

Inspection of Ashurst CofE Primary School

School Lane, Ashurst, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3AY

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 September 2024

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this village school. They are happy and build strong relationships with each other. Pupils know that staff are there to help and support them, and they know who to turn to if they have any worries. Consequently, as parents rightly summed up, it has a 'strong sense of community' and 'encourages every child to be the best they can be'.

Pupils respond eagerly to the school's high expectations and aspirations for their achievement. Pupils behave very well. They rarely need reminding to do their best and they achieve well across a broad range of subjects. When needed, the school provides additional support for pupils to enable them to take part in all aspects of school life. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Personal development is a strength of the school. The school provides many opportunities to enhance the curriculum. This includes a residential trip, visits to museums and a tour of a local castle. Pupils also enjoy visits from the police, the fire service and local charities. They relish opportunities to contribute to the school community through pupil responsibilities, such as being young governors or house captains.

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

The school has revamped many curriculum areas. In most subjects, it has identified the small steps of knowledge that it wishes pupils to learn. Learning has been carefully organised to ensure knowledge builds in a logical order over time. As a result, teachers know exactly what to teach and when. In a small number of areas, such as writing and early years, the school is still in the process of improving its curriculum.

Staff deliver the curriculum well. They have secure subject knowledge which enables them to explain new learning confidently. Teachers check effectively what pupils know and can do. They use this information to ensure that learning builds on their prior knowledge. Pupils with SEND are identified promptly, meaning staff get to know their pupils well. Teachers use this information to carefully adapt tasks and make effective use of additional resources. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Reading is a priority at this school. Well-trained staff confidently deliver the school's phonics programme. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and provide extra support where necessary. Consequently, pupils become confident and fluent readers. This enables them to make full use of the school's library, which is regularly replenished with a range of texts from different authors and genres.

Children in the early years quickly develop a sense of belonging. Communication and language are a high priority. Staff model this well. This helps children improve their language skills. Children's confidence and resilience are deliberately nurtured. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1. The early years curriculum has ambitious end points, but the sequence of learning is not as well thought through as it could be. The

school is alert to this. Work is ongoing to ensure small steps of knowledge are identified and sequenced so that learning builds cumulatively over time.

The school's personal development offer is well considered. The school provides a wide and rich set of clubs, trips, visits and experiences, such as Victorian and Greek themed days. Pupils lead charity work, such as growing and then donating potatoes to a local charity that supports disadvantaged members of the local community. This helps pupils develop skills and understanding beyond the academic curriculum. However, pupils are less confident when it comes to talking in an age-appropriate way about protected characteristics and the fundamental British value of law and order.

Pupils behave very well. Staff consistently model positive behaviours. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Routines are well embedded, including in the early years. At social times, pupils play happily and harmoniously. Pupils attend well. The school is tenacious in its work to support the most vulnerable pupils whose attendance can be a concern. This work is having a positive impact.

Governors support and challenge the school effectively. They and the school's leaders are mindful of the additional challenges of a small school and are proactive in supporting staff with their workload and well-being. As a result, morale is high, and staff feel appreciated and proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The early years curriculum is not as well thought through as it could be. This means that teaching can sometimes be about the activity rather than the learning, and staff do not always have clarity about the precise knowledge that needs to be taught. The school should ensure knowledge is clearly and consistently identified and sequenced, to support staff to know what to teach and when, and to help them plan appropriate activities.

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	126020
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10341627
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amanda Kilham
Headteacher	Sarah Smith
Website	www.ashurstcofe-pri.w-sussex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England primary school within the Diocese of Chichester. The school underwent a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools under section 48 of the Education Act in April 2018.
- At the time of inspection, the school was not using any registered or unregistered alternative provision providers.

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.

- 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 considered that in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met and spoke with leaders, staff, pupils, parents and carers, governors and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspection team conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and history. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also met with leaders to discuss the curriculum for writing and looked at samples of pupils' English work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They also considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted staff survey and the views of pupils gathered throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; considered 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 considered information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and wider learning. They also met with the school special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.

Inspection team

James Stuart, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lorraine Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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