

Sparrows Green, Wadhurst, East Sussex, TN5 6SR

**Inspection dates** 9 – 10 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher has brought about rapid change for the better. There is now a shared vision among staff which has led to a renewed drive for improvement.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Governance is strong. Governors share the accurate views of leaders about how well the school is doing and effectively hold them to account.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Leaders have improved the quality of provision in Reception.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Strong relationships are common among pupils and they respect and look after one another.
- Pupils say they feel safe at the school. Processes for ensuring that this is the case are well developed and secure.
- Teachers and teaching assistants consistently use effective questioning to deepen pupils' understanding in lessons.
- Teaching in English and mathematics is effective. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to read in lessons. They often apply the skills they have learnt in other subjects.
- Pupils achieve well at this school. They make good progress from their different starting points. They make particularly good progress in writing.
- Pupils' results in national tests show that they consistently attain levels above the national average. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- More-able pupils often make very good progress. Large proportions reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Recent changes in leadership mean that some roles are not as well established to improve teaching and learning as they could be.
- While English and mathematics lessons consistently capture the interest and enthusiasm of pupils, this is not always the case in other subjects.
- Teachers occasionally do not expect enough of pupils in lessons. Time is sometimes wasted and pupils do not always take as much care over their work as they could.
- Pupils do not always achieve as much as they could when they work alone.
- The outdoor area used by the Reception classes is not as well developed as other learning spaces of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons and one whole-school assembly. Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised pupils' work in their books.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked with them about their work. Meetings were also held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority on the phone.
- Documentation including: governors' reports; information about behaviour and safety, attendance and the management of the performance of staff; and checks on pupils' attainment and progress were reviewed.
- Inspectors took into account 53 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 30 questionnaires from staff. They met informally with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.

## Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
Janet Watson	Additional Inspector
Roger Fenwick	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Wadhurst Church of England Primary School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. There are 12 classes from Nursery to Year 6. Children attend the Nursery part time.
- The majority of pupils are White British, and approximately one in 10 pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Just over a tenth of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- In 2014, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2013. The deputy headteacher, who was also the leader of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, left the school and a new deputy headteacher and inclusion manager are due to take up their roles in January 2015.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, including when pupils are working independently
  - ensuring pupils always present their work to the highest standard.
- Improve the outdoor areas available to the Reception classes so that they provide more purposeful and exciting learning environments.
- Further develop the school's curriculum so that lessons in all subjects capture pupils' imagination and interest as much as English and mathematics lessons do.
- Improve leadership so that all leaders make a significant contribution to improving teaching and pupils' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides effective leadership and continues to bring about rapid, sustainable improvements, particularly to the quality of teaching. Through her calm, considered and determined approach, she has instilled a strong sense of direction and teamwork among staff.
- Checks on pupils' progress and observations of lessons carried out by leaders are systematic and robust, leading to accurate evaluations of the school's performance because they are based on sound evidence and analysis. This means that improvement plans are well targeted to tackle weaknesses.
- As a result of leaders' effective monitoring, teaching is consistently good in all three key stages. Any necessary improvements are tackled quickly.
- Pupils are now achieving equally well across the school, reflected in the progress of different groups. This means all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Leaders regularly hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. Teachers appreciate this level of challenge and are positive about the training they get as a result of discussions they have with leaders. Support staff are now included in these processes and are clear about how to develop further their effectiveness in lessons.
- The curriculum has many strengths, for example pupils achieve well in art and in physical education, as well as in English and mathematics. Pupils engage well in lessons and speak positively about a range of experiences, such as their residential trips. At times, other subjects such as history, geography and religious education are seen as an opportunity to apply skills learnt in English and mathematics. However, more could be made of these subjects to capture the enthusiasm of learners and enable them to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Recent work for Remembrance Day, for example, helped pupils to understand the impact of the First World War on their community, following a visit from an ex-soldier. Poems and letters written in response to this work clearly demonstrate how the school helps pupils develop strong British values. Links with a school in Burundi are well established and pupils relate well to their African peers through letters they write and visits by the Bishop from the partner school's diocese. The Christian ethos of the school quietly permeates through the work of the school. This helps pupils show positive attitudes to each other and they celebrate each other's differences. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. All statutory requirements are met.
- There have been a number of changes in key leadership roles. Some leaders are well established, such as the headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and the leaders in several of the foundation subjects. Other leaders are either new to post or about to begin and so, as yet, much of the good work to improve the school has not been shared out as well as it might be. Established senior leaders carry out their roles effectively through, for example, observing teaching in their subjects and feeding back how improvements could be made. Newer leaders, however, have yet to have a significant impact on the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher reviews carefully the impact of the school's use of pupil premium funding. Recent changes to how it is used are already accelerating the progress of these pupils. For example, some of the money is now used to ensure that support staff have time to meet and plan lessons with teachers to make sure they give these pupils the right help and support. This has significantly improved their effectiveness in class as they target their support where it is most needed.
- The use of the primary school sports funding is effective. Teachers plan lessons alongside qualified sports coaches, which has improved the quality of physical education lessons. Pupils speak very positively about these changes and are now more enthusiastic about sport because their opportunities have been widened.
- The local authority has provided effective support through frequent visits that have focused on areas identified as weaknesses by the school. This support has been used well to bring about improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the school and have high aspirations for what can be achieved. Through regular, focused visits, they carefully check the impact of leaders' actions to improve the school and have a good understanding of data about the school's performance. Their involvement in the school's evaluation of its effectiveness is appropriate and useful. Governors set ambitious targets for leaders and hold them to account effectively.
  - Governors maintain an overview of leaders' checks on teachers' performance at the school. They have reorganised their committees to achieve greater clarity in the relationship between pay and performance. Alongside the headteacher, they now ensure that pay awards are based on sound

