

Sheddingdean Community Primary School

Petworth Drive, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 8JT

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The leadership of the headteacher and senior team has secured consistent and wide-ranging improvement since the last inspection. As a result, pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching are good.
- Governors have a good general understanding of the school. However, they sometimes lack key information, such as the attendance rates of groups of pupils, which would support them in ensuring that the school continues to improve.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress from their starting points across a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They plan interesting lessons which are mostly demanding. However, levels of challenge are not consistently high enough to ensure that the very brightest pupils make strong enough progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and happy and know that they will be listened to by staff. Relationships are warm and nurturing.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are friendly and polite. They show a high degree of respect and care for each other.
- Children settle quickly into school in the Reception Year, where staff provide a range of exciting and appropriate learning experiences which build on children's basic skills and excite their curiosity.
- Parents value the family atmosphere provided by the school. However, some parents would like to see better communication from leaders, especially when changes are planned.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers' expectations are consistently high enough, especially for the most able pupils, including those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the quality of self-evaluation and school improvement planning, so that it provides governors and school leaders with clearer and more precise information to support and monitor school improvement.
- Improve communication with parents.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and the senior team have high aspirations for the school. This ambition is shared by governors and staff who can clearly articulate the 'journey of improvement' that is driving the school forward.
- The focus on improving teaching has raised standards throughout the school. Teaching is now good because leaders have monitored, supported and challenged teachers appropriately.
- Leaders at all levels have a strong desire to continue to bring about improvement in their areas of responsibility. They are working effectively with each other and in partnership with other local schools. As a result, there is a sense of purpose and a clear focus on continued improvement which permeates all levels of the school.
- Leaders set targets for teachers and subject leaders which come from careful analysis of pupil progress. Targets are aspirational, but achievable. Leaders monitor progress towards targets carefully and regularly.
- Learning through topics helps pupils to connect their knowledge across subject areas. Pupils particularly enjoy science, talking with enthusiasm about experiments to explore light sources, electricity and materials. Topics are enhanced by regular visits and visitors, such as a recent trip to a local nature reserve. Extra-curricular clubs are wide ranging and enjoyed by pupils. The school regularly enters teams into local tournaments and competitions.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through lessons and assemblies. Work in books shows that they are taught about different cultures and religions. Because of this, pupils display a developing sense of the wider community, as well as respect for the differences of others, and are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide a range of extra support and help. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils make good progress. However, sometimes the most able disadvantaged pupils are not stretched enough.
- Leaders make the best use of primary school physical education and sports funding by providing coaching for pupils, training for staff and increasing the equipment available for pupils to use. They evaluate the impact of this funding well and report on its effectiveness to governors.
- Leaders plan for improvement well. However, some plans do not contain clear enough information for school leaders and governors to understand which actions have worked well and which have had less impact.
- Parents are generally positive about the school, although some would like to see better communication from school leaders, especially in respect to any changes that school leaders are planning.

Governance of the school

- Governors are dedicated and committed to the school's constant development. They are pleased by the recent improvements secured in teaching and outcomes, but are not complacent. Together with the headteacher, they have set ambitious targets for the future.

- The governing body has been through a period of change. Despite its many strengths, it is currently using a review of the skills needed to target and recruit new members to further strengthen the breadth and depth of expertise and experience.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the finances of the school, monitoring pupil premium and sports funding to ensure that the way money is spent makes a positive difference to pupils.
- While governors are provided with a wealth of progress information, it is not always specific or clear enough to enable them to hold school leaders to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff know the processes and systems to report concerns in the school. Employment checks are thorough and staff training is up to date and appropriate.
- The school works closely with a range of partners to ensure that all pupils, especially those who are vulnerable or looked after by the local authority, are safe. The headteacher is tenacious in following up on referrals to other agencies involved in child safety. Staff attend multi-agency meetings to share information and strategies to support pupils.
- The school involves partners such as the community police officer in providing information evenings for parents on aspects of e-safety such as cyber bullying.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan exciting lessons that capture the imagination of pupils. For example, in a lesson about Jason and the Argonauts, pupils were helped to imagine being part of the boat crew. They were provided with pictures and sounds to set the scene, then the teacher rearranged the chairs to help pupils imagine being in the boat. The use of drama resulted in high-quality, evocative diary writing.
- The school's exciting curriculum, combined with systematic teaching of basic concepts such as grammar and phonics, has resulted in improved progress in English. However, on occasion, expectations are not high enough and some pupils, particularly the most able, including those who are disadvantaged, are not stretched and challenged.
- Mathematics is taught well. Pupils are encouraged to talk together to suggest methods to solve problems. They are supported in developing their understanding of concepts by good use of a range of resources such as digit cards and counters.
- Staff have adopted a well-structured, regular approach to the teaching of phonics. This results in pupils learning the sounds that letters make quickly and using these skills to accelerate progress in early reading and writing.
- The school has focused on reading as an area for improvement. A new library is in the process of being installed and junior librarians have been trained. Pupils value the books that they are given as part of the school reward system and use their reading records to write responses about the books that they are reading.
- Teachers value the contribution that pupils make to lessons. They use questions skilfully to engage pupils and encourage discussion. For example, in a science lesson, a pupil questioned the idea that light travels in straight lines. This prompted a class discussion in which pupils were able to back up their opinions using examples from previous investigations.

