

# Inspection of an outstanding school: High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School

Chillies Lane, High Hurstwood, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 4AD

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Inspection dates:

2 November 2022

## Outcome

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

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations for pupils at this school. Their vision for pupils to 'belong, enjoy and excel' is at the heart of all the school does. Pupils share warm and trusting relationships with staff, who know them well. They are supported to believe in themselves and become resilient and curious learners. Children in the early years settle quickly and make a positive start.

Pupils know the importance of kindness and including others, reflecting the school's Christian ethos. They demonstrate these behaviours when working and playing with their peers. For example, Year 6 pupils act as 'buddies' for children in Reception who are new to the school. This means that bullying is rare and, if it does happen, it is dealt with quickly by staff.

Leaders have ensured that pupils learn about culture and diversity through the reading curriculum and visits to St Paul's Cathedral, for example. Pupils take part in fundraising and charity work, so that they learn the importance of helping others. They develop leadership skills and act as positive role models as library, register and assembly monitors. Many pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of interesting clubs, including choir, multi-skills and nature clubs. However, leaders have not yet ensured that those pupils who would benefit most take part in these clubs.

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

Leaders have developed a broad and interesting curriculum that is ambitious for all, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is well sequenced, including in phonics and mathematics, so that pupils build

on their prior knowledge from Reception to Year 6. Leaders are continuing to develop the curriculum further, so that the key knowledge that pupils must learn is clearly identified in all subjects.

Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to support pupils to build on their learning and apply it to new contexts. For example, in art, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their knowledge of Cezanne to compare with the work of Van Gogh. Children in Reception use their previous learning of names and features of shapes to describe them during a 'shape hunt'. Pupils with SEND are supported effectively to learn as well as their peers in all subjects.

Teachers mostly use assessment well. They check what pupils know and can do through careful questioning. They use this information to adapt planning, so that any gaps in pupils' learning are closed. This is less strong in phonics, where misconceptions are not always identified and addressed swiftly. Teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to re-visit and embed their learning through quizzes and quick tests.

Pupils in all year groups enjoy reading. The newly renovated library is much loved and well used by all. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the wide range of books that they have read and shared with others. Leaders have chosen the new phonics programme carefully, so that it meets the needs of the pupils well. The phonics books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they have learned. Sometimes, pupils need more opportunities to practise their phonics knowledge, so that they are ready to learn new sounds. Those who find reading more difficult quickly receive the help that they need to keep up.

Most pupils are excited to learn. They demonstrate positive behaviours in lessons. However, a small number of pupils in the older year groups sometimes disrupt the learning of others. Leaders are continuing to address this, so that behaviour improves for the benefit of all.

In the early years, the indoor and outdoor learning environments are well organised. Children choose from a range of stimulating activities and resources, to help them learn through play. Adults care for and know the children well. They use skilful questioning to encourage children to think independently and problem solve. Children develop their understanding of early number by counting more items and writing numerals of a greater value each day.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to enrich their learning further through trips that are closely linked to the curriculum. For example, a Year 5 and 6 visit to a local botanical garden helped pupils to develop their understanding of plants and seeds in science and the Amazon rainforest in geography. Pupils learn how to be responsible citizens and make decisions for the benefit of the school community, through the 'learning council'.

Staff well-being is a priority for senior leaders and governors, who pay close attention to workload. Staff feel valued, as leaders frequently take the opportunity to hear and respond to their views. Leaders have established links with other schools, so that staff

develop their knowledge and expertise. Governors are a great source of support for the new headteacher, who has many plans in place to improve the school further.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff receive high-quality training, so that they know how to identify and report concerns swiftly. Leaders monitor pupils who they are worried about carefully. They seek support from appropriate agencies, so that pupils and their families get the help that they might need quickly. Leaders make sure that checks are carried out so that they can be sure that all adults are safe to work in the school.

Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will take their concerns seriously. They know that they can use the 'dolphin button' on the computers to seek help at any time.

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

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

- Some pupils in the older year groups report disruptive behaviour in lessons. This affects the ability of other pupils in the class to listen and concentrate. Leaders need to review the actions they have already taken, and implement new measures, to ensure that classrooms are a calm and productive learning environment for all.
- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum is still under review. This means that the key knowledge that pupils must know is not yet fully identified in all subjects. Leaders should continue their work in adapting the curriculum, so that pupils build progressively and securely on their learning in all subjects.

## **Background**

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in February 2017.

## 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.

## 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>	114507
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242494
<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>	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Barbara Rayner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Pollard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.highhurstwood.e-sussex.sch.uk">http://www.highhurstwood.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 and 24 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a voluntary aided, Church of England school, within the diocese of Chichester. The previous section 48 inspection took place on 13 September 2017.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast club run by the school on-site.

## 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.
- The inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, and art. This included meeting with subject leaders and talking with staff and pupils. The inspector also visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.

- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement. They met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers, and support staff.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector spoke with the school's alliance partner, and met with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed by scrutinising records, and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and at other times of the day.
- The views of pupils, parents, and staff were considered through discussions and a review of Ofsted's surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Zoë Harris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Debbie Bennett

Ofsted Inspector

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