

# Inspection of a good school: Plumpton Primary School

Southdowns, Plumpton Green, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3EB

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Inspection date: 4 May 2023

## Outcome

Plumpton Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

At this school, adults and pupils care about one another. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils meet these expectations well. Kindness and respect, two of the 'Plumpton Five', weave through the school. Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey agreed, with one explaining, 'The school has a wonderful, friendly environment. My children love going to school.'

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe. Pupils are not aware of any bullying in school. If pupils have a worry, they know they can talk to the adults in school or add it to the worry box. If there is any unkind behaviour or if bullying does occur, pupils are confident that adults will be quick to help them sort it out, and they do.

All pupils, including those in the early years and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study a broad curriculum. Pupils have lots of opportunities to be 'outward-looking', for example taking part in community activities such as litter picking in the village, or showcasing their artwork from their latest project in a gallery at the village hall. Pupils enjoy taking part in a range of clubs and activities and representing the school in sports events.

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

Leaders are passionate and committed to providing a well-rounded education for all pupils. They have worked with other leaders in the federation to design an ambitious project-based curriculum. This curriculum has been well thought through. Leaders have identified clearly the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and broken this down into small steps. Teachers plan activities so that pupils revisit prior learning regularly. This helps pupils to know and remember more. Most pupils with SEND successfully take part in the same learning activities as their peers. This is because leaders identify their needs early on and provide the right amount of support when needed.

Leaders prioritise reading. Book corners and a well-stocked library promote a love of reading. A highlight for pupils is the opportunity to read with the school's therapy dog, Nero. A pupil's journey to become a fluent, confident reader starts in the early years. No time is lost. Children get off to a quick start in learning phonics effectively, which then continues into key stage 1. Staff are trained well to teach phonics. Pupils read books that are matched to the phonic sounds they are learning. Support is put in place swiftly for those at risk of falling behind. This means pupils learn to read well and those who do fall behind catch up quickly.

Leaders recognise that, historically, some pupils at the end of key stage 2 have not achieved as well as they could in mathematics. Leaders have started to implement their plans to improve this. Teachers use well-chosen resources to meet the needs of the mixed-aged classes. In Reception, children develop early mathematical knowledge well through counting and recognising odd and even numbers. Within lessons, most teachers check what pupils do and do not know effectively. When this is done well, teachers adapt their teaching to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, in a few mathematics lessons this checking is not thorough enough yet. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could in mathematics.

Pupils, including those in the early years, demonstrate high levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment. Learning is rarely disrupted because pupils enjoy the activities their teachers have planned for them. Pupils get along well with each other and are proud to be members of this school and the local community. No one is left out. As part of the school's vision, 'Learners today, leaders tomorrow', pupils thrive on the opportunities given to develop their leadership skills. Year 6 pupils are proud to hold positions of responsibility within the school. Others are voted in democratically to take on roles within the eco-committee and school council.

All pupils, including those in the early years and those with SEND, take part in a range of experiences. Leaders select these experiences to deepen pupils' understanding and develop their knowledge of the wider world. For example, pupils in Year 5 visit the Natural History Museum to learn more about earthquakes and volcanoes for their 'Danger' project.

Leaders and governors support teachers well. Teachers say that leaders 'absorb' a lot of the pressure on their workload, which frees them up to do the 'most important work: teaching'. Additionally, subject leaders welcome the time given to them by leaders to work with colleagues across the federation.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of high vigilance in this school. Leaders know pupils and their families well. Adults are well trained to spot the signs of abuse. They know who and how to refer concerns on, including if any concerns should be raised about the adults who work in school. Leaders follow up concerns swiftly. They work closely with other agencies to get

pupils the support they need. Leaders and governors make sure that the required safeguarding checks are completed before adults start to work in this school.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online and when out in the local village.

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

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

- The mathematics curriculum planning has not been as well considered as the curriculum in other subjects yet. Furthermore, teachers are not always consistently checking pupils' understanding before moving on to new learning. This means some pupils do not achieve as well as they could in mathematics. Leaders should continue to monitor and implement their plans to further improve the mathematics curriculum.

## **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 June 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>	114410
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241752
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	128
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair governing body</b>	Peter Clark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stewart James (Executive Headteacher) Jonathan Hughes (Head of School)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.plumpton.e-sussex.sch.uk">www.plumpton.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Skylark Federation.
- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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 executive headteacher, head of school, other leaders, members of staff and four members of the governing body. An inspector also held a telephone discussion with a representative from East Sussex local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' written responses.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' books and curriculum plans, and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at the school's own evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. They also considered a range of safeguarding documentation.

### **Inspection team**

Clare Haines, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

James Lovell

Ofsted Inspector

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