

Inspection of a good school: Alfriston School

North Road, Alfriston, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 5XB

Inspection dates:

15 January 2020

Outcome

Alfriston School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are happy in this small welcoming school. Staff and governors share a vision for all pupils to achieve personal success and a lifelong love of learning. Pupils feel safe and are well cared for. Well-being and personal development for both pupils and staff are a high priority. One parent expressed the views of many, saying staff 'truly have my child's best interests at heart'.

All pupils try to uphold the school values of determination, curiosity, collaboration, creativity and independence. They are proud of the certificates they receive for such things as kindness and courtesy.

The school has established good practice for its special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) provision. This is a strength. All pupils take a full and active part in every aspect of school life.

Even on a wet day, breaktime and lunchtime were calm, and pupils well behaved. Although pupils say there is no bullying in the school, a very few parents and carers say there have been some incidents. Pupils are confident that staff always help them, and the large majority of parents say pupils are well supported by staff if an incident occurs.

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

Staff have high expectations for all pupils to do well and behave well. Leaders have designed the curriculum so that pupils can gain the knowledge and life skills they need to go on to the next step in their education. Curriculum leaders are passionate about their subjects and keen to support staff in implementing the curriculum. Staff have taken the mixed-age classes into account when planning the consolidation of previous learning and the introduction of new learning. However, in science, the organisation of the curriculum is not yet consistently sequenced so that pupils can build on previous learning. Pupils from the early years to Year 6 enjoy the interesting scientific activities on offer.

In all subjects, work is adapted by teachers for pupils with SEND, who have access to the full curriculum. The special educational needs coordinator and teachers create detailed and well-monitored individual plans to ensure that pupils' learning and emotional needs are met. Some pupils with SEND can become restless in class. Teachers manage behaviour in a calm and kindly manner and quickly refocus pupils on their work. The majority of pupils behave well in class and listen well to the teacher.

Reading has a high priority in the school. The teaching of phonics is well structured. Children learn phonics quickly in the early years. Staff assess children's progress every time they hear them read. They are swift to support any who are falling behind. Throughout the school, staff regularly monitor pupils' reading and match the books they read to the pupil's reading ability. Good use of questioning by teachers and skilled teaching assistants ensures that teachers know pupils understand the books they read. Consequently, pupils become skilled readers by the time they leave the school. Teachers often read aloud selected books which are connected to the class topic. Pupils enjoy these books and say they have helped them develop their writing.

Mathematics teaching, for example using a wide range of resources, is consistent throughout the school. This helps pupils to build their knowledge and understanding well as they progress. In the early years, children enjoy the puzzles and games they use, for example to learn about numbers. Younger pupils discuss their learning knowledgeably. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. However, the mathematics curriculum is not yet fully planned to meet the needs of the most able. Leaders are addressing this swiftly. This is evident in pupils' books in key stage 2, where the most able are responding well to more stretching work.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Continual reminders, support for families and a renewed reward system for pupils have improved attendance, which is now above the national average.

Pupils are active in the community and aware of the world around them. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places such as zoos and after-school clubs such as yoga and choir. The school values sports and holds sponsored events for charity. Pupils take responsibility through membership of the school council. Pupils respect each other and are considerate of each other's differences. The school has strong links with a French school and the oldest pupils enjoy having pen pals.

Staff appreciate the support of the headteacher and the reduction in their workload from the coaching they have had about time management and prioritising their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors are vigilant regarding pupils' safety. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about the welfare of any pupil. Leaders have a good relationship with support agencies and are thorough when

following up pupils and families who need help. All the necessary checks on staff who join the school are in place.

Leaders understand the importance of protecting pupils when online. Pupils are regularly taught how to keep themselves safe. Parents are given support and advice through the school website so that they can advise and support their children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for the foundation subjects has been coherently planned and sequenced. In science, pupils' learning is not as well organised and implemented as it is in the other foundation subjects. Some steps in learning are missed for some pupils and some are unnecessarily repeated. Therefore, pupils can misunderstand the knowledge they are being taught. Leaders should make sure that pupils are taught the curriculum sequentially so that they can build on previous knowledge learned and know and remember more science.
- The mathematics curriculum is not sufficiently ambitious for the most able pupils in all year groups. Therefore, the most able pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Leaders should continue their work to ensure that the most able pupils receive a demanding mathematics curriculum throughout the school so that they achieve as well as they can.

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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 7 March 2012.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	114385
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10122249
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	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Simon Atkins
Headteacher	Mrs Lindsey Hudson
Website	www.alfriston.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.

Information about this inspection

- As part of the inspection, we did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. We met with the headteacher and the subject leaders for reading, mathematics and science. To gain a clear view of the quality of education in the school, we discussed the curriculum with school leaders, subject leaders, class teachers and governors. We made visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and discussed their work with them. I also heard some pupils read.
- We met a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority.
- We observed playtime, lunchtime and behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- We considered 21 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. We also considered 15 free-text responses completed by parents and 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.

- We analysed a range of the school's documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures, and publicly available information about pupils' achievement.

Inspection team

Lesley Corbett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Doug Brawley

Ofsted Inspector

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