

Inspection of a good school: Buxted CofE Primary School

Hurstwood Road, Buxted, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 4BB

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2023

Outcome

Buxted CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where the youngest and oldest pupils play joyfully together. Everyone feels happy and safe. In this nurturing environment, expectations are high for all. Warm relationships ensure that behaviour is positive from the classroom to the playground.

Pupils are not worried about bullying. On the very rare occasions it happens, leaders take concerns seriously and follow procedures to stop it. Pastoral care for pupils is a high priority, and all pupils can talk to trusted adults.

Teachers enrich the curriculum with experiences such as trips to the opera, local woodland areas, castles and activity centres. Pupils enjoy frequent opportunities in sports festivals and competitions. Pupils are proud to represent their school in netball, basketball, athletics, swimming and cross country. They enjoy attending clubs, including choir, drama, football and tennis. Leaders ensure that everybody can attend. The 'Farmer John' outdoor learning club is particularly popular.

Pupils love leading activities in church. They learn about democracy when electing school councillors. The 'Green team' promotes sustainability and environmental awareness across the school. Parents value opportunities to be involved in school life. Leaders organise regular open afternoons to celebrate pupils' learning. Summer concerts bring everyone together, including grandparents and local residents.

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

Leaders have worked tirelessly to renew the school curriculum, demonstrating the highest ambition for all. Every subject is well planned, with clear progression and milestones. Knowledge and skills are precisely defined. In subjects from mathematics to physical

education, pupils know and remember more, engaging in well-planned learning activities, with a sharp focus on language acquisition.

Leaders and teachers prioritise reading. Children in early years are mastering phonics as a result of high-quality teaching. Well-matched books offer consistent practice. Assessment is efficient and precise. Staff know exactly which sounds to support pupils with. This helps pupils to enjoy books fluently and to achieve highly in reading. Pupils who find it difficult receive effective one-to-one support, which has encouraged their love of reading to blossom.

Teachers show strong subject knowledge, supported by enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leaders. Pupils enjoy mathematics, with many saying it is their favourite subject. Everyone loved 'NSPCC Numbers Day'. This featured challenges such as 'I'm a mathematician, get me out of here!', where pupils searched for multiples of six with their bare feet in bowls of baked beans. Problem solving, investigation and recall of number skills are embedded across all classes. Children make a strong start in early years. They learn mathematical language and concepts to prepare them for the whole-school approach to mathematics. Pupils' work in mathematics is impressive. Helpful resources are skilfully deployed, and pupils achieve well.

Pupils' attainment in writing is weaker, but leaders are taking action to address this. Leaders are prioritising help for older pupils to improve the accuracy and presentation of their writing. Pupils' work in writing does not yet match the higher standards pupils achieve in their reading, mathematics and foundation subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are thriving. The recently appointed special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) brings expertise and dedication. Pupils are accurately assessed and tracked to identify any concerns quickly. Staff make constant improvements to include all pupils, such as adapting resources for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils with dyslexia are making strong progress in their reading. They use resources to help them, such as coloured overlays matched to their individual needs. This commitment helps pupils in their learning and boosts their independence and self-esteem.

Pupils respond well to high expectations and do not disrupt lessons. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Any minor distractions are swiftly addressed. Learning behaviour is fantastic, with high engagement from early years to Year 6. Playtime conduct is positive, but some pupils would like more activities to enjoy.

Pupils' personal development is impressive. Pupils are proud to say that 'everyone is equal', and they have warmly welcomed refugees from Ukraine, helping them to learn English. Buddies in Year 6 enjoy helping younger children every playtime. Families are positive about strong church links, and spiritual development is highly valued. Pupils regularly lead worship and assemblies. Pupils strive to be effective citizens, and the school offers curriculum work on environmental awareness. This has led to positive action, such as litter picking and protecting birds in their natural habitat.

The recently appointed board of governors brings a wealth of educational expertise. The board provides excellent strategic support, asking sharp questions to hold leaders to account. The new leadership team has reinvigorated the school after standards previously fell. Showing dedication and determination, the team has inspired significant improvements. Leaders have managed the pace of change to ensure that staff feel highly valued and supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have embedded effective systems to keep pupils safe from harm. Staff know how to identify worries and follow them up. Procedures are well understood, including whistle-blowing. Regular training and strong governance strengthen practice further. There is a culture of vigilance across the school, with all staff agreeing that 'it can happen here'.

Leaders follow up concerns and enlist extra help for families whenever needed. They communicate clearly and maintain detailed safeguarding notes. Recruitment processes are diligently managed, including robust maintenance of the single central record.

Pupils develop understanding of online safety and healthy relationships through well-planned assemblies and lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils achieve more highly in reading and mathematics than in writing. Some pupils require more support with the presentation and accuracy of their written work. Leaders must continue their work to raise standards in writing.
- Playtimes are happy and safe, but there is a limited offer of activities. As a result, some pupils do not enjoy playtimes as much as they could. Staff should ensure that there are wider opportunities at playtime for pupils to enjoy.

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

Unique reference number	114493
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10256523
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hanna Froger
Headteacher	Karen Head
Website	www.buxtedce.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Chichester. In its most recent section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character, in October 2016, the school was rated outstanding.
- There have been significant changes to staffing and governance since the last inspection, including the appointment of new leaders and a whole new governing body.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, physical education and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read.
- The inspector observed catch-up interventions to learn how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, teachers, support staff and the SENDCo.
- The inspector met six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspector studied documents and records, including the school's single central record and child protection referrals. The inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding leader, staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses. The inspector considered written correspondence from parents.
- The inspector met with pupils to learn their views of the school. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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