

Inspection of a good school: Steyning CofE Primary School

Shooting Field, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3RQ

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 October 2023

Outcome

Steyning CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and successful school. Staff have high expectations of pupils, both in terms of what they can achieve and how they behave. Pupils rise to meet these expectations willingly and do well as a result. They are proud to represent the school values of being happy, collaborative, curious, brave and showing respect and love. Relationships across the school are warm, supportive and positive.

Behaviour in the school is settled and calm. Pupils move around the school site sensibly, and lesson transitions are orderly. Pupils play well together at social times, using the large outside space, which includes a 'reading shed', and other activities to engage them. There are clear routines in place when pupils transition back into lessons, and this happens seamlessly, without staff intervention.

Pupils are proud to hold positions of responsibility, such as being pupil librarians, 'playground buddies', house captains and members of the school and eco-councils. They take these responsibilities seriously and talk with pride about the difference they get to make to their school community. They feel safe, and they know how to raise any worries they may have, whether that is with their trusted adults or the 'caterpillars' nurture support.

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

Across subjects, the school has identified the knowledge and skills that pupils should know, planning this from the early years upwards. This ensures that effective foundations for learning are being established from the start. Pupils talk about their learning with enthusiasm and focus, and they show solid understanding of the concepts they are taught. As a result, pupils achieve well. Behaviour in lessons is settled, and pupils are keen and motivated to learn. They are keen to ask and answer questions, and they often choose activities that will stretch them and make them think.

In lessons, staff have a variety of methods to check what pupils know and understand. They give pupils time to think and discuss their ideas. They pick any misconceptions up quickly and address them swiftly, thus preventing further misunderstanding. This is especially strong in mathematics, where staff probe pupils, not only on how to reach the right answers, but also to think about the best method for securing this. This develops pupils' understanding further. In phonics sessions, staff listen carefully to ensure that children pronounce their sounds accurately. They ensure that children develop the knowledge and fluency they need to become confident, accurate readers.

In many subjects, end-of-unit assessments are used to gauge what pupils have remembered, as well as to inform staff about how the learning that comes afterwards needs adapting. These adaptations are carefully considered to support all pupils in making progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this assessment is not yet embedded in some foundation subjects, meaning that, sometimes, the school does not always have the same sense of how pupils are achieving in these subjects, or what they have remembered in the longer term.

Reading is prioritised across the school. For example, pupils enjoy visiting the library, which is a central hub. They have regular reading assemblies run by the librarian, and pupil librarians support the running of the library by, for example, writing to authors to facilitate engagement with their school. The 'Book Rocks' project is an example of this, and pupils proudly talk about the stones they display in the library that are illustrated by authors to promote reading. The school also has a 'reading army' of volunteers, who come in and share stories with pupils.

The wider development of pupils is especially strong. Pupils learn about different careers from the local community and beyond. They also learn about the importance of safety through visits from the police, the fire service and water safety speakers. Pupils also engage in community days, and the recent 'theme week' taught pupils about different cultures in the local area and beyond.

The school is reflective and acts swiftly where change is needed. Leaders measure the impact of their work carefully. There have been recent changes to leadership, with the introduction of an interim headteacher. However, this has not prevented the school from moving forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is not yet well embedded in some foundation subjects. As a result, staff do not know how much knowledge pupils have remembered in these subjects. They do not routinely use this information to inform the next steps of teaching. The school

needs to ensure that all foundation subjects develop a systematic approach to assessment, as is evident in early reading and mathematics.

- Leaders have identified the small steps of component knowledge and skills in each subject for their curriculum maps. However, there is not yet in place a systematic process for supporting pupils to retain their learning over time. The school needs to continue to develop this system to support pupils in being able to connect their learning and retain this in the longer term.

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 March 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 125996 |
| Local authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 10287967 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 387 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Mary Smith |
| Headteacher | Sue Harrison (Headteacher) Simon Phipps (Interim Headteacher) |
| Website | www.steyningprimary.org.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 21 and 22 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school has a specialist support centre on site for pupils with speech, language and communication needs, known as 'Robins'.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Chichester. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in January 2020.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also held telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and from the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of the views of parents, carers and staff through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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