

Inspection of a good school: Ashdown Primary School

Luxford Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2HW

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 November 2023

Outcome

Ashdown Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders ensure that pupils experience a broad curriculum offer. The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement from early years onwards. Staff make sure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), usually achieve well. Pupils learn to celebrate difference so that everyone is welcomed. The school's ambitious physical education (PE) curriculum helps pupils to appreciate the challenges of having a physical disability.

Behaviour in lessons is calm. This supports pupils to focus on their learning. Staff use the school's behaviour curriculum to help pupils understand how to behave responsibly. The school ensures that all pupils have a trusted adult to speak to about any worries. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils engage in a variety of events and roles to help them become confident members of the community. This includes extra-curricular clubs to build enthusiasm for lifelong learning. Pupils enjoy visits and benefit from guest speakers and workshops to bring the curriculum to life. They are proud of their many leadership roles, including the 'Ashdown Actioneers', who are elected by their fellow pupils. They raise issues with leaders on behalf of the pupil body. Pupils also relish other roles, including peer mediators, digital leaders and Fairtrade ambassadors.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum that begins in early years and builds knowledge in a sequenced way throughout the school. For example, the PE curriculum coherently develops pupils' skills and understanding over time within a variety of sports. In Reception, staff are skilled at developing children's understanding in a language-rich environment. Staff teach the essential key concepts to ensure that children are ready for Year 1. For example, children are supported to learn appropriate vocabulary so they have

the correct language to talk about mathematics. In the rest of the school, the teaching of mathematics is not as strong as it could be. As a result, pupils' fluency with number is slower. Leaders are taking action to remedy this.

The teaching of reading is effective. Recently, the school has refined how they teach phonics to ensure it is taught in a consistent manner. These improvements are positively impacting on pupils' progress as they are learning and remembering more. Staff are well trained and they support weaker readers to keep up. As a result, pupils develop into confident and fluent readers.

Staff use assessment well to help pupils to learn and remember the curriculum. This supports leaders' high ambition for all pupils, including those with SEND. There are clear procedures, to help staff identify pupils with additional needs, which start from the moment children enter the school in Reception. The school knows these pupils well and understands the barriers to their learning. Staff are skilled at checking pupils' understanding and using this information to inform their teaching for individuals and groups. This supports pupils to make secure progress across the curriculum. However, the school recognises the need to strengthen communication with parents so that they are supported to fully engage with their child's learning.

Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and during playtimes. Staff follow clear and consistent systems and routines to maintain a calm environment. The school makes efforts to acknowledge and praise positive behaviour, including individual pupil's improvements. Pupils relish the 'Friday Choc-Choc' celebration. The school provides a stimulating and enjoyable environment for pupils to learn and develop friendships and interests. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils' wider development is well considered. Staff teach them about important issues in the wider world and how to become an active and positive citizen. This includes learning how to support the local community. They also study how to look after the environment and develop an awareness of sustainability issues. The school supports pupils to participate in charity work, including selecting the charity they wish to support. The school helps pupils to raise money for these causes. This helps pupils to develop respect and consideration for others.

Governors know the school very well and are appropriately placed to fulfil their statutory duties. They understand the school's strengths and know what needs further improvement. Staff report that leaders at all levels are aware of their well-being and take active steps to improve their workload. Consequently, staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of mathematics needs further refinement. As a result, pupils from Year 1 onwards are not as fluent in number as they should be and so learning is slowed. The school should support staff to accurately check pupils' understanding and use this information to design precise tasks and adapt their future teaching so that pupils achieve highly.

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 May 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 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

Unique reference number	114392
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10287856
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Whiteley
Headteacher	Katherine Owbridge
Website	www.ashdown.e-sussex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is split across two sites which are just under a mile apart from each other. One site is the infants and the other site is the Junior school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational 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 leaders and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing committee and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. 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. The inspector also listened to pupils read.

- 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 reviewed a range of documents provided by the school. These included the school self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, the pupil premium statement and minutes from governing body meetings.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and in lessons.
- The views of parents, staff and pupils were considered through Ofsted's online surveys and conversations during the inspection.

Inspection team

Michael Eggleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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