. Older

pupils talk about a wide range of authors. Teachers carefully select books at the right level for pupils to read. Pupils, including those with SEND, acquire reading skills well. Nonetheless, some younger pupils find their books too hard for them. Leaders have recognised this. They have invested in a range of books better suited to readers who are not yet fluent.

Leaders have focused on making sure every child achieves all they can. Pupils with SEND are supported with skill. The most able children are given challenging work to do.

Pupils enjoy a very broad education. They talk enthusiastically about the range of clubs and trips. Pupils lead assemblies and they have time to discuss topics such as environmental awareness. They enjoy working with pupils from other trust schools. The forest school activities are enjoyed by pupils. They learn important life skills. Even the youngest pupils learn how to keep themselves safe while they build and light a fire.

Staff form very good relationships with pupils as they start school in Reception. Carefully planned, interesting activities in early years allow pupils to grow in knowledge and confidence. Children make a strong start in learning phonic skills. They talk with interest about stories they know. They learn the school's values, showing self-discipline and respect as they play together. Leaders make sure that pupils catch up quickly in Reception if they fall behind. This means that they are ready for Year 1.

Leaders have recently developed a more rigorous approach to the school's curriculum. The exciting topics which pupils learn now also include the key skills that they need to develop. Plans show how these skills increase as pupils move up through the school. In subjects such as computing, teachers deliver detailed plans well. Pupils have mastered each section of learning in sequence and built on them progressively. For instance, older pupils were seen programming a game. They could do this because they had retained relevant skills from previous years.

In other subjects, such as geography and history, these new plans are not yet being used in all classes. Teachers do not focus enough on the retention of the most important learning and skills. This means that pupils cannot consistently remember what they have learned. For example, pupils can identify differences between Athens and Haywards Heath. However, they cannot explain the difference in climate. This was because they had not retained previous learning on Greece's geographical position. Leaders know that pupils need to remember more of what they learn in order to apply their knowledge. As a result, leaders are now upgrading subject plans so that all will match the quality of computing.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders and governors ensure that staff are well-trained and vigilant about pupils' welfare. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and use robust systems to record concerns. Leaders follow up concerns swiftly. They make sure that pupils and their families receive timely support.

Pupils say that they feel safe and they know how to keep themselves safe online. From Reception onwards, pupils' learning experiences are very effective in supporting them to develop their understanding of risk and safe behaviour.

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

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

- Leaders have developed plans for the implementation of the curriculum across the foundation subject areas. These plans set out the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn and retain at each point. At present these plans, for example in geography and history, have yet to be embedded across the school. This means that there are gaps in the knowledge that pupils have retained and the skills that they can apply. Leaders should implement these changes so that pupils gain and remember more knowledge so that they have a better grasp of each of the foundation subjects.

## **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 the predecessor school, Northlands Wood Community Primary School, to be good on 21–22 May 2014.

## **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>	144453
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122312
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	393
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jonathan Ash-Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Sears
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northlandswood.co.uk">www.northlandswood.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This school converted to an academy in 2017, joining The Sussex Learning Trust.

## Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, I met with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- I met with the trust's chief executive officer and other trustees and members of the local governing body.
- I held meetings with teachers, support staff and subject leaders.
- I visited lessons in each key stage. I spoke to pupils from each key stage and viewed their work.
- I spoke to pupils about behaviour and expectations and observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- I heard pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read.
- I reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website. I examined records in relation to safeguarding.

- I considered 175 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 84 free-text responses. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I also used the 48 responses to the staff survey and 101 responses to the pupil survey.
- During the inspection, I looked in detail at early reading and phonics, computing and geography.

### **Inspection team**

Linda Appleby, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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