

Hurst Green CofE Primary School and Nursery

London Road, Hurst Green, Etchingham, East Sussex TN19 7PN

Inspection dates

21–22 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders and governors have a vision for pupils to thrive. They have the confidence of the local community to help the school improve further.
- Following a period of staff change, leaders have overseen rapid improvements in teaching. Teaching is now good and pupils are making strong progress.
- Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are now good overall. However, more pupils have the potential to achieve higher standards.
- There is a culture of ongoing improvement. Governors are becoming increasingly knowledgeable and systematic when reviewing the effectiveness of the school. However, there is a need for even more rigour.
- Phonics is taught successfully, and pupils make strong progress. Pupils use their phonic skills effectively when reading and writing.
- Leaders provide a broad curriculum with a range of exciting first-hand experiences. Most pupils make strong progress in a wide range of subjects including music, art and physical education.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are cared for well and feel safe. This is a nurturing school.
- Teachers monitor pupils' progress regularly, and pupils are known as individuals. Teachers plan tasks that meet most pupils' needs.
- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Most disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils are friendly, and respectful to adults and to each other. They have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Leaders use the extra funding for sport thoughtfully. Pupils welcome the additional physical activities organised in lessons and the opportunity to compete with other schools.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is incorporated into the curriculum and is promoted successfully. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Parents and carers are kept well informed. As a result, they are able to help with learning at home.
- Children have a good start in early years with a wide selection of exciting activities. However, as leaders are aware, too few children achieve higher standards.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged, are challenged consistently to attain higher standards.
- Refine governors' skills in holding leaders to account, so that governors can ensure that staffing and resources are used successfully to ensure standards rise further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The strong senior leadership team has ensured that the school is improving rapidly. Leaders make routine visits to classrooms and scrutinise pupils' work. Training linked to key priorities is organised for staff. Staff work together closely to share good practice and develop high expectations. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is improving constantly and standards are rising.
- Leaders assess pupils' achievements routinely. Consequently, they know the pupils well and have an accurate understanding of achievement across the school. Pupils who are falling behind are identified swiftly and appropriate additional support is arranged.
- The curriculum is broad and linked to a range of topics. For example, pupils were observed learning how to create tension in their writing when finding out about Japan. Other pupils made fajitas when learning about Mexico. These topics are currently under review to enable more use of the local area. However, most pupils make strong progress in a variety of subjects.
- A programme of visits and visitors brings learning to life. For example, pupils explore democracy during a visit by the local MP, learn about the Ancient Greeks when visiting the British Museum, and practise their mathematics when visiting the community shop. Pupils are helped to learn music by a specialist teacher in preparation for the Hastings International Music Festival. Pupils enjoy taking part in community projects such as the Christmas and summer fairs. Parents and pupils appreciate the rich variety of activities organised, including bench-ball, badminton and multi-sports. These activities are attended well by pupils and contribute effectively to their learning.
- The school's mission, 'living, loving and learning with God', is supported by governors, staff, parents and pupils. This mission is underpinned by the principles of 'forgiveness, compassion, wisdom, trust, friendship and perseverance'. These school values are effectively woven through the ethos and curriculum of the school.
- Pupils take on responsibility for others, in roles as play leaders, 'green buddies' and worship leaders. They experience and learn about democracy as school councillors. The curriculum and daily assemblies provide routine opportunities for pupils to reflect, share their differences and to hear the views of others. Pupils learn about other cultures when learning about festivals such as Holi and Chinese New Year. As a result, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain, and SMSC development is promoted successfully.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. This is an inclusive school. For example, counselling and mental health days help pupils cope with challenges. The breakfast club provides a safe, happy environment and a healthy breakfast before school.
- Extra funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used thoughtfully. Leaders track the progress of these pupils very closely and use this information effectively to arrange extra learning activities. Leaders

work with a range of external agencies to support pupils' specific needs. Accordingly, most pupils who are disadvantaged, and those with SEND, are making strong progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Together, leaders and governors have a determination for the pupils to thrive. Governors have established oversight of the school and have a growing understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Leaders, together with governors, have the respect and confidence of the local community to lead the school forward.
- Governors are reflective and seeking to improve further. They completed a review recently to ensure that, as a governing body, they have all the skills needed to fulfil their role. Governors attend training and use this learning to help them raise standards.
- Governors monitor the school improvement plan regularly and undertake detailed reviews with leaders. They understand their responsibility to hold leaders to account for pupils' achievements and visit the school frequently. Governors visit lessons, look at pupils' work and talk to staff. However, governors need to challenge leaders even more rigorously, to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential.
- Governors review school expenditure regularly, including extra funding for physical education (PE) and disadvantaged pupils, to ensure that it supports pupils' achievements. Pupils learn a range of skills when taking part in a variety of sporting opportunities, including frequent events with other schools. Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used to provide a broad range of additional activities, such as extra help in the classroom, speech and language therapy, and counselling support. Consequently, most disadvantaged pupils make strong progress across the curriculum.
- Governors have an effective overview of staff training. Staff welcome the training opportunities organised and use this learning to help pupils learn more quickly. Staff morale is high.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff are trained regularly. Staff understand safety procedures and take action promptly when there are concerns. Leaders keep detailed records that are reviewed by a designated governor. Clear systems are in place for use when staff are recruited. As a result, parents are overwhelmingly confident that their children are safe.
- Pupils are taught how to be safe, including how to stay safe when using computers and how to use their bicycles safely on the road. Pupils are very confident that there is always someone to talk to about their concerns, whether from in or out of school. Pupils make use of 'worry boxes' and talk articulately about how they are helped to reflect on their feelings. Pupils are very confident that any issues raised will be dealt with effectively by staff.

