

# Inspection of Copthorne CofE Junior School

Church Road, Copthorne, West Sussex RH10 3RD

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Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Pupils love many aspects of school life, such as competitive sports and learning how to make fires using flint. They are looking forward to their up-and-coming residential and trying new activities such as kayaking and dry slope skiing.

Leaders have ensured that pupils feel happy and safe at school. Pupils report that bullying has happened in the past but is very rare now. They know that leaders deal well with any issues. Recently the autism ambassadors have created a quiet area, Arthur's Place, in the school grounds for pupils who want somewhere calm to play. Pupils show great compassion and respect for each other.

Pupils' behaviour has improved recently. Pupils say lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour anymore. Parents too have noticed many changes for the better. Attendance has improved, with rates higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, in recent times, pupils have not had the quality of education they deserve. There is much to do to ensure that pupils learn as well as they should. The new headteacher has quickly identified what is not good enough and has taken swift action to tackle the issues. Leaders want pupils to learn well and are working hard to ensure that these expectations are fully realised.

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

Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Leaders, with support from the local authority, have started to review the curriculum for some subjects, for example reading and history. This work is not finished, and there are many subjects still to plan. This means that leaders have not precisely identified the key information that they want pupils to remember. In turn, teachers do not know exactly what knowledge pupils have learned before to build on.

Leaders have ensured that pupils now study a balanced curriculum. Some subjects were not taught, or not taught well enough, in the past. The partial school closures caused by the pandemic have also affected pupils' learning. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge. The system to check on how well pupils are learning does not always tell teachers what they need to know. Therefore, teachers cannot adapt their teaching well enough to give the right support to pupils.

Pupils enjoy reading and listening to stories. Leaders have made sure that where pupils are still at an early stage of learning to read, the books they read match the sounds they know. However, leaders know that the teaching of reading, including phonics, is not precise enough. They had to cancel staff's training recently, due to an unplanned school closure. This has put leaders' ambitious plans back by a few weeks.

The teaching of mathematics is an example of how effectively leaders are improving learning for pupils. There is a well-sequenced mathematics curriculum in place that breaks learning into small chunks. Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. However, sometimes, teachers do not teach the mathematics curriculum in the way that leaders expect. This happens in other subjects too, with teachers planning lessons that are enjoyable but are not tied closely to what pupils need to understand and remember. This slows pupils' learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support they need with their work. Leaders identify needs accurately and address these through carefully considered individual targets. However, the gaps in curriculum thinking and delivery hinder pupils with SEND from achieving as well as they could.

Leaders support pupils' personal development well. They have planned pupils' learning in personal, social and health education carefully. They make sure that pupils learn about looking after their mental health. Pupils are curious about the world beyond Copthorne. For example, pupils have pen pals from a school in Tanzania. They have an impressive insight into their friends' lives. They show great empathy for others.

A few staff voiced concerns about workload, as many changes are being made. Nevertheless, staff appreciate the changes that leaders are making, with one member of staff calling them 'refreshing'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Since her arrival, the headteacher has rightly prioritised ensuring the school does all it can to keep pupils safe. Staff are alert to possible risks. They know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare. Leaders carry out safer recruitment checks diligently.

Leaders keep thorough records. They follow through with all concerns. Training for all adults who work or volunteer in the school is regular. However, there is more to do to fine-tune adults' understanding of peer-on-peer abuse.

The curriculum, including the recent internet safety workshop, has ensured that pupils understand online dangers, including grooming.

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

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

- The curriculum does not build pupils' knowledge sequentially in many subjects, including reading and phonics. Staff do not always have the subject knowledge to teach content well, including phonics. This means that pupils do not achieve as

well as they should. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is developed as a matter of priority and that staff are well trained to teach it successfully.

- Pupils have not learned all that they needed to in the past to ensure their success in the next stage of their education. Systems to check whether pupils understand and remember what they are taught are underdeveloped. Leaders, including subject leaders, need to make sure that they have identified the key knowledge pupils must retain and that teachers know how to check it has been learned.

## 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>	126013
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211051
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	213
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Frances Strickley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Denison
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.copthorne.w-sussex.sch.uk">www.copthorne.w-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 and 30 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been significant changes in leadership at the school since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in her post since September 2021 and the deputy headteacher since September 2019. The chair of governors started in her role in September 2021.
- The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in February 2016.
- The school currently uses one 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 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 with senior leaders, staff, pupils and parents.

- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and art. Inspectors spoke to subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. An inspector heard pupils read to adults from the school.
- Inspectors sampled curriculum planning, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils about some other subjects.
- An inspector spoke to the alternative provision that the school currently uses.
- The lead inspector met with five governors, including the chair of governors, and spoke with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Chichester.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. This included safer recruitment checks and record-keeping of concerns. Inspectors also spoke to staff, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- Responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text comments were considered by the inspectors. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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