

Inspection of a good school: Northchapel Community Primary School

Pipers Lane, Northchapel, Petworth, West Sussex GU28 9JA

Inspection date:

15 February 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and parents hold this school in high regard. One parent described Northchapel as 'a small school with a big heart'. This sums up its ethos. Pupils get on with each other very well. They like their small school and feel safe. During playtimes pupils enjoy playing with their friends and having a chat. Pupils are polite and respectful. They behave well in lessons so that they and others can learn. Bullying is very rare. Pupils say that teachers deal with incidents quickly and they do not recur.

Leaders and teachers aspire for pupils to be curious in the different subjects they learn. Pupils particularly enjoy subjects that are practical, such as physical education, art and science. Outdoor learning, clubs and visits further afield help to make learning interesting. Pupils are getting better at mathematics. Their work is not as strong in some subjects, such as English, as it is in others. This is because some subjects are not as well planned as they should be.

Pupils help their school community. They enjoy being librarians, supporting the younger pupils and participating in the school council. Pupils think carefully about their environment and sustainability issues.

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

Teachers know all pupils in the school very well. This supports positive attitudes towards learning. The school's nurturing approach starts in the early years. Here, the adults respond to children's interests well and provide exciting activities. Children enjoy learning through outdoor experiences. In summer, for instance, children like helping a local farmer by making scarecrows.

Pupils are enthusiastic mathematicians. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to revisit and review previous learning regularly. Children in the early years use practical apparatus successfully to understand how numbers work. As pupils move through the school, they become more adept at applying previous learning. They remember important concepts and tackle more-challenging work with increasing confidence. However, teachers do not always use assessment effectively enough to ensure that all pupils learn as well as they should, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Children make an early start to learning phonics in the Nursery. They make strong progress through Reception and Year 1. Pupils who fall behind in phonics are given the help they need to catch up. In the past, a few pupils have developed gaps in their phonics knowledge. Leaders wisely introduced a new phonics programme in January 2022 to address these gaps. However, not all staff have completed training to deliver the new phonics programme with complete confidence. Pupils love to read. They enjoy the inspiring stories their teachers read and talk eagerly about favourite books.

Leaders are making improvements to the English curriculum through more-effective links between composition and grammar. Pupils appreciate their teachers showing them how to improve their writing. They are encouraged to use challenging vocabulary and sentence structure. Pupils of all ages usually learn the same content in the school's mixed-age classes. This means that the work set for the youngest pupils in the class, and those with SEND, does not follow on sufficiently from what they already know and can do. The work is too hard for some pupils, and undemanding for others.

Leaders have recently revised the curriculum structure for many of the foundation subjects. They have thought about what content needs to go where and have selected engaging topics and activities. This work is at a very early stage and subject planning remains unclear. For example, planning in subjects such as history does not ensure that teaching builds on what children learn in the Reception class well enough.

Governors know the school well. They are a force for improvement and offer effective support to the headteacher. Staff say that leaders are considerate about their workload. They are positive about the recent curriculum initiatives the headteacher has introduced.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the implementation of the synthetic phonics programme, the coherence of curriculum planning, and the extent to which it meets all pupils' needs, may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are well trained to spot any signs of abuse and to identify when pupils are at risk of harm. The school has comprehensive systems in place for safeguarding. Leaders follow through any concerns, making timely referrals to partner agencies when appropriate.

From an early age, pupils are taught to speak out if they feel unsafe. They know who they can go to if they have any worries. They trust the adults in school to help them.

Staff use an online resource to help them understand the latest risks that pupils might meet when using information technology. The school has also made this resource available to help parents.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not learn as well as they should in English and the foundation subjects. This is because the work set for pupils is not matched accurately enough to pupils' needs, including for pupils with SEND. Leaders need to make sure that teachers use assessment consistently well so that teaching builds securely on what pupils can do. This will help all pupils to achieve success.
- Curriculum planning is not sequenced to identify clearly what pupils need to know and remember in every subject, including in English. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is coherently planned in all subjects, from early years through to Year 6. This will help pupils to know more and remember more as they progress through the school.
- The school has recently introduced a new phonics programme. Not all staff have had the training they need to be able to teach the phonics programme effectively. Leaders should provide suitable staff training in the teaching of phonics. They should check that the programme's implementation is securely and consistently embedded. This will ensure that all pupils gain the phonics knowledge they need to become fluent readers.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2011.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	125846
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10201085
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anthea Martin-Jenkins
Headteacher	Deborah Coggin
Website	www.northchapel.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up her post in an acting capacity in September 2019 and was appointed to the substantive role in July 2020.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has taken over the management of the on-site nursery, Little Oaks. It offers provision for two- and three-year-old children. Most two-year old children attend part-time.
- The school has breakfast and after-school clubs, which are open to pupils who attend the school and are managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and curriculum leaders. They also spoke with four governors, including the chair of governors, and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, held a discussion with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central record. They also met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the school's safeguarding records and spoke with pupils.

Inspection team

Linda Jacobs, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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