

# Inspection of Midhurst CofE Primary School

Ashfield Road, Midhurst, West Sussex GU29 9JX

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Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

The school's ambition for all pupils to achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is clear. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should because the curriculum is not fully developed. Curriculum delivery is stronger in the early years.

Pupils at the school truly enjoy coming to this highly inclusive school. Staff warmly welcome pupils into school each day. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, say that they feel safe in school and that staff truly listen to what they are saying. Parents and carers appreciate the care and thought that staff show them.

Pupils, including children in the early years, engage fully in their lessons. Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. Pupils display the school values in the way older pupils play happily alongside younger pupils during social times.

Pupils' wider development is exemplary and very well-considered. Pupils take full advantage of the wide range of activities that the school provides for them alongside the academic curriculum, for example taking part in the many clubs, such as cookery and gardening. The school enhances pupils' understanding of how to take responsibility, for example through the leadership roles in school such as subject ambassadors and eco warriors.

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

The school has brought about the required urgency and determination to halt the decline in standards since the previous inspection, as reflected in the weak published outcomes in 2024. The school has, in a short space of time, made some marked changes that are beginning to improve the school. While undertaking this work, the school has been mindful of staff's workload and well-being.

The newly introduced curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Nevertheless, in some subjects the school has not identified well enough what teachers should teach and pupils should learn. As a result, in these subjects pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Activities are usually well matched to help pupils learn the planned curriculum. However, staff do not always check carefully enough that pupils have remembered the most important knowledge taught. This means that some pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, have gaps in their knowledge. As a result, pupils achieve less well than they should.

The school has implemented effective approaches to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils are fully involved in all aspects of school life, although sometimes some pupils with SEND do not get opportunities to apply their knowledge. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school has prioritised the teaching of reading from the early years to Year 6. Pupils in the early years are exposed to many different books. They enjoy being read to by their teachers regularly. The school has ensured that there is a suitable phonics programme in place. Pupils practise their reading using books that closely match the sounds that they have learned. Those pupils who struggle to keep up in reading receive extra help from staff. As a result, most pupils become confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

Pupils show a strong sense of right and wrong. Strong routines established in the Reception class mean pupils learn to focus well on their learning. As a result, pupils across the school work hard in lessons because they want to improve further. Their learning is rarely disrupted by the behaviour of others. Well-trained staff ensure pupils can recognise and reflect on their feelings and the impact on themselves and others. Consequently, there is a calm atmosphere in the school.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils display a strong sense of belonging and are very proud of their school. This comes from the school providing extremely strong welfare and pastoral support that is steered by the school's values. The school's extensive nurture provision effectively identifies and addresses the social and emotional needs of each child. This has led to pupils' attendance being strong, and improving further over time. Pupils also benefit from the way the school engages with the local community. This includes being part of the 'friendship tea' with the local church.

The governing body carries out its statutory duties diligently and has a strong understanding of the strengths of the school. However, the governing body has not had a secure grasp of the quality of the curriculum the school has been delivering to pupils. There have been recent changes to the way the governing body monitor the school's effectiveness within the curriculum. This has started to lead to the governing body having a better overview of this vital aspect of the school's work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Some teachers do not check pupils' understanding of the knowledge taught well enough. Consequently, they are not able to adapt their teaching, and pupils' learning slows. Leaders should ensure there is a consistent approach to identifying and addressing pupils' knowledge gaps.
- In several subjects, the school has not ensured that the most important knowledge is clear enough to teachers. In these subjects, teachers are hindered in designing learning that supports pupils to build logically on what they already know. The school should ensure that teachers are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn.
- Sometimes pupils with SEND do not always get the opportunities they need to extend their thinking. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school

should ensure that staff are well equipped to support pupils with SEND appropriately across the curriculum.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125988
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10376979
<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>	186
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mark Purves
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Jefferson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.midhurst-primary-school.co.uk">www.midhurst-primary-school.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Chichester. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in December 2024. The next section 48 inspection will be within five years of the previous section 48 inspection.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the school’s governing board, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential online staff survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school’s documentation, including leaders’ plans for improving the school, minutes from governing board meetings, and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

### **Inspection team**

Neil Pilsworth, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Sara Staggs

His Majesty’s Inspector

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