

Inspection of a good school: Etchingham Church of England Primary School

Parsonage Croft, High Street, Etchingham, East Sussex TN19 7BY

Inspection date: 25 January 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and confident learners in this bright and welcoming school. They speak very positively about their school and are proud to be a part of it. Staff develop warm and caring relationships with pupils. These relationships are supported by the school's strong Christian ethos.

Staff want pupils to do well. Teachers select topics to motivate and enthuse pupils. Their experiences are enriched with trips and extra-curricular activities. Older pupils spoke positively about the residential school journey, which helped everyone to get along well.

Pupils like talking about the books they read and study in class. They can see that they are getting better at reading and mathematics and know that staff expect them to work hard. They like the ways that staff help them to concentrate in lessons and feel that most pupils behave well in and out of lessons thanks to this support.

Most of the time, pupils play calmly together during social times and pupils know that unkindness towards each other is not tolerated. There are very few incidents of bullying. If bullying does happen, then it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Although pupils like school, their experiences in some subjects are varied. This is because leaders have not made sure that learning is always structured around the knowledge that pupils have learned and what they need to learn next. This hinders pupils' progress across the curriculum.

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

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum provided to pupils helps them to learn more and remember more over time in all subjects. Leaders identified the need to improve the

curriculum prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and prioritised writing, mathematics and science. They are beginning to share leadership responsibilities more widely to gain a deeper and more precise understanding of the quality of education in other subjects. The areas leaders have addressed, such as science and mathematics, are stronger. Here, leaders have a clearer understanding about how to build up pupils' knowledge. They have carefully supported staff to understand how to check what pupils have remembered and to focus on what pupils need to learn next. In these subjects, pupils' work indicates that they are learning what leaders intended. As a result, pupils are set up well for their next steps.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the importance of early reading. The teaching of reading is effective. From Reception Year, children immediately start to learn phonics. Regular practice helps them to commit the sounds to memory. They practise handwriting alongside their phonics. Children are excited to learn new sounds and are keen to show how well they can read. The books pupils read are well matched to their reading ability. Where pupils are at risk of falling behind, support is in place to help them catch up quickly. A sense of excitement about books runs through the school and Year 6 pupils enjoy sharing ideas about books. The class novels are well selected and are often linked to learning in other subjects, such as geography.

However, learning in other subjects is not planned as effectively. This is because leaders have only recently begun to identify what knowledge pupils need. They have been distracted by creating exciting 'hooks' and fun activities that pupils enjoy but get little from in the long term. As a result, pupils' progress in learning and remembering more is hindered.

Some subject leaders are new in post. During the pandemic, they received training for their role but they have only recently begun to check how well the new curriculum plans are taught. Similarly, during the pandemic, governors made only limited checks on the quality of education in the school. Consequently, the pace of improvement in some subjects in the curriculum has not been as quick as it could have been. Governors recognise that they have not challenged leaders enough.

Adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are inconsistent. Pupils are fully included in lessons and teachers revise activities for them. Where the curriculum is designed well, the changes made are thoughtful and effective. Where it is not, these pupils struggle.

Beyond the academic curriculum, there is more strength. Leaders are determined to provide a wide experience for all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged. Pupils are supported to develop their interest in the world around them and to consider other people's views. They participate with enthusiasm and make sure others do too.

Staff appreciate the support provided through recent training, including opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The school is part of the Riverside Federation. This benefits staff by providing them with opportunities to share expertise with staff from another school. Most staff report that leaders have considered their workload. However, some staff feel they would benefit from additional time to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that leadership development of staff, planning for the structured progression of knowledge from the time children join the school in early years, and adaptations to the wider curriculum for pupils with SEND may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are alert for any signs of worry and report any concerns clearly and quickly. Leaders responsible for safeguarding take swift and appropriate action, securing help that pupils and their families might require.

Staff receive regular updates and training on areas of safeguarding that they need to be aware of, including how to spot inappropriate behaviour.

Pupils have a secure knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, including when online. The school's e-safety education has helped pupils to build their knowledge of whom to tell and what to do if they are concerned about something while online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum thinking does not fully identify what knowledge pupils are intended to learn and remember over time in every subject. Consequently, teachers plan interesting activities for pupils to do rather than what they need to learn. Each subject needs to be coherently planned and sequenced so that teachers know what knowledge they are aiming to build over time.
- Some new curriculum leaders have not checked how well the new curriculum is taught. Leaders need to check that all subject areas are taught effectively so that pupils learn well over time across the curriculum.
- Sometimes staff working with pupils with SEND do not know how to break down the skills and knowledge into smaller parts, which does not help pupils to learn. Plans to support pupils with SEND are closely aligned with each curriculum area. Where the curriculum is weaker, adaptations for these pupils are not effective. These pupils need to be considered as curriculum plans are strengthened.
- While governors are aware that the curriculum for the foundation subjects is being developed, they have not yet checked the impact of this work. Governors need to monitor more closely the curriculum development in all the foundation subjects to ensure that they know what difference leaders' actions are having on the quality of education.

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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 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 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	114502
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10211280
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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Annette Childs
Executive headteacher	Matthew Montebello
Website	etchingham.greenschoolsonline.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2020.
- The school is part of the Riverside Federation with Bodiam Church of England Primary School. The two schools share one governing body.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met the executive headteacher, the head of school and the special educational needs coordinator. A meeting was held with the chair of the governing body and other governors. In addition, a telephone conversation took place with a local authority representative and a representative of the Diocese of Chichester.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Account was taken of 34 responses to Ofsted’s Parent View questionnaire, four responses to the staff survey and 20 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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