

West Dean CofE Primary School

West Dean, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0RJ

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Led by the driven and ambitious headteacher, this small school provides pupils with big opportunities. The curriculum and the range of trips, visits and clubs are key strengths of the school.
- Staff at all levels are ambitious for pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour and attitudes. Staff guide pupils to be the best they can be. Pupils respond accordingly, showing great respect and working hard in lessons. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding.
- Leaders and governors work closely to evaluate the effectiveness of the school and identify areas for improvement. However, plans for development are not sufficiently focused on what success will look like or when it will be achieved. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to evaluate their efforts.
- Staff skilfully guide pupils to write well and to apply their understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Most pupils write at the expected standard. However, few pupils write at a high standard.
- Pupils possess secure and well-rehearsed methods for calculation which they use to solve a range of problems. Their ability to reason is not as secure. This prevents pupils from attaining at a high standard in mathematics.
- In the early years, children make an excellent start to their formal education. First-class teaching and relationships ensure that children are exceptionally well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- In most subjects, standards are very high. However, there are some small inconsistencies in the quality of teaching – particularly in the foundation subjects – which leaders are working hard to address.
- The needs of disadvantaged pupils are clearly understood and identified early on. Staff use a range of creative and bespoke approaches to support these pupils to make strong progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported by dedicated support and teaching staff. These pupils do well because their learning and work are closely matched to their needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that plans for improvement identify specific targets and state when – and who – these will be completed by.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that staff routinely teach pupils to explain their thinking and reasoning in mathematics
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching in the foundation subjects matches that of English and mathematics.
- Further develop pupils' outcomes by ensuring that greater proportions of pupils write at a high standard in both English lessons and the wider curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school – ably led by the headteacher – is a place of deep respect, care and nurture. Everyone at West Dean is treated and valued as an individual. One parent summarised the thoughts of many, noting, ‘It’s amazing because it has such a great family feel.’
- Leaders are ambitious and hold a deep desire to improve outcomes for pupils. They work collaboratively to design an interesting and meaningful curriculum which closely matches the needs of pupils. Leaders in this small school work as a cohesive and effective team and produce far more than the sum of their parts.
- Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school and its effectiveness. They work together to gain an understanding of what is working well, share successful strategies and diminish the few remaining weaknesses in the school. Nevertheless, plans for improvement do not specifically state who is responsible for making changes and when these will be completed by. As a result, improvements are not secured as quickly as they could be.
- The curriculum is well considered and interesting. Staff work carefully to form and order the subjects and topics pupils learn to maximise their time in school. Appropriate links are made between subjects. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their writing skills to produce diaries from First World War soldiers which sensitively and carefully described the anguish of war. Occasionally, foundation subject lessons are not well matched to pupils’ skills and understanding, which slows their progress.
- The curriculum is supported by an ambitious range of visits, guest speakers and extra-curricular activities. Pupils recently visited the Houses of Parliament to gain a greater understanding of democracy and the rule of law. The wide range of clubs ensure that all pupils are encouraged to pursue their interests and talents. For example, pupils enthusiastically described the fajitas with accompanying pea and mint dip they made in cookery club. Pupils enjoy the significant opportunities to represent their school at sporting events and have enjoyed considerable success, particularly in the swimming pool.
- Pupils with SEND are supported well because staff quickly identify their needs and offer them bespoke support to overcome the difficulties they face. The ‘wraparound’ support offered to families ensures that pupils are able to thrive, both at home and in school.
- Leaders’ strong understanding of pupils’ needs helps them to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. Pupil premium funding is spent where it is needed most to help pupils access school, settle in the morning and consider and plan for the day ahead. This leaves pupils well prepared for the challenges they may face. Disadvantaged pupils make progress that is equally strong as that of their peers in school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to the school and its pupils. They use their extensive range of visits to check the work of the school and identify any areas that require further

attention. For example, when governors noticed that some of the school gates were left open, they quickly sought solutions which ensured that the site was secure. Governors' knowledge of the school and its pupils leaves them well placed to secure further improvement.

