

Inspection of Sheddingdean Community Primary School

Petworth Drive, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 8JT

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils are happy in school. They are interested in learning and want to do well. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite subjects. They enjoy special events, such as the school's Christmas jumper day, which took place during the inspection. Some pupils find school more difficult, however. They say that they are not always given the help they need when they find the work hard.

Teachers' expectations of behaviour and learning are not always high enough. They are too ready to accept poor-quality work. Sometimes, teachers are slow to notice that pupils are not doing what they should be doing in lessons. This means that some pupils learn less well than they should.

Playtimes are usually cheerful, friendly times, when pupils enjoy playing and catching up with friends. Sometimes, however, pupils say that they are upset by the unkind comments of others. Pupils feel safe in school. They know who they would talk to if they were worried about something. Most say that their concerns are sorted out successfully. However, they feel that some adults are more helpful than others. School records indicate that leaders deal promptly with any concerns raised about bullying.

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

The co-headteachers have not established a strong, ambitious, whole-school vision for the school. They have been aware that this aspect of their leadership role needs to be improved for a while. For example, the co-headteachers have worked hard to strengthen communication with staff. Early improvements in this aspect of their work have been noticed by governors and the local authority. However, more needs to be done to improve leadership if the school is to secure the urgent improvements needed.

Leaders had begun to review and revise the curriculum prior to the pandemic. They made a sensible start by making sure that the curriculum covered the content of the national curriculum fully. This work has now been completed. The revised curriculum ensures that pupils will be taught the key knowledge they need to be successful learners. Mathematics subject plans helpfully break down the content to be taught so that teachers are clear about what they need to teach. However, the pandemic has hampered leaders' plans for the next stage of curriculum development in other subjects. As a result, curriculum plans do not provide teachers with sufficient detail about the order in which the content should be taught in all subjects.

The school's phonics programme ensures that many pupils develop secure early reading skills, including in Reception Year. However, the teaching of reading does not always take sufficient account of pupils' specific needs. This is particularly the case for those pupils who sometimes find learning more difficult. One pupil summed up the views of others when he said, 'We should have some help with answering questions because it's a bit tricky for some of us. I like it when the teacher writes

some ideas on the board to help us.' There are too few opportunities to develop children's language and vocabulary skills in Reception Year. This hinders children's progress in reading. Most pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about their favourite books. They love to listen to their teachers reading books but say that this happens infrequently.

Some pupils have significant gaps in their reading skills due to historical weaknesses in the teaching of reading. This is especially noticeable in the older year groups. Leaders have taken steps to support pupils who need extra help, such as small-group work and individual support, designed to target specific difficulties with reading. This has been partially successful, and some pupils have made notable progress as a result. However, others are not catching up quickly enough.

The school's behaviour management policy is not followed consistently enough. As a result, the quality of pupils' behaviour varies. While many pupils complete their work with care, others produce work of poor quality. Adults maintain warm and caring relationships with the children in Reception Year. As a result, children feel safe and secure here. However, some find it hard to settle during lessons. Their behaviour is not always addressed properly when this is the case, so other children are disturbed.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved in recent years. For example, the special educational needs coordinator has helped staff to develop a better understanding of pupils' needs and she provides a consistent point of contact for parents. However, teachers lack the expertise needed to ensure that pupils with SEND learn as well as they should.

The school's personal development curriculum helps pupils to develop respect for others in the community. For example, the money raised in donations on Christmas jumper day will be given to a local charity for homeless people – a cause chosen by the school council. However, the curriculum does not focus well enough on the importance of mutual respect among pupils in school. Before the pandemic, a wide range of responsibilities for the older pupils, such as helping with playground games, or buddying with children in Reception Year, encouraged qualities such as compassion and confidence. Activities such as these had to stop during the pandemic. Leaders intend to begin reinstating them during the spring term.

Subject leaders' roles are at an early stage of development. They are keen to play their part in the school's development but lack the knowledge and expertise to do so. Plans are in place to get this aspect of their role back on track as soon as practical.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders give safeguarding an appropriately high priority. They use regular training well to update staff knowledge of safeguarding matters. Newly appointed members

of staff are given clear guidance about safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff are confident about what they need to do if they are concerned about a pupil.

The school's centralised record system is well established. The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) use it effectively to record and monitor developments for individual pupils. The DSLs liaise constructively with agencies, such as children's services, and take swift action when necessary to ensure pupils' welfare.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The lack of an ambitious shared vision has detracted from the pace of school improvement. Weaknesses in communication between the co-headteachers, and between the co-headteachers and the staff, have caused difficulties for some staff, who have received mixed messages as a result. The local authority has been working with senior leaders to improve this aspect of their work. However, while there are early signs of improvement, there is still much to be done. The co-headteachers should work with staff, governors and the local authority to establish a strong whole-school vision for the school's future. This should be unequivocal and aspirational so that no one is in any doubt about the school's direction of travel, or about the urgency for improvements.
- Curriculum plans provide broad information about the subject content to be taught in each year group. However, the plans lack sufficient detail about precisely what should be taught and when. This is the case for all subjects and year groups, including early years. Leaders should continue with plans to ensure that schemes of work provide sufficient detail to ensure that teachers are clear about what they need to teach, how this builds on what pupils have learned previously and how it will prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. They should make sure that teachers have the subject knowledge needed to deliver the curriculum consistently well.
- Inconsistencies in the teaching of reading mean that some pupils develop more secure reading skills than others. The reading curriculum is not adapted well enough to support pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND. As a result, some pupils struggle to read, including some of the oldest pupils. The extra help provided for these pupils is not always successful enough. Leaders should address weaknesses in the teaching of reading as a matter of urgency.
- Many pupils behave well and want to get on with their work. Some, however, chat to each other when their teachers are talking, or they do not bother to join in with all lesson activities. Teachers do not address this issue well enough. As a result, some pupils fall behind. Leaders should raise expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. They should make sure that there is a whole-school approach to behaviour management and provide training for teachers so that they know what they can do to ensure that all pupils behave well.
- Subject leaders' roles are underdeveloped. The pandemic has made it difficult for them to monitor the delivery of their subjects of responsibility in the classroom.

Leaders should continue with plans to support the development of subject leaders' roles.

- Routines and expectations have not been established well enough in early years. Leaders should ensure that routines and expectations are securely in place so that the youngest children in the school develop the academic, personal and social skills needed to learn successfully.

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	125958
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10200209
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Foster and Nick Johnston
Headteacher	Yasmin Ashraf and Catherine Gent
Website	http://www.sheddingdeanschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has two co-headteachers. Each works three days per week. They share all responsibilities.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the co-headteachers and other senior leaders. They spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection. They also met with the co-chairs of the governing body and had a telephone discussion with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, held a discussion with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central record. They also met with the DSLs, reviewed the school's safeguarding records and spoke with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors considered 46 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered 12 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their views of the school, as well as speaking with pupils informally during playtimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

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