- Pupils say that this is a friendly school, and they speak confidently about how they care for, and respect, one another. Older pupils take care of Nursery children when they play together at lunchtime.
- Staff have a good understanding of pupils' individual needs. Leaders work closely with external organisations when needed, to provide specific support for pupils and families. This is a nurturing school. Consequently, pupils are cared for well, and feel safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Following a series of rapid improvements, teaching, learning and assessment have many strengths.
- Most staff have high expectations and strong subject knowledge. Teachers are enthusiastic and plan lessons with interesting activities and a range of resources to help pupils learn. Staff encourage pupils with routine praise and by special mention in assembly. As a result, pupils are attentive, keen to learn and enjoy being challenged.
- Adults question pupils thoughtfully to build on their previous learning and increasingly to make links between subjects. New learning is divided into small steps and questions are made more difficult when a task is too easy. Staff use pupils' assessment information to make changes to their teaching during lessons to meet pupils' differing needs. Most pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects, although, as leaders have recognised, more pupils need to attain higher standards.
- Extra adults in the classroom organise catch-up activities that are targeted carefully to meet pupils' needs, both in small groups and individually. These activities give pupils additional opportunities to practise the skills learned in class and to ask questions. As a result, pupils are attentive and learn quickly.
- Pupils' learning is supported by a growing range of interesting and relevant first-hand experiences. For example, pupils made and wrote recipes in literacy for 'thunder cake' as part of their 'Scrumdiddlyumptious' project. Pupils learned about the work of William Morris and his influence on the local church, while being taught how to sketch flowers. Pupils welcome the chance to use their skills in different ways and to learn new vocabulary.
- Staff know the pupils as individuals, and teachers ensure that lessons meet the various needs of most pupils successfully. Disadvantaged pupils, and those with SEND, are supported effectively to take part in lessons with carefully chosen resources, a range of suitable tasks and appropriate adult support.
- Parents are happy that they are kept up to date with their children's progress and have the opportunity to meet regularly with their class teacher. Teachers set homework in line with school policy, including spellings, reading and tasks linked to class topics. Teachers value homework and leaders are currently refining the policy further to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. Homework makes a positive contribution to most pupils' learning.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff know pupils well and relationships are very good. The school ethos, 'living, loving and learning with God', is reflected in all aspects of school life. Pupils are very respectful of each other, tolerant of differences and they cooperate very well. A visit to a local care home enables pupils to understand the needs of others, and a trip to the lifeboat station helps children to appreciate the dedication of those who serve. Pupils learn to care for the environment and wider world when gardening and when training as 'green buddies'.
- Pupils are known as individuals by staff, a fact very much appreciated by parents. Staff work closely with families to provide support when needed. Plans for pupils with individual needs are reviewed regularly to ensure that these pupils play an active part in the full life of the school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are very confident that any issues they raise with staff are dealt with effectively and promptly. Parents are overwhelmingly satisfied that their children are safe.
- Pupils' mental well-being is a priority for the school. Incidents of bullying and racism are very rare. Parents are confident that any unkind behaviour is dealt with appropriately.
- Pupils speak happily and confidently about their school. They welcome the opportunities to take part in the various activities on offer. Activities include singing in the choir, visiting Glyndebourne and Bodiam Castle, and participating in a dance festival. Pupils learn to win and lose gracefully, and work together as a team when taking part in events with other schools. An outdoor residential visit helps pupils to be independent. Parents appreciate the wide range of activities provided by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Most pupils move around the school calmly and pupils cooperate very well in the playground. Pupils from Nursery through to Year 6 play together at lunchtimes. Pupils appreciate the variety of equipment provided, such as colouring activities, building bricks and a bean-bag target game. Year 6 pupils are appointed as buddies to the youngest children and support the young children in their play. Other pupils enjoy scrambling on large apparatus, taking turns to play on the tyres and ropes. There are quiet areas where pupils sit, talk and listen to music, and energetic pupils enjoy using the spacious field.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and the vast majority are keen to attend school regularly. Pupils arrive punctually. Leaders follow up any absences routinely. They have established positive relationships with families and provide a range of support to help

ensure pupils attend regularly. These include regular meetings and the opportunity to attend breakfast club. One parent commented, 'the staff have been phenomenal and have been working diligently' to support their child's attendance. Overall pupils' attendance is similar to that of other pupils nationally, and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is declining.

