

Inspection of Ashurst Wood Primary School

School Lane, Ashurst Wood, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 3QW

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Ashurst Wood Primary School are happy and feel safe. They know that their school is inclusive and say that 'everyone's opinions are celebrated here'. The culture of 'ready, respectful, safe' is exemplified throughout the school. There are strong relationships between adults and pupils. Incidents of bullying are rare. If bullying does happen, leaders deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Pupils enjoy the leadership responsibilities they are offered. These include running their own clubs and being a house captain. Pupils are passionate about working with the local community and talk enthusiastically about the fundraising they have undertaken for local charities.

The curriculum at Ashurst Wood is still being refined. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and ensure that they experience a broad range of subjects. However, in some subjects, learning is not as effective as it could be because the curriculum is not as carefully thought through and delivered as leaders intend. The curriculum in the early years is yet to be fully developed. As such, children do not experience learning in a way that builds effectively on what they already know. This means that not all pupils are achieving as well as they could be.

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

Leaders at this school have inspired pupils to enjoy stories and reading. Pupils talk positively about reading and value the many opportunities leaders provide. Despite this, not enough pupils, particularly those who need more support to be confident and fluent readers, are practising reading regularly enough. Staff do not routinely use decodable books, so some pupils are not able to apply their phonics to be able to read. This means that some pupils are not reading at the expected level. Interventions are sometimes not precise enough and do not focus well enough on pupils' specific gaps in learning.

Curriculum thinking from the early years onwards is not fully developed in every subject. Where this is established, pupils learn well. In these areas, leaders have carefully matched activities to learning, and pupils build on knowledge over time successfully. In subjects where the curriculum is less connected, pupils remember activities, such as making posters or going on the bus, instead of the intended learning. Linked to this, assessment is more developed in some subjects than in others. Where it is successful, teachers identify the gaps in knowledge that pupils have and use this information to adapt their lessons. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to access the learning activities. Pastoral support has been considered carefully, and the opportunity to access a learning mentor to facilitate learning means that some

pupils are accessing the classroom who otherwise would not be. However, this support is not consistently strong, and some pupils with SEND are not always able to access the curriculum as leaders intend. Leaders are aware that these pupils are not yet learning as well as they could be. Training has helped staff to understand ways to adapt learning to meet pupils' needs, including those with SEND. There is still work to do to ensure these pupils are achieving as well as they could be. This is because not enough staff consistently check what pupils know and then adapt the curriculum to meet their needs.

This is a small school where staff know their pupils well. Leaders have created a shared sense of purpose and community. Adults set clear expectations for behaviour. Most pupils engage well in most lessons. When pupils do not demonstrate the expected behaviour, staff address this quickly and effectively. The youngest children are supported well to learn routines quickly. This helps them as they progress through the school. Pupils are proud to be lunchtime buddies to support their peers at play and lunchtimes.

Pupils appreciate the wider opportunities staff build for them. They are proud to represent their school as, for example, part of the school council or the football team. Leaders ensure that pupils are prepared well for their next steps, whether moving from Reception to Year 1 or in the wider world. The citizenship programme supports pupils well, and pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. For example, they talk with confidence about their fundraising for the local community.

Staff speak positively about the school. They say that leaders are considerate of their workload and support them to respond to and support pupils' behaviour. The governor team is mostly new to post since the previous inspection and is confident to challenge and support leaders, particularly around safeguarding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

This is a small school, and adults know their children and families well. All staff are focused on ensuring that every pupil is safe. There are robust systems in place, and leaders take swift action if concerns are raised. Leaders work closely with relevant external agencies to help pupils get the right support. Leaders and governors ensure that the required safeguarding checks are completed.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including online. The 'five fingers of safety' is used effectively to talk about worries and to find a way to deal with them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- What will be taught in Reception and in some key stage 1 and 2 subjects is not fully thought through. Some content that leaders intend pupils to learn has not been included in the plans that teachers are using. This means that there are gaps in what pupils learn over time. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers understand what knowledge is intended to be covered in each year to ensure that pupils learn what they need to.
- The teaching of early reading is weak overall. Pupils are hindered when learning to read because of inconsistent practice, such as some staff not giving children sufficient opportunities to practise their reading. Leaders must ensure that staff are fully trained and are confident to follow the scheme that leaders have adopted.
- The assessment process within some subjects is underdeveloped and does not identify gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use assessment to identify what pupils know and what they need to do to develop and embed their knowledge. They should also use this to address any gaps in learning.

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](#)' 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	125929
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10227664
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	John Durrant
Headteacher	Lisa Hobby
Website	www.ashurstwoodprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school runs a breakfast and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior teachers, office manager, special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders. The inspectors met with members of the teaching staff and with teaching support staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and design and technology. For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school by looking at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training. They also considered policies and procedures and how well adults in the school act on emerging concerns about pupil welfare.
- Inspectors took account of the 53 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey.
- Inspectors observed breaktimes and spoke to pupils from all year groups throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss the training they have received, how leaders support them and how their workload is managed.

Inspection team

Emma Law, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lorraine Phillips

Ofsted Inspector

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