

Inspection of an outstanding school: Netherfield C of E Primary School

Darvel Down, Netherfield, Battle, East Sussex TN33 9QF

Inspection date: 4 July 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding 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 enjoy spending time in this friendly, rural school. They behave exceptionally well and form very positive relationships with one another. Staff show genuine care for their pupils. This ensures that pupils are happy and feel safe. Pupils readily uphold the school values of friendship and compassion. Older pupils act as buddies to children in the early years. This helps to create a culture in the school where everyone cares. Playtimes are busy and happy times for pupils. They relish riding on bikes and playing games with one another. As one pupil said, 'I love this school because it feels like a family.'

The school is ambitious for its pupils. While the progress of some pupils in national tests in 2023 was low, the school has put in place new approaches to the delivery of the curriculum to address this. Pupils experience a curriculum that interests them and inspires them to learn. They relish the opportunities to learn beyond the classroom, including visits to local historical sites, attending performances in local theatres and visiting the school's forest school area. These activities enhance their understanding of what they learn in class.

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

The school provides a curriculum that matches the needs and interests of the pupils well. The school leadership team has re-formed in the past two years and has acted swiftly to refine the curriculum. Leaders work closely with governors to ensure that the improvements needed are enacted effectively. Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable and support teachers to develop their class practice. This creates a culture of collaboration where teachers work together to share practice that has a positive impact on pupils. The school ensures that teachers' workload is manageable, helping them to focus on their time in class. Teachers provide meaningful adaptations to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps pupils to access learning

alongside their peers in class. Pupils in mixed-age classes develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum broadly well. However, in some subjects, such as history, the steps in learning are less well thought through. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils develop a love of reading. Children in the early years quickly gain the phonic skills needed to learn how to read unfamiliar words well. They explore what they learn in class in the vibrant outdoor area. Children read books in the reading shed and practise writing through play activities. This prepares them well for the move into key stage 1. Teachers support pupils who have fallen behind in their reading to catch up swiftly. Older pupils develop their reading skills well. Daily reading sessions provide pupils with a wide range of reading opportunities. Teachers use skilful questioning to draw out pupils' understanding of the texts read.

Teachers' activities enthuse and interest pupils. The school ensures that staff receive relevant and helpful training. This helps staff to deliver the curriculum well. For example, the introduction of a new approach to teaching mathematics has helped pupils who have fallen behind in their mathematics to catch up. The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND well. Staff nurture pupils' emotional needs and help them to develop their confidence. Adults support pupils in a sensitive and helpful way in class. They use a range of adaptations that guide pupils to make sense of what they learn. However, in some subjects, teachers do not ensure that pupils remember subject knowledge well enough.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Children in the early years listen well and show very positive attitudes to learning. Older pupils respect the views of others and remain focused on learning. While some pupils' attendance is low, the school works diligently with families to strengthen attendance. This is a high priority for the school.

Pupils receive an impressive range of wider opportunities. The school welcomes families and visitors from different faiths to speak to pupils. This broadens pupils' knowledge of a range of cultures. Pupils attend clubs that develop their interests and personal talents well. Older pupils attend residential trips and take part in activities that build their confidence. Pupils appointed as school councillors provide a resounding voice in the school. This helps pupils to understand the democratic process. Pupils compete in sporting competitions across a network of local schools. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their transition to secondary school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not retain what they have learned in some subjects with enough clarity. This is because learning draws on too much information and can overload pupils' working memory, limiting what pupils know and can recall. Teachers need to help

pupils to focus on and record what needs to be learned and remembered so that pupils retain and readily recall what they learn.

- The progression of knowledge in some subjects is not designed carefully enough. This means that some pupils do not connect what they learn in order to secure the knowledge needed. Leaders need to provide teachers with manageable steps in all curriculum subjects to ensure that teachers are clear about the sequence of what is taught and when.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in February 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	114514
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10341333
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jenny Dudgeon
Headteacher	Laura Collins
Website	www.netherfield.e-sussex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England (voluntary controlled) school and is part of the Diocese of Chichester.
- The school provides a breakfast club on site.
- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and a range of staff at the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about

their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.

- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors spoke to staff and pupils during the inspection and took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- 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.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Matt Batchelor

Ofsted Inspector

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