

Inspection of a good school: Amberley CofE Primary School

School Road, Amberley, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 9NB

Inspection date: 4 May 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. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy the community feel of the school, as do parents. As one parent said, 'Amberley is a wonderful nurturing school with a real family atmosphere.' The school is calm, and pupils show respect and kindness to each other. Pupils enjoy being at school. They understand the school values, which underpin their actions and attitudes in and around school. Pupils develop positive relationships with adults and each other. Through these positive relationships, pupils develop their confidence and independence.

All pupils are taught a broad and ambitious curriculum. Most subjects within the curriculum are clearly planned and taught well. However, leaders are aware that they need to take further steps to ensure that all pupils are supported well to read fluently and confidently.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know who to speak to if they are worried about anything. They trust adults in the school to respond appropriately to the rare incidents of bullying or unkindness. Leaders' expectations for behaviour are high across the school. Staff support pupils well to meet these expectations. As a result, pupils in lessons are ready to learn. Pupils also enjoy participating in extra-curricular activities and other opportunities that complement their curriculum.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They are working closely with leaders from the school with which they are federated to strengthen the leadership and planning of subjects across the school.

Leaders are taking actions to support more pupils to read well. There is a common approach to teaching phonics across the school. Pupils have been carefully grouped to

ensure that they receive teaching that matches their current knowledge. Pupils who are struggling with their reading are quickly identified through regular assessment. However, the teaching of early reading needs further development. Pupils identified through assessment as needing support are not yet benefiting from effective, timely and targeted support. Pupils are also not yet all practising reading decodable books inside and outside of school. As a result, not all pupils are being supported to quickly develop their accuracy and fluency. There is ongoing training to provide to staff working with some of the lowest attainers, including some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The curriculum in mathematics is ambitious for all and staff have strong subject knowledge. The curriculum plans identify precise knowledge that pupils need to learn, including important vocabulary. Leaders have also carefully identified the content that pupils may have missed due to COVID-19 and have made amendments to their planning. Staff select appropriate activities to help all pupils to practise their mathematical skills and build their understanding. As a result, pupils are all well supported to know more and do more in mathematics.

In many other subjects, the content to be taught within the curriculum has been clearly identified and sequenced. In religious education (RE), for example, important content to be taught is broken down into clear steps. Pupils are able to confidently discuss similarities and differences between world faiths. They also talk passionately about the stories that teachers have shared with them.

Leaders are determined that pupils with SEND have the same opportunities as their peers. Pupils' needs are identified quickly. However, some adaptations that are made to pupils' learning are not always precise and so do not support them to make more progress. Leaders are taking action to ensure that all pupils are regularly provided with the most effective support in their lessons.

From Reception, staff encourage supportive and nurturing relationships, which help children to settle quickly and learn the shared routines of the school. Pupils respond positively to teacher instructions and feedback. They collaborate and communicate well together, including the youngest children in Reception. As a result, learning is rarely disrupted across the school.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and safety in an age-appropriate way. They confidently discuss Christian values, as well as values from other faiths and cultures. They demonstrate a clear understanding of diversity, tolerance and inclusivity. Pupils also like the sports clubs and other creative activities available to them.

Leaders' decision-making is focused on providing rich opportunities for all pupils that attend the school. They are mindful of workload demands and they take appropriate actions to support staff with well-being. Staff feel valued and respected by leaders. They are proud to be members of the school and enjoy working at the school. Governors work closely with leaders and demonstrate clear ambition for the school. As a result, those responsible for governance provide effective support and challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know their pupils and families well. They are trained to be alert to possible signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. They know what actions to take and they do this promptly. Leaders work well with external agencies to provide pupils at risk of harm with the support they need. However, while the majority of actions that leaders have taken to ensure the safety of some vulnerable pupils have been recorded, the completion of actions is not always clear.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Written safeguarding records do not always accurately provide all details of the decisions reached and actions taken. This means that some records do not always reflect the actions leaders have taken to keep pupils safe. Leaders must ensure that record-keeping is accurate and demonstrates the actions they have taken to keep pupils safe.
- Not all pupils are well supported to catch up quickly if they need additional support to learn to read. Some books that children are reading do not yet match the sounds that they know and some additional support that pupils receive is not yet regular and precise. Leaders must ensure that struggling readers receive appropriate and specific practise in reading at school.
- Pupils with SEND have been accurately identified. However, they are not yet consistently receiving effective support within their lessons. This means that some pupils with SEND are not able to achieve as well as they could within the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that teachers are provided with clear guidance to support all pupils and that the support in place is closely monitored.

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	125970
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10268939
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	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ray Jackson
Executive Headteacher	Lizzie Martin
Website	http://www.amberleyschool.com
Date of previous inspection	30 and 31 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with another primary school. The executive headteacher took up her post in September 2021.
- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in September 2016.
- 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. 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 these subjects: early reading, mathematics and RE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, observed pupils at work, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The lead inspector also looked at curriculum documentation from relationships and health education.

- Inspectors held meetings with leaders from across the school. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also had a telephone call with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the Diocese of Chichester.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation and relevant school policies, including leaders' own evaluation of the effectiveness of the school and their plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors talked to a wide range of pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- Safeguarding records were scrutinised, including the single central record, records of referrals and evidence of leaders' actions. Inspectors also spoke to staff and pupils about this area of the school's work.
- Inspectors considered 19 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 10 free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 11 responses to the staff survey and 15 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils to gather their views.

Inspection team

Hanna Miller, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Martin Smith

His Majesty's Inspector

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