

# Inspection of a good school: Stedham Primary School

School Lane, Stedham, Midhurst, West Sussex GU29 0NY

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Inspection date: 25 January 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good 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?

Pupils are happy and proud to attend this small, nurturing school. They feel safe and say, 'It feels like belonging to a family as everyone knows each other.' Pupils behave very well. The school deals with any rare incidents of bullying in a caring and supportive way. Pupils are kind to each other. Pupils say, 'We all work well together.' Older pupils who are in the same class willingly help younger pupils.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive. They say how well the school supports their child's well-being and interests. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that enrich their learning. Numerous links with local primary and secondary schools ensure that pupils can participate in a varied range of activities, such as football tournaments. Music is celebrated in the school. In class, pupils learn to play instruments, such as the ukulele. Pupils take part in many performances during their time at this school. These include music festivals with other schools.

Although there have been recent improvements in the school, leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that pupils learn consistently well in all subjects.

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

The quality of education has been impacted by a large number of staff changes. During this challenging time, leaders have had to take on additional responsibilities. Now staffing is more stable, and leaders have begun to make the changes that they know are needed.

Leaders have established a creative and ambitious curriculum for all subjects. From early years, senior leaders have identified the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and the order in which it will be learned. Leaders have recently refined their approach to identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or

disabilities (SEND). Teachers have also recently received training in how to adapt the curriculum further, so that pupils with SEND can learn well.

Although the curriculum is well structured, this is not always so evident in the classroom. Teachers do not always check how well pupils have remembered previous learning. This means that sometimes, pupils are insecure in their understanding before moving on. Teachers' expectations regarding pupils' handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are not always high enough. As a result, some pupils do not make strong gains in developing their writing.

Many staff are new to the school and so far, their professional development opportunities have been limited. This means that subject leaders do not have the expertise to check that teachers are teaching the curriculum well. Leaders are aware of this and are putting in place arrangements for staff to attend relevant courses.

Leaders place a high priority on reading. Children in early years get off to a flying start in developing their reading skills. They receive phonics lessons from the first week of school. All staff are well trained. They inspire a love of reading in pupils. The school benefits from having a children's author on the staff team who reads their own books to pupils. The new library is a relaxed place for pupils to read quietly. Pupils are encouraged to read at home regularly. They enjoy receiving reading rewards in assembly to celebrate the number of books they have read.

When designing the curriculum, leaders have given real thought to the school's rural location. Staff ensure that all pupils develop a deep appreciation of the beautiful countryside that surrounds them. In forest school, for example, pupils were fascinated by the emerging catkins. Pupils learn the importance of monitoring gradual changes in the local environment, for example in the changing bird populations. Residential trips, such as to outdoor activity centres, provide further opportunities that enrich pupils' learning.

All staff want to ensure that pupils understand important concepts, such as social justice. These are reflected in the school's values. Pupils work hard in lessons. Incidents of low-level disruption are very rare. Pupils learn about the importance of democracy and vote for school council members. Pupils are given every encouragement to stay fit and healthy both in and out of school. Regular use is made of the village amenities, such as the sports ground.

School staff are proud to be part of this school. They are very supportive of the direction that senior leaders have set. Staff say that leaders care for their well-being and ensure that their workload is manageable. Governors work well with leaders to identify the school's next steps. They ensure that strategic plans are working as intended.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. They have regular training to ensure that they can identify and help any pupils who may be at risk of harm. Safeguarding systems clearly log actions taken to address any concerns.

Pupils are confident that, if they had any worries, they could share them with a member of staff. Pupils learn how to stay safe. They know about the risks associated with the local rural area, such as not to play near farm equipment. Pupils also know about online safety, including when using social media.

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

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

- Teachers do not use effective strategies to check what pupils have learned before moving on to the next part of the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not building their learning systematically as they progress through the school. Leaders need to improve teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge so that they can implement the curriculum effectively.
- Curriculum leadership is in the early stages of development. Some leaders do not yet have a strong overview of their subject and lack the expertise required to drive improvement. Leaders need to ensure that subject leaders develop the skills to monitor the implementation of the curriculum for their subjects.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations for how well pupils can write. Pupils' handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are not developed consistently well across the school. Staff need to ensure that pupils develop appropriate handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation skills so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their 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 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 good in January 2018.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 125854   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | West Sussex  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10256527   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 43   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Jeff Ace   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Malcolm Meaby  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.stedham.w-sussex.sch.uk">www.stedham.w-sussex.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 17 and 18 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005            |

## Information about this school

- In October 2021, the school federated with Harting Church of England Primary School to form Weald and Downlands Schools Federation.
- Children in the early years phase are taught in a mixed Reception and key stage 1 class.
- The school runs a breakfast club every day. An after-school club runs every Wednesday.
- The school currently does not use any alternative provision.

## 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the governing body and spoke to a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors did deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings and records of visits to the school by the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's website and policies, met with leaders and spoke with pupils and staff. They scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including any free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Chris Parker

His Majesty's Inspector

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