

# Inspection of Ninfield Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Ninfield, Battle, East Sussex TN33 9JW

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Pupils are very clear that they accept everyone for who they are in their school. As soon as they start school in Reception, children learn to be kind and respectful of differences through the 'healthy living' curriculum. Leaders have an ambition for all pupils to learn the life skills they need to be safe and responsible citizens. Pupil 'Well-being Warriors', patrol the playground at breaktimes in high-visibility jackets. They make sure that pupils who feel alone can easily find a friend to play with.

Pupils learn to read very quickly and get the extra help they need if they find it difficult. They read a wide range of different books that leaders have specially selected for them. Pupils proudly read aloud to adults every day and persevere even if they find the words tricky. Pupils experience a well-planned curriculum in mathematics but in some other subjects key areas are missed out.

Pupils told inspectors that bullying is very rare. They trust the adults in school to help them. If pupils report concerns or worries, these are sorted quickly to help them feel happy. However, the leaders in school do not manage safeguarding concerns well enough and this potentially puts pupils at risk of harm.

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

In some subjects like mathematics and reading, leaders have been ambitious for what they want pupils to know and be able to do. Leaders have made sure that subject plans order blocks of knowledge in a way that builds a secure foundation. In mathematics pupils learn to use a wide range of problem-solving skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 worked together to find the best method to measure angles using a protractor. In reading and mathematics, teachers regularly check what pupils know and can remember. If pupils need extra help, staff provide this to help them catch up quickly.

From Year 3 onwards, teachers teach pupils in mixed-year groups. In subjects such as history, geography and science, leaders have not arranged the curriculum so that all pupils in these classes learn the important knowledge that they need. Leaders know that the current curriculum narrows the learning experiences of pupils, but they have not taken appropriate action to address this. Not all pupils learn topics such as the Romans and Tudors or develop fieldwork skills in geography. In science, pupils do not always learn content that is appropriate for their learning stage. Pupils struggle to link learning to what they have experienced before. Leaders are not clear about what pupils need to know. Activities that pupils complete do not support them to learn deeply enough. For example, pupils can remember activities such as having a mock battle in the playground, but not why this battle was historically important.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support to help them learn. Leaders are swift to identify pupils' needs. They work with parents to construct plans that set out the specific help that pupils require.

Teachers know their pupils well and use the agreed plans to adapt lessons so that pupils with SEND can keep up with their peers. However, there are not enough adaptations of the curriculum beyond mathematics and reading to enable SEND pupils to make as much progress as they should. For example, in modern languages SEND pupils struggle to connect words to form full sentences or count past the number 10 in French.

Children in Reception have a good start to their learning. Leaders use a range of well-selected and exciting books to form 'learning journeys' that explore different ideas and themes. Staff seize every learning opportunity. They carefully plan experiences like mini-beast hunts to count insects while also learning about different habitats. Pupils in Year 6 share their love of reading with Reception children every Friday when they come to visit to read together.

Although governors take an active interest in the school, they have not identified serious lapses in safeguarding processes. Leaders and governors do not fulfil their statutory duties with regards to safeguarding.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Safeguarding records are not effective and do not provide a clear picture of concerns raised about pupils so that the school can be sure it has done, and is doing, the correct things to support them. Records do not detail the actions that leaders have taken and the outcome of those actions. In many cases, records are incomplete and have not been updated over time. Information is not readily accessible to the appropriate designated safeguarding leads.

Leaders do not always take appropriate action to maintain effective communication with external agencies or seek help for the families of the pupils when they need it. In many cases seen by inspectors, there have been lengthy delays between concerns raised and actions taken. This causes delays in getting families the help they need and puts pupils at potential risk.

Leaders have not made sure that all staff receive effective, up-to-date training to help them spot pupils at risk of harm. Though staff state that they know how to report concerns about pupils' safety, concerns are rarely raised in a formal way.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They have an age-appropriate understanding of sex and relationships. Leaders complete appropriate checks when recruiting new staff.

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

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

- Leaders do not maintain detailed records when concerns about pupils are raised. This means there is a lack of vigilance for pupils at risk of harm. Leaders must take urgent action to ensure that safeguarding procedures and recording of concerns meet statutory requirements. This will ensure that there is a clear picture of the support in place to address concerns about pupils' welfare.
- Governors do not ensure that leaders comply with statutory requirements and adhere to the school's safeguarding policy. As a result, the ineffective safeguarding processes in place go unchallenged, which place pupils at potential risk. Governors must ensure that their own processes of checking provide an accurate view of how well leaders comply with their legal duties to safeguard pupils.
- Leaders do not communicate effectively with external agencies when pupils face significant risks to their welfare. This means that pupils and their families do not receive the level of support that they need. Leaders must ensure that they follow school policy and local authority arrangements. This will ensure that all appropriate agencies involved in the care of a pupil and their family have a united view of the support that is needed to keep them safe.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff have regular comprehensive safeguarding training on how to identify and report signs of a pupil being at risk of harm. This means there is not a culture of vigilance and staff are not made aware of their safeguarding role and responsibilities. Leaders must make sure that all staff have full and comprehensive training as a priority to establish a suitable culture of safeguarding which is clearly understood by all staff.
- In subjects such as history, geography and science, leaders have not arranged the curriculum so that all pupils learn the same ambitious content. As a result, some pupils have a narrowed learning experience and do not develop a wide breadth and suitable depth of knowledge. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum provides an equal opportunity for all pupils, including those with SEND, to learn the knowledge and skills that prepare them for future 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114515
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211982
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	161
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ian Moffatt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Brown
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ninfieldceschool.org.uk/">www.ninfieldceschool.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was not present in school during the course of this inspection.
- This school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school in the Diocese of Chichester. Its last section 48 inspection took place on 14 June 2016.
- 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.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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 and pupils. They also spoke with the chair of the governing body. An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and the Diocese of Chichester.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and languages. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed plans for the teaching of science and geography and met with a group of pupils to talk about their learning in these subjects.
- Inspectors considered the 32 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including 22 free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's website and policies and met with the deputy designated safeguarding leader. They also spoke to pupils, staff and governors and scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks on adults working in the school.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, their evaluation of how well the school is currently performing, minutes of governing body meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils to discuss their views about many different aspects of their school. Inspectors also held informal conversations with pupils at break and lunchtime.

## Inspection team

Michelle Lower, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Enser

Her Majesty's Inspector

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