evidence about the performance of staff. This has ensured that those who are on the upper pay spine, for example, now take appropriate responsibility for managing staff, as well as tackling any improvements that need to be made.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils demonstrate appropriate attitudes to their learning and listen well to teachers and to each other. Relationships are positive and pupils show respect for the views of others during discussions and in their play.
- Pupils do not, however, always show the same level of commitment to their learning when working independently. They are sometimes too casual in their approach to their work at these times and so time is wasted and they do not achieve as much as they could.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is also good. They are well supervised at break times and lunchtimes. The school's behaviour logs demonstrate that this is typical of their behaviour over time. There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions in the last three years.
- Parents, carers and pupils are positive about standards of behaviour at the school. They are confident that on the rare occasions where there are friendship issues, the school is effective in sorting them out.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school takes effective action to ensure that pupils are safe, for example through the risk assessments they have about the school site, and those completed for school trips.
- Relevant staff have completed the appropriate training to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust. There are good partnerships between the school and other agencies.
- Pupils demonstrate that they have a good understanding of how to assess risk. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe in a range of contexts, including when using the internet. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 talk positively about learning about internet bullying.
- Pupils report that bullying is exceptionally rare and this is reflected in the school's logs. Governors have been proactive in reviewing this area. Pupils say they feel safe.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now at least in line with the national average. The school has effectively eliminated persistent absence.

## The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. Lessons interest and engage pupils and help them to make good progress. Questioning by both teachers and teaching assistants is particularly well developed and often accelerates pupils' progress.
- Teachers plan effectively for pupils' next steps in learning, using their knowledge about what pupils can do. This means that work is well matched to the different needs of pupils in classes. Other adults, such as teaching assistants, are deployed effectively. They add value to the learning in classes that they support.
- All work is marked in line with the school's policy, although the quality of the comments is sometimes variable. In English, the next steps to help pupils improve their work are clear and useful. This is also the case in some other subjects, such as science, and in topic books. However, it is not always as effective in mathematics, and there are times when pupils get too few opportunities to improve their work in light of teachers' comments.
- The teaching of writing and reading is effective. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use their phonics (the sounds that letters make) knowledge effectively to help them read. Teachers work with pupils in small groups to help pupils develop their inference and deduction skills effectively. Teachers' questions challenge pupils to think deeply about their views on texts they are studying. More-able pupils across the school read particularly well, demonstrating highly developed expression.
- Teachers ensure that lessons meet the needs of more-able pupils. An example of this was a lesson seen in a Years 3 and 4 class about sequences in mathematics. The teacher sent the more able pupils to solve challenging problems with the support of a teaching assistant while she taught the rest of the class how to calculate the missing numbers from sequences of varying difficulty. Once the rest of the class were able to

do this confidently, she sent them to work on their own. This gave her the chance to focus on challenging the more able. The more able pupils were very engaged and challenged throughout the lesson and spoke very positively about what they had learnt.

