

Inspection of a good school: Orchards Junior School

Nelson Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN12 6EN

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

Outcome

Orchards Junior School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Paul Jones. This school is part of the Sparkle Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Neale.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive many opportunities to 'sparkle' in this inclusive school. A vast range of clubs and trips develop pupils' many interests and talents. Pupils are creative. They proudly perform in whole school dance shows and impressive drama productions. The curriculum provides pupils with purposeful 'extended learning opportunities', such as visits to The Globe to watch plays that pupils explore in English lessons. The school ensures that all pupils receive a rich range of cultural experiences that extend their learning beyond the classroom. This helps pupils to be confident and articulate and eager to learn.

A culture of inclusion runs through the heart of the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by expert staff to achieve their best. Specialist speech and language and communication support enables pupils with SEND in 'Aspen Class' to learn well. Specialist help enables pupils to overcome any barriers they may face to learn well.

Staff insist on high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils behave very well and try their best. Those that need additional help to manage their behaviour receive effective support. Pupils proudly wear many badges on their school ties as a symbol of them upholding the school's 'Sparkle' values, such as 'keep trying'.

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

The curriculum has been meticulously designed to provide pupils with the essential knowledge they need to be well prepared for the next stage of education. The curriculum in every subject builds in a logical way to help pupils make connections between different concepts. Teachers design learning to help pupils apply their knowledge across different subjects. For example, when completing field work about the Arun River, pupils explore

not only how the river formed, but its historical significance through time. A well-selected range of interesting texts supports pupils' literacy. Dedicated library sessions and regular reading quizzes motivate pupils to read often. There is a sharp focus on pupils acquiring subject specific vocabulary when learning new topics. Consequently, most pupils can communicate their ideas clearly in their work.

A significant minority of pupils join the school unable to read as well as they should. The school's newly planned approach to support these pupils is not yet in place. Consequently, these pupils are not always supported by staff with appropriate phonics expertise. This means that some staff cannot identify and address gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. Consequently, some of these pupils are not able to make rapid improvements in their reading skills. This potentially impacts how well they can read in subjects across the rest of the curriculum.

The school does not always intervene as robustly as they could when pupils' attendance starts to decline. This means that a minority of pupils miss out on essential learning. This puts them at risk of falling behind in their education. The majority of pupils, however, keenly come to school and behave very well. They are thoughtfully kind and considerate of their peers. An ethos of respect and tolerance ensures that all pupils feel happy and included in this school.

The school's approach to developing pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils learn to take care of their health and well-being. They demonstrate citizenship through raising money for their chosen charities. A wealth of pupil leadership roles means that pupils make a tangible contribution to the positive and inclusive culture of the school. Successes in local and national sporting competitions are a testament to pupils' commendable positive attitudes and effort.

Every member of staff has an unwavering commitment to supporting pupils to thrive. The school consistently evaluates the impact of its work through a culture of professional challenge and staff development. Staff and parents speak highly of the committed leadership and sense of unity upheld by all. As one parent commented, 'Orchards school feels like a family and my children are proud to be a part of it.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Reading support for those at the earlier stages of reading is not yet fully effective at identifying and closing gaps in reading knowledge and skills. This means these pupils do not learn to read as well as they should. The school must ensure that all staff have the training, expertise and resources that they need to deliver phonics effectively in a way that helps pupils become fluent readers.

- The school does not intervene quickly enough when pupils do not attend school well. Consequently, some pupils miss out on the many opportunities and vital education that the school provides. The school should continue to strengthen their work in ensuring that pupils get the help they need to attend regularly.

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 September 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

Unique reference number	142381
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10296431
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	479
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Neale
Headteacher	Paul Jones
Website	www.orchardsjunior.school
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Sparkle Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school has a specialist resource provision for 13 pupils with speech, language and communication needs. This provision is called Aspen Class.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also met with representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- The lead 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. They also listened to some pupils read aloud to familiar adults.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead 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 lead inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life. They also took account of the views of parents, carers and staff through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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