- Other adults make positive contributions to the learning of individuals and small groups. They are particularly effective when working alongside teachers to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those who need to catch up.
- Pupils respond well to the written and oral feedback given to them by their teachers. This helps to extend pupils' thinking and clarify any misconceptions they may have.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils exhibit a high degree of respect for each other, seeking out opportunities to be kind and caring. They are polite and follow instructions quickly and sensibly.
- The values of the school, 'reflective, resourceful, reciprocal and resilient', are well embedded in the school's culture and regularly referred to in assemblies and lessons. This means that pupils are clear about what is expected of them and inspired to encourage these behaviours in each other.
- The entire staff team is committed to ensuring that the school is a happy place for pupils. At break and lunchtimes, staff play games with pupils, encouraging them to use the wide range of equipment that is provided. Year 6 buddies support the games of younger pupils with good humour and kindness.
- Pupils value the opportunity to engage in the wider life of the school. Many of them have been part of the school council. They say that there is very little bullying and are confident that it would not be tolerated should it occur. They appreciate the things the school does to make them feel special, such as allowing them to wear their own clothes on their birthday and having tea with the headteacher as a reward for being positive playground models.
- Support systems for pupils are wide ranging. The school uses resources, such as the pupil premium funding, to provide well for the individual needs of pupils from different vulnerable groups.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, kind and respectful of others around them.
- Pupils work hard in lessons and listen attentively to each other and to their teachers. Occasionally, a few lose interest and become disengaged when the activity does not challenge or interest them enough.
- Behaviour is monitored well by leaders, who use a clear system of rewards and sanctions to promote good behaviour. Fixed-term exclusion have fallen and are only used as a last resort. Where individual pupils have difficulty in managing their own behaviour, the school works effectively with a range of partner agencies to ensure that appropriate support is provided.
- Overall, attendance has improved and is broadly in line with national averages. However, leaders are aware that the persistent absence levels of some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are too high. They are using the right strategies to help improve this, but know that they need to continue to work with families to ensure that pupils attend school more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement across the school has improved since the last inspection because of leaders' aspirations and determination to secure good teaching across the school. As a result, pupils are well prepared to move through the school and take their next steps in education.
- Leaders use assessments and monitoring to track the progress of pupils effectively. They have put additional support in place for those who need to catch up. As a result, progress across the school is good.
- The school's latest, and as yet unvalidated, test results show that the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards in reading, mathematics and English grammar, spelling and punctuation is similar to other schools nationally at the end of key stage 2.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking system show that the majority of pupils are making good progress from their different starting points, and are on track to reach the expected standards for their age in different subjects across all year groups.
- Regular and systematic teaching of phonics has resulted in improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of Year 1. Where pupils do not achieve the expected standard, effective support enables virtually all to do so in Year 2.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They use the skills that they have been taught to tackle books from a wide range of authors. They talk with insight and understanding about the stories that they read.
- The most able pupils are not challenged regularly enough during lessons, although extension work is provided through 'waterfall challenges'. Leaders are aware of the need to increase the level of challenge in lessons in order to effectively extend the most able.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well by teachers and support staff, who adapt tasks and materials to meet individual needs. Leaders have established tracking systems to identify pupils who require extra support and they monitor the quality of interventions to ensure that pupils make at least expected progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum because they are given the right levels of support and challenge that they need to catch up. However, the most able disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well enough, and more emphasis needs to be given to using the extra funding allocated to support disadvantaged pupils to stretch and challenge this group further.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the school with skills and knowledge broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in the early years so that by the end of the Reception Year the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is higher than the national average. Most children have the social, emotional and early learning skills that mean that they are ready for Year 1.

- Adults support children well by listening to responses and asking questions that extend thinking, using appropriate vocabulary to support learning. Adults are patient and kind and children take evident delight in these warm relationships.
- The outside learning environment, which is bright, appealing and safe, inspires curiosity and encourages exploration in a wide range of areas. Children enjoy investigating the range of appealing activities available to them, as well as working as part of focused groups with adults when asked.
- When adults extend learning effectively, children respond well and delight in their own success. For example, a child jumped up and down with excitement repeating 'I can do it!', when able to record the number 11. Occasionally, opportunities to stretch children and prompt them to make connections with previous learning are missed.
- Recent staffing changes mean that assessment of children's learning has not been happening as routinely this term as in the past. However, leaders are taking effective action to ensure that staff observe and assess what children can do and use this information to plan activities that provide the right level of challenge for children.

School details

Unique reference number	125958
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10019897

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Stanbridge
Headteacher	Yasmin Ashraf
Telephone number	01444 246 532
Website	http://www.sheddingdeanschool.org.uk
Email address	office@sheddingdean.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 September 2014

Information about this school

- Sheddingdean School is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average.
- A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils are White British.
- The percentage of pupils receiving support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with national averages. Where pupils have extra support, this is mostly for additional speech and language needs.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school met the government floor standards in 2015. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- In the course of the inspection, 15 lessons were visited, many jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with governors, senior leaders, middle leaders and a range of other staff.
- A telephone interview was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan, governor minutes, the school's website and policies, child protection and attendance case studies, the single central record, monitoring records and pupil performance information.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils read to check how their reading skills were developing.
- Discussions took place with pupils formally and informally. Inspectors had telephone conversations with parents and met with them at the school gates.
- In carrying out the inspection, 38 responses to the Parent View survey, including 35 free text responses, and 10 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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