

Inspection of Rusper Primary School

Rusper, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 4PR

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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 enjoy attending this happy, village school. Every morning starts with a warm welcome for pupils and their families. There is very little bullying, and leaders take suitable action to follow up any incidents. Pupils like their teachers and feel safe and cared for well by them. However, significant weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements pose a potential risk to pupils. When safeguarding concerns arise, leaders do not always follow statutory processes.

Most pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They also enjoy the extra responsibility that comes with being a house captain or a school councillor. Pupils enthuse about the clubs on offer, such as those for dance, football and 'around the world'. They say that there is 'something for everyone'. The school's community events hold special, lasting memories for many pupils. These include the Victorian day, the May Day celebrations and the carol service at the local church.

In English and mathematics, most pupils realise leaders' aspiration for them to achieve well. However, weaknesses in the wider curriculum mean that pupils in key stages 1 and 2 do not achieve as well across a range of other subjects.

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

The curriculum for most foundation subjects in key stages 1 and 2 is still being developed. Leaders have not yet identified with precision what pupils need to learn and remember. Some content is left for teachers to decide, and leadership oversight of the wider curriculum in foundation subjects is not strong enough. Additionally, there are lengthy periods of time when pupils do not learn some subjects. This makes it difficult for pupils to make meaningful connections with previous learning. This is particularly so for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils' learning across the wider curriculum is patchy and not secure.

In contrast, the mathematics curriculum is well planned and coherently sequenced. This enables pupils to build their knowledge securely. Teachers regularly revisit content to help pupils remember important concepts. They also make sure that pupils with SEND are introduced to some content in advance of lessons. This helps them to be confident and better placed to understand new mathematical concepts.

Children in early years achieve well and build a strong foundation for learning in key stage 1. Staff have identified the small steps along the way that children need to learn through Reception. They have adjusted the curriculum and their assessment practices in the light of the revised early years framework and the COVID-19 pandemic. Key 'checkpoints' help staff to know how children are getting on. Staff now give even greater focus to children's communication and language and their

personal, social and emotional development. They engage children well in dialogue and help children to recognise and express their feelings.

Reading is taught well, and most pupils learn to read with ease. Staff identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and, when needed, provide extra support. However, some pupils in key stages 1 and 2 who are not yet fluent readers have reading books that are sometimes too difficult. As a result, some struggle to read fluently or experience success and enjoyment. A love of reading is not promoted well enough in the school. Leaders have recognised this and plan to give reading a higher profile and to revamp the library.

Staff keep on top of how well pupils are learning in English and mathematics. They identify pupils with additional needs and those who need more support. Staff adapt teaching activities so that all pupils can access the full curriculum. They also explain new content well. However, assessment processes in the wider curriculum are not so well established.

Staff prepare pupils well for the wider world by ensuring that they learn about different cultures, and values such as equality, tolerance and respect. They also provide good support for pupils' well-being and personal skills, including their mental health needs. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to make the most of school life.

Some pupils do not benefit fully from this work because they have often been absent from school. This reduces the opportunities they have to learn. School leaders are aware that they need to work closely with these children and their families.

Leaders have created a nurturing ethos founded on good relationships and mutual respect. Staff enjoy working at the school. Leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. They have built a strong community spirit that is especially valued by parents and carers. Most parents support the school wholeheartedly.

Although governors visit the school regularly and check many aspects of the school, they have not kept a strong enough oversight of some of the school's safeguarding arrangements. They do not have a secure understanding of what should be in place.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements potentially put pupils at risk of harm. Leaders do not have a secure understanding of statutory safeguarding requirements. This means that some adults in the school have not been properly checked, and leaders cannot be certain that they are safe to work with children. Leaders have not ensured that some concerns have been referred to other agencies, as they should have been. They have not consistently recorded the actions they

have taken in response to concerns. Leaders have also not followed the correct protocols and guidance for the sharing of confidential safeguarding information.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are significant weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements, and leaders have not followed statutory requirements. These weaknesses pose a potential risk of harm to pupils. Leaders need to take urgent action by ensuring that:
 - all the required checks for any adults working in the school are completed and recorded systematically on the school's single central record
 - they strengthen their understanding of safeguarding statutory processes and, when needed, they refer concerns promptly to partner agencies
 - record-keeping is accurate and includes leaders' decision-making and actions taken in response to concerns
 - they follow the protocols and guidance regarding information-sharing.
- The curriculum in most foundation subjects is at an early stage of development. Leaders have not identified clearly enough the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. There are also long blocks of time when pupils do not learn most foundation subjects. Consequently, some pupils are not achieving well enough, and many struggle to reconnect with previous learning. Leaders need to ensure that they identify and sequence the most important knowledge pupils need to learn and remember. They need to review their current arrangements for the teaching of foundation subjects.
- The reading books for some pupils in key stages 1 and 2 who are at an early stage of learning to read are not consistently matched well to their reading knowledge. Consequently, some pupils struggle to maintain fluency and draw meaning from the text. This risks pupils not catching up quickly and falling further behind in their reading. Leaders need to ensure that books are matched well to pupils' reading knowledge.
- The school is not doing enough to promote a love of reading. As a result, some pupils do not enjoy reading and some feel uninspired by the choice of books on offer. Leaders need to implement their plans to improve this aspect of the school's work, including their plans to improve the library.
- Leadership oversight of the curriculum in the foundation subjects is not yet in place. As a result, leaders do not understand how well the curriculum is being implemented or how well pupils are achieving in these subjects. Leaders need to strengthen their oversight of the curriculum in the foundation subjects and pupils' achievement.

- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough and have high rates of absence. This means that these pupils miss out on vital learning. Leaders need to redouble their work to reduce rates of persistent absence.

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

Unique reference number	125850
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10241799
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Worskett
Headteacher	Nicholas Avey
Website	www.rusper.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes to the leadership structure of the school. The school is led by the headteacher. Another member of staff is the teacher in charge of the school when the headteacher is not in school.
- The headteacher is currently the leader for SEND.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His 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 carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, sampled pupils' work and spoke with pupils and staff. An inspector also heard some pupils read and sampled the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair of governors. She held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead (who is also the headteacher). The lead inspector spoke with pupils and staff and considered a wide range of safeguarding documents and records. The lead inspector reviewed the school's record of checks on staff and other adults in the school.
- Inspectors took account of staff's views during meetings with them and considered their responses to Ofsted's staff survey. Inspectors gathered pupils' views through meetings with them, visits to lessons and during morning playtime.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments. An inspector spoke with parents on the morning of the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cathy Reid

Ofsted Inspector

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