

# Inspection of a good school: North Downs Primary School

Wheelers Lane, Brockham, Betchworth, Surrey RH3 7LA

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Inspection dates:

6 and 7 June 2023

## **Outcome**

North Downs Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils are very proud of their school. They talk with enthusiasm about their lessons and the care that they receive from staff. Pupils enjoy, and make the most of, the school's grounds. They have worked with staff to establish gardens and are working with community groups and charities on protecting their local environment. The behaviour of pupils around the school site is exemplary. They are taught to treat it and each other with respect.

The school is split over three sites, in three different villages. Leaders have ensured that this still feels like one school with one vision for their pupils. This vision includes the high expectations that leaders have for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is especially the case for the wider development of all pupils. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities to learn from visitors, go on trips and learn outside the classroom. The well-being of pupils, and others in the school community, is a clear priority for leaders. At times, expectations could be raised for what pupils learn through some of their subjects. However, in most cases, pupils achieve highly and are confident in discussing the things that they have learned.

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

The importance of reading throughout the school is fully recognised by leaders. Pupils learn to become confident and fluent readers, and they read with obvious pleasure. A recently introduced phonics scheme is helping those at the earliest stage of reading to make good progress. Teachers are adept at identifying those who are struggling to read. Pupils receive timely and highly personalised support to catch up and then keep up with their peers. However, at times, lessons in reading are not as sharply focused as they could be. As a result, some pupils are unsure of what to do, and time is then not used well. Usually, though, pupils benefit from very well-planned lessons in a wide range of subjects. These lessons are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour, and most classrooms have a calm atmosphere where pupils can concentrate on their work. Teachers quickly address any disruption when it does occur.

Leaders have carefully planned the activities for children in Reception classes. Staff here know the children and their learning needs very well. They direct children to activities that staff modify to meet the child's needs in the moment. This form of ongoing assessment can be seen across the school in many subjects. Teachers are able to identify how pupils are progressing, and they adapt their planning to help close any gaps in knowledge. Teachers also make effective adaptations to support pupils with SEND. Teachers work closely with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and external agencies to make sure that pupils' needs are identified and met.

Leaders have organised the curriculum for some subjects into termly topics. Where this has been most successful, leaders have carefully planned the subjects to be combined in a way that supports what pupils learn. However, at times, leaders have not been clear enough about what knowledge pupils should learn during a topic and how they intend that one subject should link to another within these topics.

Teachers make effective use of the extensive school grounds to support learning in the classroom. The leader for learning outside the classroom works with teachers to identify opportunities for pupils to apply what has been learned in different settings. These outdoor spaces are also used to help with pupils' wider development. Pupils are given various opportunities to spend time outside. They are taught about the natural world while also learning about independence and resilience. There is a very well-planned curriculum for personal, social and health education. This includes relationships and sex education and health education, which is introduced in an age-appropriate way. This curriculum is adapted to meet the emerging needs of the pupils and to address concerns and questions that they have. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is taken seriously by leaders. Pupils are taught to be respectful and accepting of differences. As one pupil said, 'We want this school to be welcoming to everyone and we know that we play a part in that.'

Staff at the school are very well supported by leaders. Leaders are ambitious for their pupils. They recognise that these ambitions can only be realised if teachers can focus on the areas that will benefit pupils the most. Leaders, therefore, consider staff's workload and well-being when making decisions.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff have frequent training on identifying and managing risks. Leaders follow up on this training to ensure that it is having an impact. When concerns are raised, leaders act swiftly to get pupils help. Potential risks around the school's sites, and with recruitment, are managed extremely well.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. This includes how to keep themselves safe online. When issues have arisen, leaders have been quick to adjust the curriculum so that they are addressed and that pupils get the advice that they need.

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

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

- Routines for the teaching of reading are not yet well established. As a result, pupils are sometimes confused about what they are expected to do during these lessons, and some miss out on important learning activities. Leaders should ensure that staff have consistent approaches for the teaching of reading.
- In some subjects, the important knowledge for each topic has not been clearly identified. This results in pupils learning fragmented knowledge about these subjects which they then struggle to apply. Leaders need to ensure that staff are confident about what pupils should learn from each topic.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2014.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124949
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268996
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	426
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Wendy Anne Mumford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Douglass
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northdowns.surrey.sch.uk">www.northdowns.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is split over three sites in three neighbouring villages. There is a Reception class at both Betchworth and Brockham and key stage 1 classes at Leigh and Brockham. All key stage 2 classes are based at Brockham.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher, the SENCo and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with members of the local governing body and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 also spoke

to the subject leads of other subjects and the leader for learning outside the classroom about their curriculums.

- The single central record was checked, and the inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead and members of the safeguarding team about their approaches to safeguarding. They also sampled case studies and documentation and spoke with a range of staff and pupils about their knowledge of safeguarding.
- The inspectors met with a range of staff and considered their views through the confidential online staff survey.
- The inspectors met with pupils formally and informally around the school, in lessons and at playtime. The inspectors met with some parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Enser, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Claire Martin-O'Donoghue

Ofsted Inspector

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