

Buxted C of E Primary School

Hurstwood Road, Buxted, East Sussex, TN22 4BB

Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Governors, the executive headteacher and the head of school have been successful in improving teaching and strengthening leadership across the school.
- Staff are united in their drive to ensure every pupil achieves their potential. Morale is high and teamwork is effective.
- Teaching is generally good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in lessons and have high expectations of pupils.
- Pupils are happy and proud of their school. They feel safe and very well looked after.
- The school's strong values and Christian ethos underpin the very positive learning environment. Pupils are well behaved and show consideration for others.
- The school offers a wide range of learning experiences in and outside of lessons that support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure pupils make excellent progress.
- Sometimes, pupils' learning is inhibited because activities do not sustain their curiosity and desire to learn.
- The pace of learning is not always appropriate for some pupils and occasionally pupils do not move on to more challenging work when they are ready to.

Information about this inspection

- Teaching and learning were observed in 19 lessons and pupils' work was examined, especially in English and mathematics.
- Some observations were joint visits with the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- An extended assembly where pupils from across the school presented and celebrated good work was also observed.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and four members of the school's governing body. The lead inspector spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority. One meeting with pupils was dedicated to a discussion of reading, with an opportunity for pupils to read aloud.
- Informal discussions with pupils took place at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of the 67 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire. Parents' involvement in school life was discussed with senior leaders. At the beginning of one day, informal conversations were held with parents in the school playground.
- A range of documentation was looked at including records relating to pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jacqueline White, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Roger Parry

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- While smaller than average, this primary school has expanded rapidly in the last year. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In January 2013, the school began a collaboration with Bonners C of E Primary School. The executive headteacher oversees the leadership of both schools, dividing her time equally between the two. The schools retain separate governing bodies.
- The school has established partnerships with the St Marks Teaching School and the Village Schools' Association.
- The head of school works closely with the executive headteacher and is central to the day-to-day running of the school.
- The school holds a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools and Gold Artsmark awards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is outstanding by ensuring:
 - the pace of learning in lessons is appropriate for all pupils to ensure they make more rapid progress in the lesson
 - pupils move on to more challenging work when they are ready
 - lesson activities develop pupils' curiosity and desire to learn.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well as a result of carefully planned teaching that includes high-quality individualised support for some pupils. Pupils' progress has accelerated over the last year and there is a trend of rising achievement. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average.
- Children join the school with a range of skills and knowledge; some are below levels typical for their age and some are above. The good assessment systems in the Early Years Foundation Stage give the teacher and assistants a detailed understanding of strengths and weaknesses in children's learning. This information is used well to ensure the children make good progress. Strong partnerships with parents help pupils to settle in quickly and enjoy their time in the Reception class.
- A number of pupils have recently joined year groups throughout the school. Appropriate support and care help them to focus on their learning quickly and achieve well.
- Pupils make at least good progress in writing and mathematics because teachers use the breadth of their subject knowledge well to develop pupils' skills.
- Pupils have not made such consistently good progress in reading as they have in writing and mathematics. Staff have undertaken intensive training in helping pupils to link sounds and letters. The impact of this has been very positive. In 2013, the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) check showed that standards were average. The school is building on this and pupils now make good progress in reading. They display a love of books and confidence in reading for a variety of purposes.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding well. For example, it contributes to providing small-group or individual tuition and extra activities for pupils. Consequently, pupils thrive and make good progress. There are no significant gaps between their attainment in English and mathematics and that of their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make both good progress and the very most of school life because such close attention is paid to their well-being and academic development.
- More-able pupils achieve very well. Many make excellent progress. Last year, an above-average proportion of pupils reached the highest Level 6 in all aspects of assessed work.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good. Pupils respond well to the staff's high expectations. Most work diligently and follow the well-established class routines.
- Warm and trusting relationships throughout the school encourage pupils to be intrepid learners who are not afraid to make mistakes.
- Children in the Reception class are carefully nurtured. Skilfully planned activities and interaction between children, the teacher and assistants ensure early literacy and numeracy skills develop well.
- Pupils are supportive of one another and work well together. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson pupils evaluated the effectiveness of each other's writing. They were thoughtful, constructive and generous in suggesting improvements and recognising success. As a result, some very well-written stories were taking shape.
- Planning for lessons is thorough and considers the different needs of pupils. However, sometimes, even though more challenging work has been planned, teachers do not move pupils on to harder work quickly enough and so pupils do not make as much progress as possible.
- Teachers' marking has improved since the previous inspection. The helpful written pointers for improvement and continuous dialogue with pupils about what they need to do to succeed ensure

that, as pupils mature and move up the school, they become very clear about what they do well and how they can improve their work.

