

Inspection of a good school: Wivelsfield Primary School

South Road, Wivelsfield Green, East Sussex RH17 7QN

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2022

Outcome

Wivelsfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy. They know that their views are valued. Pupils are confident that they can make a difference to the community by, for example, organising charity sales or voting via school council to change the outdoor play equipment. They happily take on roles of responsibility, such as being a digital leader, being a prefect, or representing the school in sports competitions. They are very positive about the wide range of opportunities they have at school. Pupils are proud of the school's extensive grounds, which include a forest school, pond area and outdoor classroom.

Staff have high expectations of pupil's work and behaviour. Pupils work hard and behave well, so that these expectations are realised. They move sensibly and safely around the school. Pupils are polite and friendly. They helped to create the school's values: believe, achieve, succeed, and model these well. School is an orderly environment.

Pupils feel safe at school. They value the additional support provided when they need it, such as nurture provision. Staff develop positive relationships with pupils. Any concerns about bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

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

Parents and staff are very positive about continued strong leadership of the school. They demonstrate a high degree of trust in their leaders. Staff say that they feel listened to and that leaders have everyone's well-being 'at the front of things'. They say that leaders consider workload carefully when planning developments in the school.

Leaders ensure that provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and understood well. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully and regularly reviewed. Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND get the support they need to experience success in all aspects of school life.

Leaders prioritise providing a curriculum, which prepares pupils well for the next stages of their education and for life beyond. The curriculum has been structured in careful steps. Teachers know what to teach and when. Pupils' knowledge builds securely over time in English and mathematics. They remember what they have learned. Pupils become confident and competent mathematicians. They are able to use different strategies to tackle increasingly complex mathematical problems.

The wider curriculum has been carefully designed. However, pupils do not remember and build on their knowledge as effectively as they do in English and mathematics. For example, pupils can talk about what they have learned about ancient Greece in recent history lessons. However, they are unable to connect this with what they have learned previously about the Romans, or to develop a broader understanding of empires or civilisations. Subject leaders have begun work to adjust the curriculum to address this issue.

Learning to read is given a high priority from the start of Reception Year. Highly effective phonics teaching ensures that children acquire secure early reading skills. Teachers make sure that reading books are carefully matched to children's skills, so that they experience success. Children are encouraged by their progress and keen to apply their growing knowledge. Regular training ensures strong staff expertise in teaching phonics. Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully. This means that teachers are able to identify and address pupils' needs quickly. Any who start falling behind are given the support they need to catch up.

Leaders maintained a strong focus on reading throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, they made sure that pupils had access to a wide range of books. Special events, such as author visits, help to inspire pupils to read. The school library is a hub of activity.

Pupils' positive behaviours show that they are keen to learn. They listen to each other and their teachers with respect and they try their best. The behaviour policy is well established and consistently applied. Pupils know what is expected of them. They value awards for positive behaviour.

Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to support their personal development, such as clubs, music lessons and residential trips. They make sure that all pupils can participate equally, regardless of ability or background. Pupils enthuse about their experiences in school. One pupil commented, 'You learn so much about yourself.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise pupils' safety. Clear systems help staff to identify safeguarding risks. Regular training ensures that staff know what to look out for. Leaders explore any risk factors, such as poor attendance, fully. They maintain meticulous records.

Leaders work closely with agencies, such as social care, to ensure timely help for individual pupils.

The curriculum is carefully structured to help pupils to learn how to keep safe, including when online. Parents are well supported by information provided by the school. Governors work alongside leaders to ensure that systems around safer recruitment are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not fully emphasise how disciplinary knowledge is built, and themes are connected within and across subjects. As a result, pupils are not developing deeper knowledge and understanding within the wider curriculum. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders continue to get the support they need to further refine the curriculum in foundation subjects. They should ensure that connections are made which support pupils in understanding how the knowledge they acquire fits within wider frameworks of learning.

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 March 2013.

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	114424
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10211483
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Milton
Headteacher	Helen Smith
Website	www.wivelsfieldschool.org
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school was undergoing a building project to support its expansion at the time of the previous inspection. This work has now been completed and the school has grown from five to seven classes.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met regularly with senior leaders. Meetings were also held with other school leaders including the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to some pupils reading.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record and the school's recruitment procedures. The inspector spoke with staff about their safeguarding training and spoke with pupils about the support they have to help them to understand how to keep safe.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys. She also considered 14 emails from parents.
- The inspector met with staff to gather their views about the school, including discussions about workload and well-being. The inspector completed a tour of the school with pupils and spoke to them during lessons and at other times of the school day.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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