

Inspection of Willingdon Primary School

Rapsons Road, Willingdon, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN20 9RJ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are kind and respectful. The school's values are woven into everything. Everyone understands these values and tries to live up to them. Pupils use words such as 'amazing' to describe their school. They like their teachers, who offer help and encouragement. One pupil put it this way: 'Teachers always challenge you and congratulate you for trying.' Pupils work hard and try to do their best.

Pupils struggle to remember any bullying happening in the school recently. They know exactly what it is and would report it if it happened. Pupils trust adults to have children's best interests at heart. They feel safe and valued in this caring, inclusive school.

There is still much work to do to. Senior leaders have raised everyone's expectations of what pupils should achieve. However, pupils do not do as well as they could. Some younger pupils cannot read as well as they should be able to. Also, in some subjects, pupils enjoy learning new things but can often quickly forget what they have learned.

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

This is a school that is now moving firmly in the right direction. The headteacher arrived when the school was at a low ebb. It had been through a prolonged, unsettled period with a high turnover of staff and governors. Senior leaders have identified the most important areas for improvement. They are taking action to improve the quality of education. Leaders' expectations about what pupils will achieve are rising. Staff expect pupils to work hard and to achieve well. Senior leaders have the full support of all staff and consider the workload and well-being of staff carefully.

However, the quality of education that pupils receive is currently too variable and is not consistently good. Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently ambitious for all pupils. There are strengths, such as mathematics and personal, social and health and economic education (PSHE). In these subjects, teachers introduce new ideas in a logical order, building on what pupils already know. However, in too many other subjects, it is not clear what pupils need to know and remember. New learning is not connected carefully to what pupils have learned before. Several subject leaders are new to their role and inexperienced. They have not yet made sure that all subjects allow pupils to learn what they need to. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should do over time.

Reading is a central part of the curriculum. Pupils really enjoy books and stories. By the time they leave the school, most pupils read and write well, using accurate grammar and a wide vocabulary. Children are introduced to phonics as soon as they start Reception Year. Staff are well trained in how to deliver the school's newly introduced phonics programme. They have high expectations for pupils. This

includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). If any start to fall behind, they now receive help, often on the same day. However, despite this, some younger pupils still struggle to read well. They have gaps in their learning from previous years. Although leaders have plans to tackle this problem, some pupils have not yet caught up.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They enjoy lessons, work hard and try their best. Positive relationships between adults and pupils make for a happy, purposeful school. This is just as true in Reception Year as it is in Year 6. Inspectors observed children during their first full day in school in Reception. They were all happy, settled and confident. Leaders have improved the early years provision this term. More resources have been added to spark children's curiosity and to encourage them to work together and solve problems. Staff are well trained. They use spoken language accurately, so children develop a wide vocabulary and learn to speak well.

This is a thoroughly inclusive school. Leaders make sure that all pupils enjoy the full curriculum and wider opportunities, such as residential visits. This includes pupils with a wide range of disabilities. Leaders even changed the venue for a residential trip so that it was suitable for wheelchair users. The curriculum involves far more than lessons in classrooms. Pupils enjoy a range of clubs. Sometimes, teachers start clubs that pupils suggest. Pupils love taking responsibility and take these additional roles very seriously.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone who works at this school takes safeguarding seriously. They understand the risks that pupils might face. Staff know how to protect children and are always on the lookout for worrying signs. Staff have had up-to-date training and senior leaders check that all have understood and remembered it.

Senior leaders leave no stone unturned in getting the help that pupils and families need. This includes working with external agencies.

Pupils are safe and well cared for. They learn a lot about keeping safe, including when online. Pupils also know how to deal with unwanted attention from their peers, should it happen.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils struggle to read fluently and to sound out words accurately. This is because historical weaknesses in the phonics and early reading curriculum have left pupils with gaps in their knowledge which hold them back. Senior leaders should make sure that these historical gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified

and rectified. This will enable pupils to catch up quickly and keep up with the curriculum, and so become confident, capable readers.

- Pupils really enjoy learning subjects across the curriculum, but they struggle to retain and build on what they have learned. This is because, in too many subjects, the most important knowledge for pupils to learn and remember is not identified in the curriculum, nor is this knowledge carefully sequenced. Senior leaders should make sure that in these subjects the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn and retain is explicitly identified and sequenced in a logical order. With this in place, pupils will be better equipped to reach the end points of the curriculum and apply the skills that they are learning.
- Although they are receiving ongoing training, some subject leaders do not yet have the knowledge and skills to drive improvements. Senior leaders should continue to provide subject leaders with the training and support needed to make sure these leaders have a fully positive impact on pupils' learning.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	114422
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10199660
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Laura Carter and Natalie Greenaway
Headteacher	Gemma Roxburgh
Website	www.our-school.net
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides a base for the Hearing Support Facility (HSF). This is a resource for pupils with serious hearing impairment. It is owned and staffed by the local authority. All eight pupils who attend this facility are on the school roll and are fully included in classes.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2021, having joined the school in a part-time role in November 2020. The acting deputy headteacher and acting assistant headteachers are both new to their roles.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher and the acting assistant headteacher regularly throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector met with the inclusion manager and the manager of the HSF to discuss provision for pupils with SEND. The inspector also visited classes to understand how this provision is implemented in lessons.
- Inspectors met with pupils throughout the inspection, including in lessons, on the playground and around the school. Inspectors also talked to pupils about their work and aspects of the school. An inspector listened to three pupils from Year 6 read.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including curriculum plans for other subjects and spoke to other subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the two co-chairs of the governing body. He also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out a wide range of activities to inspect the school's safeguarding arrangements. These included looking at the school's policies and procedures, discussions with pupils and staff, and a detailed discussion with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher during which we looked at case studies of individual pupils.
- Inspectors considered 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate at the start of the day. Inspectors also considered a letter received from a parent. In addition, 40 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were taken into account. An inspector also had a meeting with a group of support staff. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Becky Greenhalgh	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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