

Inspection of a good school: Five Ashes Church of England Primary School

Five Ashes, Mayfield, East Sussex TN20 6HY

Inspection dates:

10 March 2020

Outcome

Five Ashes Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school with big ambitions for all pupils. Leaders want pupils to be successful in everything that they do. Pupils work with determination in every lesson and learn well in a wide range of subjects. Their learning is enhanced through the fruitful links that the school has with its local community. There are many clubs for pupils to join. Archery and cookery are particularly popular.

The school's ethos is rooted in its Christian values. These are lived out by the whole school community. Pupils of all ages mix happily together and look out for each other. Staff work hard to keep pupils safe. Pupils told us that there was no bullying because they know each other so well. They have confidence that staff will deal with any poor behaviour, which only occurs rarely.

Pupils enjoy their time at school immensely. As one pupil told us: 'School is the best thing that's happened in my life.' Parents also appreciate the experiences offered to their children at this school. One parent expressed the views of many, saying: 'We think it is a fantastic school and are so glad our daughter is part of the school family.'

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

A new leadership and teaching team were appointed at the start of this school year. They quickly identified that learning in all subjects was not as strong as it should be. Consequently, leaders have introduced new approaches for every subject. These have led to improved learning. For example, teaching in mathematics is now more effective because it includes a greater focus on problem-solving. In mathematics, teachers explain new learning clearly. They check pupils' understanding before moving on.

For every subject, leaders have thought carefully about the order in which they want pupils to learn new knowledge and skills. However, teachers do not always use these plans when preparing lessons. For example, in some geography lessons teachers introduce new knowledge without linking it to what pupils have learned previously.

Teachers teach phonics well. As a result, all pupils become fluent readers by the end of key stage 1. This includes pupils who find reading difficult. These pupils receive further support that helps them to catch up. Teachers read to pupils regularly to promote a love of reading. The school is a book-rich environment. Consequently, all pupils learn to enjoy reading. Leaders identified that pupils do not always read with sufficient understanding. Leaders are taking steps to improve this, though more remains to be done.

Leaders are determined that all pupils should learn equally well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers accurately identify these pupils' additional needs. The skilful special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) helps with this process. Pupils with SEND receive effective help from well-trained teaching assistants. This usually allows pupils with SEND to learn alongside their peers. Staff also give disadvantaged pupils extra support. This results in learning that is at least as strong as their classmates' learning.

Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning. They are attentive and eager to participate in learning activities. These activities typically help pupils to know more and remember more. Established and effective classroom routines support a strong focus on learning. Pupils' learning is less secure when teachers lack detailed knowledge of the subject that they are teaching.

Pupils behave well throughout the school day. They know what is expected of them and are motivated by being rewarded for meeting these expectations. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and nurturing. Older pupils show a caring attitude towards younger ones. The children in Reception have settled into school well and are able to work independently.

Pupils' broader development is well catered for. There are many visitors from the local community. The vicar, doctor and police regularly come to talk to pupils. Pupils also support the local community. For example, pupils helped with a Christmas lunch for senior citizens at the village hall. There are meaningful opportunities for pupils to take on extra responsibilities. An active school council is involved in nearby environmental projects.

Leaders have successfully built a cohesive staff team. Staff work well together to improve the quality of education for all pupils. Staff also benefit from working with colleagues from the other federation schools. Leaders are committed to the continued improvement of every aspect of the school's provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff are vigilant in their efforts to keep pupils safe. Staff have been well trained to do so. The small size of the school means that every member of staff knows all the pupils well. Consequently, staff are quick to spot if anything may be worrying a pupil.

In lessons, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn about road safety, online safety and how to form healthy relationships. As a result, all pupils feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders have made many improvements to the curriculum so that pupils learn well across a wide range of subjects. For all subjects, leaders have written detailed progression documents that describe the expected sequence of learning over time. However, teachers are not yet consistently using these documents to plan all their lessons and to deepen their subject knowledge in a few subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers do so. Curriculum leaders should check that the progression documents help pupils to learn in a sequential way across the whole curriculum.
- Pupils learn to read fluently. Nevertheless, leaders correctly identified that pupils were not developing strong enough comprehension skills, particularly in key stage 2. Leaders have successfully introduced a greater focus on developing these skills. However, teachers do not yet teach comprehension skills with sufficient rigour. Leaders should ensure that this happens so that standards in reading continue to improve.

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 or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence 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 the school to be good on 23-24 May 2012.

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

Unique reference number	114526
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10122288
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	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Robson
Headteacher	Debbie Bennett (executive headteacher), Darren Gurr (head of school)
Website	www.fiveashes.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Five Ashes Church of England Primary School is part of the Weald Federation. The federation was formed in September 2019 when the Aspire Federation (to which the school previously belonged) and the Saxonbury Federation amalgamated. The federation consists of four Church of England primary schools, led by an executive headteacher and governed by a shared governing body.
- The head of school was newly appointed in September 2019, as were all three of the class teachers.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and is located in the Diocese of Chichester. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in February 2018, which reported that this was an outstanding Church of England school.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the executive headteacher, head of school and the SENCo. The lead inspector had a meeting with three governors (including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body). The lead inspector also had phone calls with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.

- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. This included meeting with senior leaders and curriculum leaders, visiting lessons, discussing learning with teachers, talking to pupils from different classes and looking at their work. The lead inspector also heard some pupils read.
- We met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised the school's safeguarding records. This included a review of the single central record of recruitment checks on adults working with pupils. We spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding throughout the inspection.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime and during collective worship. We talked to pupils throughout the inspection and considered the 19 responses they made to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.
- We took into account the 15 responses to Ofsted's confidential Parent View questionnaire, including 11 free-text comments.
- We met with staff throughout the inspection and reviewed the 10 responses to Ofsted's online confidential questionnaire for staff.
- We looked at a range of school documentation, including plans for the curriculum, the school's website and publicly available pupil performance information.

Inspection team

Chris Donovan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Liz McIntosh

Ofsted Inspector

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