- The good subject knowledge and mostly effective questioning demonstrated by teachers and teaching assistants are used well to consolidate pupils' learning and tackle gaps in understanding.
- Occasionally, the pace of learning is not well matched to the needs of pupils. This is particularly true for more-able pupils and, because there is not the flexibility for them to work at a faster pace, some make good rather than excellent progress.
- Usually, pupils show determination and pleasure in learning new things. However, now and then, their learning and curiosity are curtailed by tasks that do not offer them scope to explore ideas and take responsibility for their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most have positive attitudes to learning and are very happy at school. This is reflected in their above-average attendance.
- Some parents raised concerns about behaviour and bullying during the inspection. This was followed up carefully but not borne out by inspection evidence, which included direct observations, records kept over time, a detailed audit of behaviour undertaken by a consultant and the views of staff and pupils.
- Pupils say that bullying is uncommon and are confident that if there were any incidents, they would be sorted out quickly. They are aware that there are different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and are very clear about their responsibility to treat others equally and with respect.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good and most parents agree with this. Staff are diligent in caring for pupils and pupils feel very well looked after and valued as individuals.
- Equality of opportunity is central to the school's ethos and discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well together.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. For example, the 'buddy' system where older pupils look after younger pupils works very well and is highly thought of by pupils and parents.
- The excellent range of activities offered outside of lessons is greatly appreciated by pupils and contributes to their very good personal development.
- The routines and values that sustain the orderly, calm and well-kept environment are ingrained and consistently adhered to by staff and most pupils.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally a few pupils need and receive extra prompting from adults to keep them fully involved in learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher, head of school and governors have worked successfully to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement. Together, they have established a culture that supports pupils' learning and well-being very well.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because a very small amount of teaching still requires improvement.
- The appointment of the executive headteacher and the collaboration with Bonners C of E Primary School have boosted leadership capacity. The new senior leadership arrangements give the school strong capacity to improve further.
- In the last year the school has undergone rapid change, including an expansion of the pupil roll as additional houses have been built in the area. Some parents are disconcerted by this and feel that communications have suffered. Senior leaders and governors are very aware of this and are increasing the opportunities to speak with and listen to parents.
- Regular lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews with pupils keep the

improvement of teaching a high priority.

- Pupils' progress is monitored very closely. Any underachievement is swiftly detected and rectified by high-quality support.
- Leaders' accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses informs well-organised and effective training programmes for staff.
- Middle leaders work well as a team and are making an important contribution to the development of teaching and the curriculum.
- The performance of teachers is managed well. Decisions about the salary that each teacher receives are securely based on the progress made by the pupils in their care.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs and supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. An abundance of after-school activities such as sports, music, drama and singing, and close links with the church and community add further enrichment.
- The primary sports funding has enabled pupils to engage in a greater range of sporting activity, including competitive sport. It also supports the development of teachers' skills in teaching physical education.
- The school's partnerships with the St Marks Teaching School and the Village Schools' Association have been highly effective in enhancing pupils' educational experiences and development opportunities for staff.
- The productive relationship between the school and the local authority has helped senior leaders to steer the school through a period of change while maintaining a sharp focus on pupils' achievement.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils fully meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led and has a good range of expertise. Governors work hard to develop their skills through training. Consequently, the support and challenge they provide to the school are very effective.
 - Governors know the school very well and are ambitious for it. They receive accurate data about pupils' achievement from senior leaders and compare it with that of other schools nationally to judge how well pupils are doing.
 - Governors are prudent in their management of the school's finances. They know how additional funding such as the primary school sports funding and the pupil premium are spent and what the benefits are to pupils.
 - Governors have a clear picture of the quality of teaching across the school and maintain a strong link between teachers' salaries and their effectiveness in ensuring pupils progress well.

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

Unique reference number	114493
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	441011

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Pagett
Headteacher	Anne Radford
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2011
Telephone number	01825 733185
Fax number	01825 733860
Email address	office@buxtedce.e-sussex.sch.uk

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