

# Inspection of a good school: Bonners CofE School

School Hill, Maresfield, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 2EG

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Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

## Outcome

Bonnars CofE School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils. All staff and governors are committed to excellence in every aspect of the school's work. Pupils feel safe and are very happy. They make a wonderful start to their school lives through exceptional provision in the early years. In Nursery, staff focus on developing language clearly at the earliest stages of children's learning. Staff use songs, rhymes and stories to help to create magical learning environments where children thrive. This supports disadvantaged pupils, in particular, to achieve well. By the end of key stage 2, almost all pupils achieve highly in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils have positive relationships with staff and each other. The behaviour policy is understood across the staff team and applied fairly and consistently. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities that help pupils to build confidence, independence and readiness for their next stage of education. Pupils enjoy their roles and responsibilities, such as pupil governors, play leaders and buddies, to help and support each other. Bullying issues are taken very seriously by the school. Incidents are dealt with robustly and resolved quickly. Pupils' good attendance and punctuality are supported effectively. This ensures that all pupils attend school regularly.

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

Pupils know the school's values of 'kindness, love and respect,' and can describe what these mean clearly. The school works thoughtfully to enrich learning through an extensive programme of activities in the local environment and visitors to the school. For example, author visits, sports activities and outdoor learning are all used to support pupils' learning greatly. The school's work with the local church and volunteers has a strong, positive impact on pupils' wider development. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. They talk enthusiastically about drama, netball, archaeology and music clubs. Disadvantaged pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit consistently from these inclusive activities. Pupils with SEND have their needs identified quickly, and the school works effectively with external

agencies, where necessary, to ensure that pupils with SEND access the curriculum successfully. However, some pupils with SEND do not have precise enough targets to help teachers shape support in lessons. This means that they do not achieve as highly as possible.

In core subjects, the curriculum is strong. Teaching in English inspires pupils to read and write independently and recommend ambitious books to each other. Book swaps, the school library and 'Secret Reader' events all contribute to helping pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils learn to read securely. If any pupils fall behind their peers, they are given close support that helps them to catch up quickly. Reading books are closely matched to the sounds that pupils have learned. Staff have very secure phonics knowledge, and the phonics scheme is implemented consistently well. In mathematics, learning is strong. Lessons are sequenced carefully to help pupils build knowledge cumulatively. Pupils use efficient and effective strategies to work out solutions to increasingly complex problems. They have a positive approach to mathematics. One pupil said, 'Mathematics is like art – we can draw and think our way to the answers.' Disadvantaged pupils receive extra support, where needed, and are equally confident in their learning. Staff have effective strategies to check how well pupils have learned. They use assessment to ensure effectively that pupils are making progress through the core curriculum.

In wider curriculum subjects, although pupils are developing their knowledge increasingly well, they are not achieving as highly. Pupils make a strong start in early years and build on this over time. In geography, for example, mapping skills, fieldwork and curriculum visits, such as farm visits, all support pupils' learning well. Some pupils use subject-specific vocabulary in context confidently. However, some pupils are not as secure in retaining the key knowledge that they need because activities that teachers use do not consistently promote a depth of learning. This means some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

The school engages with parents and carers highly effectively. Parents appreciate the care and support for all children shown by the whole staff team. Staff feel supported with their workload and talk about the 'family feel' and close community. Governors know the strengths and areas to develop of the school well. They offer support and challenge to school leaders and are ambitious for all pupils at the school. Governors clearly prioritise pupils' achievement and well-being, with a focus on maintaining the school's distinct, caring ethos.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The needs of some pupils with SEND are not supported as effectively as they could be. The school does not identify these pupils' next steps in learning with sufficient

precision. The school should ensure that the curriculum is planned and adapted in ways that support all pupils with SEND as effectively as possible.

- In some foundation subjects, activities and opportunities to deepen and strengthen learning are not as effective as they could be. This means that some pupils are not building on their prior knowledge and achieving as highly as they could. The school should ensure that pedagogical approaches across the wider curriculum are developed successfully across the staff team to help all pupils to achieve the highest outcomes.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2014.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114511
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10313342
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Hanna Froger
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ewa Wilson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bonners.e-sussex.sch.uk">www.bonners.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school currently does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of South Ashdown Federation and is federated with Buxted CofE Primary School.

## 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 met with the headteacher, the staff and the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also met with a representative from the local authority and the diocese, and other leaders within the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and, where possible, 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 considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. He gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

### **Inspection team**

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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