

# Inspection of The Gattons Infant School

Royal George Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9SL

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Inspection dates: 29 and 30 September 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

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

Pupils are happy in this caring, welcoming school. They know and appreciate the school's 'rights respecting rainbow'. These values and a strong sense of 'family' lie at the heart of the community. Everyone is included and valued. Relationships are based on mutual respect. Pupils are cheerful and kind towards each other. At break and lunchtimes pupils interact and play happily together. They enjoy playing a range of games that keeps them active.

Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility such as being a member of the class council or eco council. They like the clubs and activities that are available, such as trips to the nature reserve, mindfulness and multi-skills. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that adults will help them get along if they fall out with their friends or have any worries.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are not always high enough. At times, pupils do not engage fully in their learning. Pupils told inspectors that sometimes other pupils' behaviour stops them getting on with their work.

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

Leaders and governors are ambitious for all staff and pupils. Leaders know the quality of education needs to improve swiftly for all year groups, including early years. They have begun to make the necessary changes.

In some subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge and skills pupils should learn and remember well. Teachers make sure that pupils' learning carefully builds on what they already know and can do. However, in other subjects such as science and geography, this is not as effective. This is also the case for the early years curriculum. As a result, pupils, including children in Reception Year, do not learn well across the curriculum.

Pupils cannot always explain and develop their ideas well enough. This is because they are not taught the necessary vocabulary in different subjects consistently well. Leaders have not ensured that teachers have the necessary subject expertise in all subjects. Consequently, most pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not achieve as well as they should.

Reading is a high priority. Staff are well trained and confident in teaching phonics. Children in the Reception Year are taught phonics right from the start, in a sequence which helps them learn to read confidently. Staff provide pupils with suitable and interesting books to read. This helps them to practise the sounds they are learning. Staff quickly identify any pupil who is falling behind. As a result, all pupils are able to catch up and keep up.

Leaders make sure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified appropriately. Leaders and staff know these pupils' pastoral and wider needs well. While teachers plan work that is matched to the specific needs of these pupils, weaknesses in the curriculum mean they do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils show genuine care for each other. However, their behaviour is not consistently good enough. Pupils are often too chatty and find it difficult to maintain their attention in lessons. Too often, teachers do not address these issues. As a result, pupils do not focus on their learning as well as they should.

Pupils' personal development is strong. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests such as learning a musical instrument. The themes of kindness, respect and responsibility are explored and celebrated throughout the year. These help pupils to think about others and understand the difference they can make through their choices and actions. For instance, pupils develop an awareness of the importance of taking care of the local environment.

Staff morale is high. They feel valued and find leaders supportive. Leaders, including governors, are careful to ensure that teachers' workload is manageable. Staff appreciate this.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders keep a watchful eye on the well-being of pupils. Effective training means that staff have a clear understanding about how to keep children safe. They know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders deal with any issues swiftly. Where necessary, leaders work well with external agencies to help pupils and their families get the help they need. The curriculum is effective in developing pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils trust that staff will always listen and help them if they have any worries. Governors regularly check safeguarding procedures.

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

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

- In subjects such as science and geography leaders have not clearly identified the order in which pupils should be taught knowledge or the subject-specific vocabulary which pupils ought to learn. This means that pupils are not achieving well overall. Leaders must continue to develop curriculum plans to help all pupils learn more, remember more and be able to explain their ideas clearly.
- The early years curriculum is not coherent and well sequenced across the seven areas of learning. This holds back children's learning. Leaders should ensure that the development of the curriculum provides a firm foundation on which to build on in Year 1.

- Staff have variable pedagogical knowledge across the different subjects. This limits how well all pupils, including those with SEND, develop their knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that teachers are confident and skilled in the content they are delivering.
- Staff expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. As a result, at times, pupils' attitudes to learning are not always positive enough. Low-level disruption prevents most pupils from learning as well as they should. Leaders must ensure all staff have high expectations and understand how to implement the new behaviour policy consistently.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125940
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199339
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	269
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lucas Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Gospel
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thegattons.co.uk">http://www.thegattons.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 January 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was made substantive in July 2021, having been the acting headteacher since September 2020. She was previously the deputy headteacher.
- 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 assistant headteacher and members of staff.
- Inspectors met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors also met with a representative from West Sussex local authority.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 33 responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and 30 additional free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the 84 responses to the pupil survey. They met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- As part of our inspection of early years, inspectors meet with the early years leader and visited the three Reception classes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, and pupil premium and catch-up funding plans.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and physical education. 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 a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors also heard a selection of pupils read.

## Inspection team

Louise Walker, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Cole

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