- Following a review of governance last year, the governing body decided to focus its efforts on individual cohorts of pupils in order to track their progress more closely. Governors possess a strong understanding of these cohorts and their performance, which allows them to challenge leaders to improve any weaknesses as they emerge. Nevertheless, governors are hampered from checking progress against the school development priorities because planning does not specify the timescales for improvements or what success will look like.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Thorough checks on staff are made well before they commence employment. All staff receive useful safeguarding training and governors check to ensure that this is refreshed regularly. When concerns are passed to leaders, they take the right action, working closely with families and external agencies to get children the help they need.
- Parents and carers receive useful information to help keep their children safe. They appreciate the regular safeguarding meetings which help them to set up appropriate parental controls on their devices at home and to learn about the links between social media and mental health. Parents feel they can approach the school with any concerns, confident that staff will do all they can to support them.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and regularly discuss and consider the risks they may need to manage. Last year, pupils created a video to educate their peers about the dangers of careless internet use. Pupils throughout the school have worked with the Royal National Lifeboat Association to learn how to stay safe around open water. Pupils are well equipped to make the right decisions about their personal safety when faced with potential dangers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff and pupils enjoy exceptionally positive and productive relationships. Classes are typified by an excited buzz as pupils discuss their ideas, compare their thinking and enthusiastically record their work. Pupils are productive and take great pride in the work they produce.
- Pupils make strong progress through the broad and interesting curriculum which is enhanced by regular trips and visits. For example, pupils visited Southampton University to consider how nanotechnology is used to improve products and medicines. Pupils often produce well-judged and carefully presented work which demonstrates their learning and clear thinking. However, standards of work in foundation subjects and science can vary, which prevents pupils from making greater progress.
- Pupils develop a sound foundation in mathematics because teachers know how to develop their fluency and calculation skills. Increasingly, pupils are able to solve a

range of problems and consider the links between different operations. For example, pupils in Year 2 considered how multiplication is the opposite of division and solved problems using this information. Nevertheless, pupils do not routinely explain or record their reasoning, which prevents them from organising and sharing their mathematical thinking at a high standard.

- Teachers skilfully support pupils to improve their writing and help them to learn and apply their skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This leads to pupils creating interesting and sophisticated writing for a range of purposes. For example, pupils wrote letters of complaint to a local travel company to express their concern about the standard of service they received. They cited suitable evidence to support their claims and made clear requests to help resolve their complaints. While many pupils write at the expected standard for their age, too few pupils write at a high standard.
- Support staff work closely with teachers to assess and plan work which closely matches pupils' needs. Their work to support pupils with SEND is particularly effective as they possess a clear understanding of how to segment and adapt tasks to support these pupils. The 'can-do' attitude of all staff helps these pupils to make strong progress from their relative starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils love their school and feel a deep responsibility to look after their friends and peers. In this small school, pupils of all ages, genders and ethnicities are happy to play and learn together. The sense of harmony and care is palpable.
- Pupils learn about those with different beliefs, cultures and abilities to their own. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about an assembly delivered by a peer to explain how disability affects her life. A visit from a Paralympian brought home the message that a disability should not prevent anyone from achieving their goals. Pupils show respect towards others regardless of their physical or mental abilities.
- Pupils learn to adopt healthy lifestyles. At break, they enjoy a range of healthy snacks. The wide range of clubs help pupils to learn to cook and to access regular physical activities. Classes run the daily mile – regardless of the mud – to increase their stamina and strengthen their circulatory system. Leaders' work to support whole families to improve their exercise and diet is having a positive impact well outside the school gates.
- All pupils take an active role in the well-established school parliament. They use their time productively to review the work of the school and suggest ways to improve it further. For example, pupils reviewed and revitalised the playground rules to ensure that everyone is included, happy and safe. This engenders pupils with a sense of personal and collective responsibility which permeates all aspects of school life.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- In class, pupils show respect and reverence towards adults. Guests are welcomed warmly and pupils delight in sharing their work. Pupils work with purpose and ambition, constantly reviewing what they produce to ensure that it matches their teachers' high expectations. These positive attitudes to learning form the bedrock upon which strong progress is built.
- Pupils attend school regularly and are rarely late. As a result of leaders' relentless efforts, rates of absence are extremely low. This effect has been felt among all pupil groups. Disadvantaged pupils attend school more regularly than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils are well supervised at play and breaktimes and report that there is no bullying of any kind. When small squabbles do occur, teachers are great at ironing these out and pupils quickly get back to laughing and playing together.
- The small proportion of pupils with SEND are supported well to interact and engage with their peers. Their behaviour is carefully monitored and – when required – additional support is provided to ensure that they – and those around them – can thrive. In many circumstances, Wiley the dog provides a gentle distraction and affectionate cuddle which help pupils to settle.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make strong progress in writing because they possess a secure understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils use these to write interesting texts to inform, persuade or entertain their intended audience. The proportion of pupils who write at the expected standard is broadly average. However, too few pupils write at a high standard.
- In recent years, pupils have benefited from regular opportunities to practise their key number skills, such as calculations and times tables. This helps them to quickly solve numerical problems using efficient and well-rehearsed methods. Nevertheless, pupils do not routinely explain or record their reasoning, which prevents them attaining at a high standard in mathematics.
- Pupils read well because they gain an excellent grounding in the basics early on. As their reading develops, pupils enjoy the opportunity to read aloud to adults and access a wide and interesting range of texts and genres. This support is particularly effective for pupils with SEND and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils across the school make strong progress in reading.
- Pupils enjoy and make strong progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 and 6 wrote to younger pupils to persuade them how to vote in a historic election. Enthusiastically, these pupils decorated doors and hallways with posters to emphasise their points. Occasionally, pupils' work in the foundation subjects is not of the same standard as that seen in mathematics and English lessons.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with their peers in school. The support provided to these pupils ensures that they are well prepared for their lessons in school. Additional funding is also used to ensure that these pupils routinely benefit and learn

