

# Inspection of Fittleworth CofE Village School

School Lane, Fittleworth, West Sussex RH20 1JB

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Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</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?**

Pupils are safe and happy at this caring school. Pupils know the school's values of perseverance, responsibility, independence, determination and effort, well. They enjoy the school's emphasis on outdoor learning and connection with nature and the wider world. Pupils value their roles and responsibilities highly, such as feeding the school chickens or acting as school councillors. The school promotes a strong focus on creating responsible and active pupils.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are kind and respectful towards staff and each other. If pupils present challenging behaviour, the school adopts sensitive approaches that maintain a calm, purposeful learning environment. Pupils experience a wide range of extra-curricular experiences, including residential trips and regular collaboration with other schools. This helps pupils to develop confidence and readiness for their next stage of education.

In some core and wider curriculum subjects, pupils do not learn the curriculum well. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge that are not addressed as consistently and effectively as they should be. This is reflected in the low published outcomes achieved in recent years. However, the school has identified this and has begun to implement improvements, such as ensuring that pupils at the earliest stages of reading are learning well.

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

The school is ambitious for all pupils, but actions to improve the curriculum since the previous inspection have not achieved this ambition consistently and effectively. At times, some activity choices do not give pupils the opportunity to deepen their understanding. Pupils too often remember the activities they complete without recalling the key knowledge that they were expected to learn.

In some subjects, staff do not consistently review how well pupils have learned the curriculum. Some aspects of the writing curriculum, such as the school's focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar, do not have a strong enough impact on pupils' learning. This leads to some pupils maintaining errors and misconceptions. For example, in writing, pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they should. Some pupils make repeated mistakes in their spelling, punctuation and grammar, without the appropriate support they need. Despite changes that are beginning to improve the curriculum overall, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 are too low.

The school has rightly prioritised phonics and early reading. Leaders have focused on phonics to help ensure pupils make a strong start in the Reception Year. However, beyond the early years, not all staff have received the training and development they need to implement the phonics programme effectively. Books to help pupils learn to read are matched to the sounds that pupils have learned. If any pupils at the start of their reading journey begin to fall behind their peers, they receive appropriate help to catch up. From the beginning of the early years, children enjoy engaging, challenging texts that help them to develop a love of reading. This continues through the school.

In the Reception Year, children learn well. Staff have strong subject knowledge of the early years. They use questions skilfully to extend children's thinking and strengthen their understanding. Key vocabulary is emphasised and developed effectively. The environment is nurturing and engaging. Children enjoy activities such as junk modelling and construction. Children develop their communication and language skills effectively, for example talking about the number of bricks they used to construct turrets in a castle. This creates strong foundations for key stage 1 and beyond.

The school identifies and meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Pupils with SEND access the curriculum successfully. The school works closely with external agencies, such as speech and language specialists, to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support, where needed.

Pupils learn about their physical and mental health well. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. School clubs include activities such as football, gardening and maypole dancing. Pupils participate in school sports regularly and enthusiastically. Swimming lessons in the outdoor pool help pupils to be secure in their swimming abilities by the end of key stage 2. These activities help pupils to build confidence, resilience and a sense of achievement.

Pupils attend school regularly. The school is inclusive and is welcoming to its families. If pupils are at risk of lower attendance, the school does all that it reasonably can to help them be in school regularly. The school analyses attendance information and intervenes directly with parents and families quickly.

Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development. They work closely with the school and external partners such as the local authority and diocese with increasingly positive impact. Staff are proud to work at the school. They are dedicated and committed to helping pupils to thrive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some aspects of the writing curriculum, such as the school's focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar, do not have a strong enough impact on pupils' learning. As a result, too many pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the end of key stage 2. The school should ensure that teaching strategies to support pupils with their writing build pupils' knowledge and understanding consistently and effectively.
- In the wider curriculum, checks to evaluate what pupils know and can do are not as effective as they should be. Sometimes, pupils do not understand core knowledge

securely before new curriculum content is introduced. The school should ensure that staff identify and resolve errors and misconceptions in pupils' understanding. In doing so, this will help pupils to build their learning more securely over time.

- In some subjects, some activity choices do not help children learn the intended curriculum as effectively as they should. This means that some pupils are not learning securely and building their knowledge and understanding over time. The school should ensure that the staff receive effective training and monitoring so that the curriculum is implemented effectively and consistently well across all subjects.
- Beyond Reception Year there is an inconsistent approach to the teaching of phonics. This means that by the end of key stage 2 some pupils are not becoming as accurate and fluent readers as well as they should. The school needs to build on the early years provision and ensure consistency and accuracy in the implementation of the phonics programme so that pupils become confident readers who are well prepared for their next stage of education.

## 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>	125984
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341616
<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>	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jon Nodding
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Burnett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fittleworthschool.org.uk">www.fittleworthschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a religious character. It is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Chichester. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 4 March 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

## 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 and/or sixth form 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The school's previous inspection in 2019 was carried out under a different inspection framework.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the local governing body, a member of the local authority and diocese, and senior staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. 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, where possible, 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 spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at break and lunchtime.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff and considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed from parents through Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kate Owbridge

Ofsted Inspector

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