

Inspection of Catsfield Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Catsfield, Battle, East Sussex TN33 9DP

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy, safe and thriving in this caring and ambitious village school. The vision to 'nurture the spirit, grow the mind and love your neighbour' is fulfilled daily by joyful pupils and dedicated staff. Behaviour is positive from the classroom to the playground. Expectations are high for all. Published test results were weaker in 2023, but pupils' attainment is now strong across the curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are achieving well.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. In the caring early years environment through to responsibilities in key stage 2, pupils blossom with extensive enrichment. The school brings out the best in everyone. Pupils' talents are promoted and celebrated from the sports pitch to the theatre. Trips and visits provide inspiration for learning. There are endless opportunities including geography fieldwork, science celebrations and historical enquiry. These rich experiences are accessible to all. The school ensures that disadvantaged pupils benefit particularly well from this impressive offer.

The school prioritises pupils' mental health, well-being and character development throughout the curriculum and school life. Pupil leadership roles are widespread. Year 6 buddies proudly support children in Reception. The elected school councillors are proactive, making a tangible difference to the community.

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

Children have settled and adapted to school life well in early years. They are learning sounds accurately with effective support from the caring staff team. The sharp focus on early reading continues into Year 1 and beyond. Teachers check gaps and provide swift help to stop anyone falling behind. Staff are well-trained, ensuring that catch up activities provide an essential boost for any pupils who struggle. Pupils become fluent, confident, and motivated readers. The school's approach to mathematics is also consistent across the four classes. As a result, pupils now show secure understanding of mathematical concepts and procedures by the end of key stage 2. Published tests in mathematics reflected poor progress in 2023, but this subject is now a strength, with pupils producing high-quality work.

All subjects are planned well from early years to Year 6. The school has diligently defined the essential knowledge, skills and language they want pupils to learn. Subject expertise is strong across staff as a result of ongoing training and collaboration with local schools. Teachers bring learning to life with role play, drama and high-quality interaction. In history, pupils learn about civil rights and racism, taking inspiration from Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. Local trips and real artefacts make learning hands-on and memorable. This means that pupils become engaged and immersed. Most pupils learn and remember key content well over time, aided by the way teachers check their understanding. Curriculum improvements need more time to embed to ensure that every lesson is taught as consistently well as the best.

Conduct around school is calm and purposeful. Relationships are warm, caring and kind. When staff remind pupils of expectations, they respond well and are particularly proud to win 'values points' for their positive behaviour. The school has worked diligently to ensure that pupils attend school well, reducing persistent absence to well below national average. This effort must continue, as some pupils with SEND do not attend highly enough, which means they miss out on high-quality support provided by the school.

Personal development is excellent. Across the classes, a focus on multicultural awareness has developed understanding of different faiths, providing excellent preparation for the modern world. 'Values days' celebrate a different school value every term. 'Life Skills' books showcase pupils' excellent understanding of mental, physical and emotional health. Pupils learn to reflect, and this has nurtured an inclusive mindset for all. Pupils are passionate about standing up to prejudice. They show secure understanding of online safety, healthy relationships, and environmental issues.

Leaders have secured improvements with dedication and compassion. The leadership team is relatively new and has engaged well with external support. Staff morale is high. Everyone feels supported, happy and proud. Governors fulfil duties well, harnessing expertise across the governing body to support functions such as school finance. Some parents and carers have had concerns about support for pupils with SEND in the past. SEND provision is now a strength. Staff sharply identify when pupils need extra support and put extensive help in place, from individual resources to targeted intervention activities. This support is given with expertise and kindness to help pupils blossom academically and emotionally. Many parents are pleased with this effective provision, saying that their children are 'flourishing' and 'achieving their very best as part of a caring community'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the recent curriculum improvements need more time to embed. As a result, some pupils do not learn and remember knowledge securely across the whole curriculum. The school must ensure that teaching is consistently effective so that pupils achieve highly across all subjects.

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	114494
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10341331
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	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carol Feltwell
Headteacher	John Barnes
Website	www.catsfieldcep.e-sussex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 October 2013

Information about this school

- This school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Chichester. The school last received a section 48 inspection in October 2017, and is due to be inspected again by October 2025.
- In the last two years, there have been significant changes in leadership, including the appointment of the current headteacher, deputy headteacher and SENDCo.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, teachers, SENDCo and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with five governors, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with representatives from the diocese and local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors also discussed and evaluated pupils' work in geography, art and design, computing and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).
- The lead inspector listened to a range of pupils read. The inspector observed catch-up interventions to learn how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- 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.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils to learn their views about the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of parents, considered written correspondence from parents, and took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Harry Ingham

His Majesty's Inspector

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