- The teaching of mathematics is also effective. Work seen in books demonstrates that pupils are taught a wide range of mathematical skills. There are also good examples of investigative approaches for teaching mathematics. Pupils use and apply what they have learnt well, for example pupils from Years 5 and 6 were seen using their understanding of nets and measures to create their own boxes for use at the Christmas fayre.
- Pupils show engagement in their learning and there are consistently positive relationships in lessons. At times, however, teachers could expect pupils to work harder, particularly when asked to work independently.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points in all three key stages at the school, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, Year 6 pupils are on track to make above average progress by the end of Key Stage 2. This is because the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- The number of children who left Reception in 2014 with a good level of development was below the national average. However, the learning observed in lessons and in children's learning journals, as well as the school's own tracking information, demonstrate that children now make good progress in Reception. More children are now on track to achieve a good level of development in 2015.
- Pupils make good progress in their phonics (the sounds that letters make) lessons because of improvements the headteacher has made. At the end of Year 1, pupils' results in the phonics screening check are broadly in line with the national average.
- By the time pupils finish Key Stage 1, their attainment is much higher than the national average. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels has remained consistently high, particularly in reading.
- Pupils continue to achieve well across Key Stage 2 and attainment has remained above national averages for the last three years. Pupils are, therefore, well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers across the school and sometimes better. This is because school leaders have radically changed the provision for these pupils so that it caters more effectively for their specific needs.
- More-able pupils make good progress at this school. Large proportions make more than expected progress across all three key stages.
- The progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is often better than that of other pupils in the school and similar pupils nationally. Overall, their attainment is better in reading and writing than it is in mathematics. They are, on average, almost a term ahead of their peers in school and nationally in reading and less than half a term behind in writing. Although only half a term behind their peers nationally, they are a term and a half behind other pupils in school in mathematics. The most recent information about these pupils' achievement demonstrates that disadvantaged pupils in Years 2 and 6 are making better progress than their peers in writing and mathematics and so gaps in achievement are narrowing.

### The early years provision

is good

- Provision in the early years is effective. Children benefit from excellent facilities and resources in all areas of the Nursery and in the indoor areas of Reception. Assessments made by adults lead to purposeful learning at times when children are working with adults and when learning through play.
- Lessons where children have more choice about what they do to help them learn are well planned and resourced. The environments they work in are amended to meet their interests and needs. For example, in a lesson observed in Reception, several activities offered the opportunity for children to develop and apply their mark-making skills. This was particularly effective where some children were making imaginary foods. They used the paper and pencils available to write labels and lists for ingredients.
- Activities led by adults are also effective and help children to make progress. For example, a whole-class physical development lesson led by the teacher gave pupils the opportunity to develop a range of skills. Each child had access to their own equipment and were given opportunities through various activities to develop their fine and gross motor skills and sharpen their hand-eye coordination. The children

participated with enthusiasm and enjoyed their success, particularly because of the positive praise they received from the adults working with them.

- Children come into the Nursery with skills that are typical for their age. They make very good progress in the time that they are in Nursery. The rates of progress in the current Reception classes have improved and are now good.
- Throughout the early years there are good relationships and children work and play well together. Their behaviour is good and adults ensure they are safe. Children enjoy what they are asked to do and often persist with activities for long periods of time. This means they are well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
- The outside area of Reception is less well developed than the other environments in the early years. This is partly because the area is shared and used by all pupils at playtimes. This reflects the difference between the stronger provision in Nursery compared with Reception.
- There are good links between staff and parents and carers. Parents and carers are well informed about what their children are learning about. Parents and carers contribute well to share information about what their children do at home with the Nursery when they start at the school and this is continued well throughout their time in the early years.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Leaders have an accurate view of where there are strengths and weaknesses in their provision. The impact of the relatively new leader in the early years can be seen in the high-quality learning journals that are consistent across all three classes. These demonstrate that all seven areas of the early years curriculum are taught effectively. The early years leader has also improved provision as a whole and, with the support of the headteacher, has ensured that teaching in Reception is now good.

## WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114532
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	448776

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	333
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mark Thorn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Clare Vernon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01892 783155
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