

# Inspection of a good school: Hellingly Community Primary School

North Street, Hellingly, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 4DS

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Inspection dates: 16 and 17 June 2021

## Outcome

Hellingly Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to Hellingly Community Primary school to learn and play alongside their good friends. Parents fully appreciate how well staff know and understand their children. This small, nurturing school is the heart of the community. When the school was closed before Christmas due to an outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus), the Christmas tree was placed outside the door, festooned with lights as a beacon of hope.

Leaders work with determination to ensure pupils achieve their very best. Teachers provide pupils with interesting, engaging activities that bring learning to life. They have worked hard to continue this throughout the last year, despite COVID-19 restrictions, for example the winter games and 3D art sculpture competitions. When needed, pupils receive carefully planned extra support which helps them keep up with their learning.

Pupils are polite and eager to learn. They talk proudly of the school's core values of 'respect, achievement and perseverance'. They say they feel safe at school because adults look after them well. They are certain that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly by staff.

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

Since joining the school in March 2020, the interim head of school and executive headteacher have made many necessary improvements. English and mathematics have really improved, and other subjects are improving quickly too. Leaders have focused on ensuring English and mathematics are coherently sequenced and planned, and that learning activities suit what pupils need to focus on. For example, regular, structured times table repetition helps pupils develop their mathematical fluency. Teachers have strong subject knowledge as a result of thorough training and support from subject leaders. Teachers have worked closely together and now have a very good understanding of what pupils learn in other year groups, not just the year they teach. This helps them to make sure pupils are fully prepared for when they move on to a new class.

In some subjects other than English and mathematics, the curriculum is not yet as coherently planned and sequenced as it could be. However, leaders are well on their way to addressing this. All subjects are now well planned in terms of how pupils will develop skills effectively over time. However, how pupils will develop subject-specific knowledge as they move through the school is not always as clear.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading. They explain articulately about the school's system to choose books that match their reading level precisely. They describe with pride how this colour-coding system has really helped to improve their reading. Pupils read often, to a variety of people, and sometimes to a bigger audience. This helps to develop their confidence, as well as giving them practice with their reading. All teachers now have strong phonics knowledge because of recently received training. Story times are engaging, exciting and pupils look forward to the next part of their class book. Pupils who struggle with their reading are given lots of carefully planned support to 'keep up not catch up'. Children in the early years foundation stage regularly experience a wide variety of rhymes, songs and stories that develop their communication skills and vocabulary well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from carefully and thoughtfully planned activities. Knowledgeable, well-trained teaching assistants work creatively with pupils. This results in these pupils getting what they need to learn and achieve well. For example, pupils who find it difficult to concentrate and access their learning benefit from using sensory circuit equipment. The recent addition of the nurture room provides a calm environment for those pupils who need extra support. Wherever possible, pupils with SEND benefit from learning alongside their friends in class. This works well because teachers have excellent knowledge about pupils with SEND and how to meet their learning needs successfully.

Leaders have introduced clear, consistent behaviour systems. As a result, the school is a calm and friendly environment. Pupils get along together extremely well. They listen attentively in lessons and enjoy playing together at breaktimes. Knowledgeable staff effectively support any pupils who sometimes struggle to manage their own behaviour.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of wider curriculum opportunities. For example, Year 3 pupils are learning the ukulele. Where possible, these opportunities continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the pupil leadership team worked hard to produce a school newsletter. Pupils understand that trips to inspire awe and wonder, such as a previous planetarium visit, were not able to happen last year. However, now that COVID-19 restrictions are easing, pupils are excitedly looking forward to the upcoming Year 6 residential, the leavers' service and the school show.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and families extremely well. Leaders have ensured that systems used to make referrals and share vital information are clear and helpful. These systems are used well by staff. Consequently, any concerns are dealt with quickly and record-keeping is

comprehensive and up to date.

Pupils learn how to keep safe, including when online, in a variety of interesting ways. Leaders provide parents with useful safeguarding updates through the termly school newsletters and additional emails. The content of these are very relevant to current issues. These newsletters help to ensure parents, as well as staff, remain aware of any possible risks to their children's safety and well-being.

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

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

- The strengths seen in English and mathematics are not yet matched in all foundation subjects. Subject leaders have already begun to address this, and the progression of skills in all subjects is well planned. In some foundation subjects, such as art and physical education, the knowledge content is also sequenced well. However, in other foundation subjects, this is not as developed. Consequently, pupils' learning in these subjects does not build sufficiently on prior knowledge. Leaders should ensure that the knowledge, as well as the skills, in all subjects is carefully sequenced, so that pupils build their knowledge over time.

## **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 outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 school to be good on 16 and 17 June 2016.

## **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 [here](#).

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>	114396
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10192859
<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>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Michael Nix
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Mckay
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hellingly.e-sussex.sch.uk/">www.hellingly.e-sussex.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 and 17 June 2016

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been many changes in leadership and staffing. The current interim head of school and interim executive headteacher joined the school in March 2020. Their positions will become permanent in September 2021, when the school becomes part of the Rampion Federation, along with another primary school in Hailsham.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector also met with governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. In each subject, this included discussions with subject leaders and teachers, lesson visits with leaders, talking to pupils and looking at their work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in class and around school during their free time to hear

their views.

- To look closely at safeguarding in the school, inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and governors. The lead inspector looked at safeguarding documentation, including the school's single central record, which contains details of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors considered 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered the views of 47 pupils and 21 staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaires.

### **Inspection team**

Maxine McDonald-Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lizzie Jeanes

Ofsted Inspector

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