from the excellent range of trips, visits and clubs the school provides.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children in the early years enter the school with skills and understanding broadly in line with other children nationally. By the time they leave, higher-than-average proportions of children attain a good level of development. This represents excellent progress from their starting points.
- The early years team is a collaborative and creative group. Staff work cohesively to investigate what children know and plan learning that closely matches children's needs and interests. Parents receive high-quality information on their child's progress and plenty of support to help their child at home. The excellent links between parents and school help form a strong team around every child, which sets them up brilliantly for the next stage of their education.
- Children in the early year develop exceptionally strong relationships with staff and peers. They mimic the excellent example of older pupils and display great pride in their behaviour and attitudes. Children mix well regardless of race, religion or gender, and happily play and learn together, confident that they do not need to conform to age, gender or racial stereotypes.
- Staff in the early years are highly skilled and intuitive. They gently guide children to activities which will help them to develop in key areas. This is done with understated precision. For example, children worked with a teaching assistant to build their own spaceship out of crates. Staff helped children to record the numbers one to 10, and read these backwards to signal the launch of their rocket. The questioning and modelling that staff provide contribute greatly to children's excellent development.
- Parents of children in the early years work closely with the school and have great confidence in staff. As a result, any concerns or niggles are quickly addressed and – when required – staff help to signpost parents to the right additional support.

School details

Unique reference number	126004
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10084273

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Goacher
Headteacher	Gill Moss
Telephone number	01243 811 247
Website	www.westdean.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	head@westdean.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2009

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Many pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. All teaching staff undertake leadership and improvement roles in the school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in seven parts of lessons, many with the headteacher.
- The inspector considered the views of parents who submitted their responses via the Ofsted Parent View website, as well as those submitted directly in writing. The inspector also met with several parents on the playground to gather their views.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised to gather information on: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance; systems for managing the performance of teachers; the behaviour and safety of pupils; safeguarding; the progress and attainment of pupils; and curriculum leadership.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's website to evaluate the quality of information for parents and whether the school meets statutory publishing requirements.
- The inspector spoke to pupils to gather their views about the school, and heard pupils read.
- The inspector met with school leaders, governors – including the chair of the governing body – and an officer from the local authority.

Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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