

# Inspection of Ewhurst CofE Aided Infant School

The Street, Ewhurst, Surrey GU6 7PX

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

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

Ewhurst is a happy, welcoming school. Pupils are kind and respectful towards others. Leaders strongly promote the school's values of respect, honesty, love, friendship, community and perseverance. Pupils enjoy their jobs, such as playtime buddies. They relish being voted onto the school council. Pupils feel safe. Bullying is not an issue. If it occurs, pupils know that staff will deal with it immediately. The vast majority of parents have highly positive views about the care and support their children receive. They say that this is a 'wonderful community'.

Pupils learn about the importance of looking after the environment. They have planted flowers and trees in the village to support the eco-system. Pupils develop their character through working in the forest school. However, pupils told inspectors that they have very few opportunities to pursue their interests, talents and hobbies.

In recent times, the school has had several changes of leadership. The quality of education is not consistently high. The curriculum in most subjects is not well planned. Teaching, including in phonics, is inconsistent. Most pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders are addressing these weaknesses, but the process is in the early stage of development.

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

Since his appointment, the interim headteacher has worked resolutely to improve the quality of education. He has brought much needed consistency and rigour. Together with his leadership team, he is prioritising the areas that need to improve urgently. However, despite these changes, there is still more work to do. The interim headteacher has galvanised team spirit. Staff feel rejuvenated and valued. There is a strong sense of ambition for what can be achieved.

Governors recognise that they need to focus their monitoring of leaders' actions more sharply. They have identified that, in the past, they did not provide sufficient challenge and accepted too much of what leaders told them without question. Leaders, governors and staff are making effective use of the training and resources arranged by the local authority.

The curriculum in most subjects is not well structured. Several subject leaders are new to their posts. Overall, they have set out broadly what pupils should learn from Reception to Year 2. However, in too many subjects and areas of learning for younger children, they have not identified precisely what they want pupils to learn and know well. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils do not learn to read as quickly and fluently as they should. This is because staff do not teach the school's chosen phonics programme effectively. The books that pupils read do not always match the sounds they learn. This is particularly the

case for some of the youngest pupils who need the most help with their reading. Leaders prioritise the promotion of pupils' love of reading. Across all year groups, they provide pupils with an interesting and diverse range of literature to choose from and share with their friends and families. Children in early years delightfully explore the books staff share.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum and school life. Leaders ensure that teachers identify the needs of pupils with SEND efficiently. Staff work well with leaders to provide pupils with SEND with support and resources that meet their individual, pastoral and emotional needs.

Pupils do not learn as well as they should. Most teachers, including staff in early years, do not check what pupils know and understand well enough, and therefore they do not identify gaps in pupils' learning. This means that pupils do not embed their knowledge as well as they should. Too often, teachers focus on making sure that pupils complete the tasks and activities provided. As a result, in too many lessons, including in early years, pupils are easily distracted and become passive.

Leaders take every opportunity to promote good attendance. Despite their efforts, the attendance of some pupils is not high enough. These pupils miss out on vital school experiences. Leaders are taking firm and decisive action to address this.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about the wider world. For instance, children in Reception learn about different cultures, religions and festivals. Pupils understand fairness, and they know that everyone is equal regardless of individual differences. Pupils find out about the history of their village and work with residents in the local care home. Leaders are now reinstating some of opportunities and wider experiences that were affected as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make thorough checks on staff and visitors. Staff are well trained. This enables them to quickly spot signs when things are not as they should be. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders respond promptly and appropriately when concerns are raised. They involve other agencies when necessary. Record-keeping has not always been timely, but leaders are now making sure that all follow-up actions are recorded promptly.

Pupils know how to stay safe online and in the locality. For example, they are aware of road safety.

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

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

- Staff do not teach the school's phonics programme effectively. The books that pupils read do not always match the sounds they learn. As a result, some of the youngest pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. Leaders need to make sure that all staff are trained to deliver phonics effectively and that the books pupils read match the sounds they learn in lessons.
- In most foundation subjects and areas of learning, the curriculum does not set out precisely the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and remember well. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is well sequenced.
- Teachers do not check and consistently address pupils' misconceptions of the concepts taught. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should provide training to develop teachers' subject expertise to ensure that pupils deepen their knowledge of the concepts they learn.
- Governors do not challenge leaders well enough to check for the impact of their actions in order to improve the quality of education. As a result, governors do not have a precise understanding of the areas that require improvement. Governors need to hold leaders to account more effectively in order to monitor the rapid improvements required.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they miss out on essential learning. Leaders should ensure that the strategies they have introduced are implemented consistently to improve the attendance of all pupils.
- Leaders do not have a well-considered approach to promoting pupils' wider interests and talents. Leaders should ensure that a broad and stimulating range of opportunities and clubs are offered to all pupils.

## **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>             | 125181   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Surrey   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10256345   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Infant   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 7   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 64   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Heather Hadfield   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Jonathan Walters (interim)   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.ewhurst.surrey.sch.uk">www.ewhurst.surrey.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 3 and 4 December 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005         |

## Information about this school

- The interim headteacher took up his post in September 2022. He is currently employed to work on a part-time basis.
- Most subject leaders took up to their roles in the previous academic year.
- A new chair of governors was appointed in October 2022. Most governors are also new to their role.
- The school is a voluntary aided Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in May 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 the interim headteacher, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also spoke on the telephone with a representative from the Diocese of Guildford, who is also a senior officer at the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. The lead inspector talked with some parents on the first morning of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered responses to the pupil survey. They met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school development plan.

## Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Vicky Matthews

Ofsted Inspector

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