

Inspection of a good school: Danehill Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Danehill, Haywards Heath, East Sussex RH17 7JB

Inspection date: 12 June 2024

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. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy, confident and enthusiastic learners at this friendly, welcoming school. Relationships across the school are relaxed, warm and supportive. Pupils strive to meet the expectations of staff, who are ambitious for every pupil to achieve their best. Pupils' successes and growing interests are shared, encouraged and celebrated by staff.

Pupils are motivated to learn. However, their achievement in some subjects is varied. This is because the school has not ensured that pupils learn key curriculum knowledge in a logical order. This means pupils are not always learning as much as they could.

Pupils enjoy school. They like how their curriculum includes meaningful experiences such as outdoor woodland learning and opportunities to plant and tend to trees and nature. The school is well connected to the local community and pupils benefit from regular activities at the recreation ground or listening to local visitors explain about life in the past.

Playtimes are full of opportunities to explore and socialise together. Pupils get along well, whether playing games or working together to move branches during woodland play. They are kind to each other and mutual respect is evident throughout the school. They generally behave well.

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

The school's curriculum aims to ensure learning is enjoyable and engaging for pupils. The school has a clear understanding of how they want pupils to learn, but has not given sufficient attention to structuring what knowledge will be taught when. As a result, pupils' knowledge does not build effectively over time. Staff know that more rigour is needed for pupils to develop their understanding in well sequenced steps towards national curriculum

endpoints. Work to provide this structure to the curriculum has begun, but there is more to do to ensure key curriculum content is planned and taught so pupils are fully prepared for the next stages of their education.

Actions to strengthen the curriculum for early reading have been effective. Pupils learn to read quickly and well. Phonics is taught systematically by well trained staff. Right from the start in Reception, children demonstrate delight in building and reading words. Any pupils who struggle or join the school later without the phonics knowledge they need are given the help they need to catch up quickly.

Reading is prioritised and valued across the school. Older pupils relish regular book club sessions to prepare and share snippets of the texts they are reading. This forms the basis of rich discussions about characters, plots and styles of writing. Shared stories are carefully selected to build on what pupils are learning or introduce them to new ideas.

In some subjects, such as English and mathematics, there are clear systems to check what pupils know and remember. This helps staff to ascertain the next steps for pupils. This includes pupils with SEND. These pupils have their needs clearly identified and staff look to remove specific barriers to learning and provide effective support. In other subjects, however, what pupils know and can remember before moving learning on is not always checked. This means learning does not always help pupils build on what they already know and can do.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils' personal development. For example, all pupils in Year 5 have training to become play leaders. Year 6 pupils are peer mediators and take pride in supporting younger pupils to make friends and resolve conflict. Pupils learn about themselves and others through a well-designed personal development curriculum which includes learning about a range of faiths and places of worship.

In lessons and around the school, pupils mostly behave well. Pupils listen to instructions and work well individually or in groups. Pupils are articulate and confident. They listen to each other and build on ideas and suggestions well. The school is working with parents to help support regular school attendance. There is evidence that this is beginning to have an impact. However, too many pupils do not attend school as well as they should.

Parents are very positive about the school. They like the caring atmosphere and describe their children as 'flourishing'. One parent summed up the views of many in describing the school as 'a little gem'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not precisely identify what knowledge pupils need to learn and when in every subject. Consequently, pupils' learning does not always build towards clearly defined curriculum aims. The school needs to make further improvements to ensure subjects are coherently planned and sequenced so that pupils build their knowledge over time.
- Approaches to check what pupils know and remember are not effective in the foundation subjects. Teachers therefore do not always have the information they need to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning. The school should ensure teachers effectively check pupils' learning across the school's curriculum.
- The school's work on improving the attendance of pupils who do not regularly attend school is not yet having sufficient impact. These pupils therefore miss important learning. The school should continue to work with pupils and their families to further improve attendance.

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 2019.

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	114499
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10321797
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	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nick Kirby-Jones
Headteacher	Katie Jones
Website	www.danehillcepschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2022.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Chichester. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in January 2023.
- 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 education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with school leaders. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the governing body and had telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Chichester.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspectors talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including aspects such as their workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons and at playtime.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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