

# Inspection of West Dean C of E Primary School

West Dean, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0RJ

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils know and live the school's values of love, peace, joy, hope and faith. Pupils feel very safe and happy in what is an incredibly nurturing school environment. Older pupils help the younger ones in lessons and outside on the playground. The local environment, trips and visits are utilised exceptionally well to support pupils with their personal development. For example, a residential trip to France gives Year 6 pupils the chance to develop independence and practise their learning meaningfully. Extra-curricular activities are rich and varied, including cricket, cycling, languages and those focused on the arts. These help pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, to grow in confidence and learn new skills enthusiastically.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and for what all pupils can achieve. Governors have worked closely with the school to help create strong recent improvements. The school is taking the right action to develop the quality of education. However, while pupils learn increasingly securely in core subjects because of the school's focused work, this is not yet reflected in pupils' outcomes at the end of key stages. Overall, the full curriculum is still in development and some areas are not yet implemented as consistently and effectively as the school intends. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they should.

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

The curriculum does not build pupils' learning securely in some subjects in the wider curriculum. Some lessons focus more on activities for pupils rather than the key knowledge they need to learn. Staff do not always check what pupils have learned precisely. As a result, pupils have gaps in their understanding and do not build on their prior learning as successfully as they should.

The school has rightly focused on improving core subjects such as mathematics and English. In these subjects, the school has introduced revised curriculums which are effective. This is already having a positive impact on pupils' learning across the school. However, sometimes pupils' errors and misconceptions are not addressed effectively. The subject knowledge of some staff is not strong enough to implement the curriculum well.

Pupils are increasingly learning to read successfully. Phonics teaching has improved rapidly and supports children well, particularly in Reception. Reading books are matched closely to the sounds that pupils have learned. The school is skilled at checking the sounds that pupils have learned and then adapting the reading curriculum appropriately. Pupils speak about the books that teachers share in school with real joy and passion. Older pupils share books with the younger ones, who take great delight in these collaborative experiences as well.

In Reception, staff are highly ambitious for all children. Children work together very well. Adults offer meaningful interactions that deepen children's learning in both guided and independent learning activities. The curriculum is designed and delivered

systematically. While there is a focus on communication and language and on personal, social and emotional development, it is clear that all areas of learning are considered thoughtfully. For example, children learn about Mary Anning and dinosaurs in rich, connected and contextual ways as part of their developing understanding of the world. By the end of Reception, children's outcomes are secure, and they are ready for their next stage of education.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is thoughtful and precise. Pupils' needs are identified quickly through highly skilled practice. The school makes strong use of staff expertise as well as external support, where needed. Pupils with SEND make good progress through the curriculum overall.

Behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils know what is expected of them and rise to the challenge with very positive attitudes to their learning and towards staff and each other. Attendance is strong and has improved over time. The school works closely with any pupils and families who are at risk of poor attendance, with notable impact.

Governors monitor the school's improvement work with drive and determination. Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development. They are taking the right action to improve standards and maintain the school's distinct ethos. At the same time, governors are mindful of workload and staff well-being. They support school staff helpfully. Staff are very proud to work at the school. Parents are incredibly supportive. One parent summarised the thoughts of many, saying, 'It's a wonderful school, a hidden gem and it has so many special things about it.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- By the end of key stage 2, published outcomes indicate that pupils are not as secure in reading, writing and mathematics as they should be. While pupils' current achievement is improving in core subjects, teaching is not yet consistently effective. The school should ensure that staff have securely strong subject knowledge in the core subjects so that the curriculum is implemented routinely well.
- In the wider curriculum, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. As a result, some are not always able to make connections in their learning and integrate new knowledge into larger ideas and concepts. The school should address these gaps by utilising assessment processes efficiently and effectively.

## 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.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 126004   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | West Sussex  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10321905   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 98   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Edward Younghusband  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Chris Williams   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.westdean.w-sussex.sch.uk">www.westdean.w-sussex.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 22 and 23 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005              |

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.
- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Chichester. The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in October 2023.
- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the staff and the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspectors also met with a

representative from the Diocese of Chichester and with other leaders in the school.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and computing. For each deep dive, the inspectors 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

### **Inspection team**

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Cottingham

Ofsted Inspector

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