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are able to make improvements to their own work using reference books and by following guidance from staff. Pupils work together very well and listen to each other's points of view. They are keen to volunteer answers and to demonstrate solutions to problems in lessons. Pupils take pride in their work, themselves and their school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Following a dip in attainment at key stage 2 in 2018, pupils are now making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, they are now achieving broadly in line with national averages. Most pupils are prepared well for Year 6, and their transfer to secondary school, although more pupils are capable of reaching the higher standards.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress. Leaders arrange individual sequences of learning that are reviewed regularly. Leaders work with, and seek advice from, external organisations when necessary. Pupils with SEND, and their families, are supported very successfully, a fact appreciated by parents. As one parent wrote, 'My child has come on leaps and bounds, having been very behind with all aspects of learning.'
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is monitored closely, and extra activities are arranged to help them catch up when needed. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils make strong progress.
- Pupils enjoy reading a range of exciting texts and participate enthusiastically in reading lessons. Pupils read regularly at home and school. Phonics is taught systematically, and pupils make strong progress in learning their letters and sounds. Pupils use this knowledge independently when reading and writing. Pupils discuss their reading articulately. For example, they are able to identify figurative language and discuss how this helps to create tension in the novel 'Kensuke's Kingdom' by Michael Morpurgo.
- Pupils' work across the school shows improving progress in a range of subjects, including music, art and physical education. Pupils have an increasing range of opportunities to use their numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils record measurements in science and write imaginative diary entries in history. Pupils are motivated by these activities, which contribute effectively to their outcomes.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of early years is strong. The Nursery class became part of the school in 2016 and leaders are working together effectively as a team to ensure consistency. They are constantly seeking to improve and have a clear understanding of the

provision's strengths and weaknesses. Changes have been made to the environment, and assessment systems are now being refined to improve children's learning further.

- Children begin early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although there is some variation from year to year. High expectations throughout the provision ensure that children experience a variety of exciting activities that match their interests and needs. Children enjoyed finding interesting words to describe the alien 'gloop' that they were stirring with their fingers, and others organised the mud kitchen to provide imaginary refreshments for customers. These activities help most children make good progress across all areas of learning.
- Phonics is taught systematically, and children make good progress when learning to read and write their sounds. They are able to use their phonic knowledge when reading aloud, and when writing sentences.
- At the end of early years, children achieve similarly to other children nationally. As a result, most are prepared well for key stage 1. However, too few children are achieving the higher standards.
- Extra funding, both for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, is used successfully to fund a range of extra support. As a result, most of these children make good progress, and catch up with their classmates.
- The early years environment is very attractive and organised successfully to stimulate learning. There is a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities, including opportunities for numeracy and literacy. Children enjoy drawing the newly-hatched chicks in the incubator, sharing a book in the quiet area and making lunch in the playhouse. All of these activities support their learning effectively.
- Relationships are very strong, and staff know the children well. Staff have undertaken safeguarding training and know how to keep the children safe. Children are taught how to be safe, for example, when using a small knife to spread butter on a crispbread for a healthy snack. The vast majority of parents are confident that their children are safe.
- Children enjoy taking part in the fun activities provided for them. Children were seen working together to take turns emptying and filling containers in the water tray and sharing the toy vehicles on a pretend track. They are encouraged not to give up too easily, such as when writing sentences with basic punctuation. Staff teach the children to be independent. For example, adults show children how to find their own sponges for water play. Children learn quickly, and behaviour is good.
- There is a close partnership with parents, which supports children's learning successfully. Parents are happy that they are kept well informed. The weekly 'mother and toddler' group ensures that children are known as individuals prior to starting school. Parents are welcomed into the classroom and contribute to the children's ongoing assessments. This ensures that children settle into school successfully.

School details

Unique reference number	114508
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10058194

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary with a nursery
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Crouch
Head of School	Miss Allison Flack
Telephone number	01580 860375
Website	www.hurstgreen.e-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	hurstgreenoffice@quercusfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 November 2015

Information about this school

- Hurst Green Church of England Primary School joined another primary school to form the Quercus Federation on 1 September 2016 and came under the jurisdiction of a single governing body.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England primary school with a nursery. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2019 and the school was judged to be good overall.
- The school expanded to include Nursery-aged children in 2016.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Some pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The school has a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching, learning and assessment in all classes, jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector talked to pupils, looked at their work and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the head of school and executive headteachers, the chair of the governing body and one other governor, the school's middle leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector took account of the 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 23 free-text responses provided.
- The inspector took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- The inspector also spoke to parents and carers during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the wider work of the school, including an assembly, playtime and lunchtime.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents including: minutes of meetings of the governing body; leaders' and external evaluations of the school's effectiveness; the school development plan; information about leaders' monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress; school policies; behaviour and safety records; safeguarding policies and procedures; and the single central record of recruitment checks made on staff.

Inspection team

Rosemary Addison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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