

Inspection of a good school: Motcombe Infants' School

Macmillan Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 1SN

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2023

Outcome

Motcombe Infants' School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high ambition for all pupils. The purposeful and well-considered learning environment promotes pupils' learning successfully. Pupils rise to the challenges set by their teachers and show interest in what they study. All pupils are supported to learn well across the curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is impressive. They are polite, caring and respectful towards each other and the adults within school. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying at the school. They know they can speak to an adult in school if they have any worries. Leaders deal with incidents of unkind behaviour effectively. Pupils are happy and feel safe. Playtimes are sociable and harmonious occasions. One pupil commented, 'We are kind to each other and if we see someone alone in the playground, we ask them to play with us.'

Pupils look forward to the after-school clubs. These include nature, tennis, rugby, karate, football and choir. Leaders encourage pupils to learn about and understand the world around them. This is reflected in the school's ethos, 'helping people because we can.'

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

Leaders have ensured the ambitious curriculum is well developed. They have identified what pupils will learn and in what order from early years onwards. This helps staff to ensure that pupils build well on their previous learning. Leaders have provided training so that staff have strong subject knowledge. Teachers use assessment well to ensure that lessons are engaging, thought-provoking and well suited to pupils' starting points. Through teachers' careful questioning, pupils who struggle receive prompt support. Consequently, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that staff have secure knowledge to identify and support pupils with SEND effectively.

In the 2022 national assessments, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as previous cohorts. Leaders have subsequently taken action and put in place effective strategies to address gaps in pupils' learning. This is beginning to bring about the required improvement for the vulnerable learners.

A well-planned and structured approach to reading is in place. Consequently, pupils value books and stories. The introduction of a new phonics scheme has strengthened the teaching of early reading. A love of reading is created through pupils being exposed to a diverse range of texts, including the school's 'Favourite Five' book sharing programme. Children in Reception quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. They blend these sounds well to read words. This strong practice continues throughout the school and pupils swiftly learn to read fluently. Any weaker readers are supported by staff to develop their phonic knowledge through daily intervention in speedy phonics and speedy reading.

Pupils are keen and confident mathematicians. This is because teachers have thought carefully about how best to support pupils' mathematical thinking. For example, in Reception, pupils were learning about the number six. There were activities, both inside and outside, to reinforce the learning using concrete and pictorial resources.

Leaders prioritise promoting pupils' wider development through a variety of opportunities. Staff help pupils to develop an age-appropriate understanding of the wider world and their role in it. This includes making a positive difference to the school and wider community, including through charity work. Pupils learn how money raised for charity makes a difference to other people. Pupils followed the charity journey of Rob Burrow and Kevin Sinfield for motor neurone disease awareness and they can explain where their money is going.

Pupils behave well in lessons because of the high expectations and well-established routines. Teachers ensure that pupils are attentive and respond well to questions. This means that pupils have a positive approach to learning. The pupils are polite, caring and respectful towards each other, the staff and visitors. The school provides a calm and welcoming environment in the classroom and around the school. Routines are established and followed by all pupils. Pupils said that bullying does not happen. They said behaviour is good but if they were bothered by someone they would tell the teacher and it would be dealt with. A pupil stated, 'We are kind to each other and if we see someone alone in the playground we ask them to play with us.'

The school is well led and managed. Leaders consider teachers' workload when making decisions, for example to make sure that the way they use assessment is manageable. Governors are committed, enthusiastic and determined to help the school continue to improve. They talk knowledgeably about initiatives introduced to improve learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide high-quality training so that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. Staff are alert to any sign that a pupil may be at risk of harm and take this responsibility seriously. They record concerns promptly and carefully. Leaders take swift and effective action to get pupils and families the help that they need.

Pupils feel safe and know they can speak to an adult if they have any worries. They are confident that the adults will take their concerns seriously. They know how to recognise risk and keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the most recent national assessments, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as those in previous cohorts. Leaders should ensure that the strategies that are in place are embedded so that all pupils are learning what is expected.

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 2012.

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	114460
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10256532
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Debbie Aggett
Headteacher	Tracy Robinson
Website	www.motcombe.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast club run by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and music. As part of each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders and spoke to staff and pupils. The inspector also visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement. The inspector met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders and teachers.
- During the inspection, the inspector spoke with the chair of the governing body, three governors and a representative from the local authority.

- The arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class and at other times of the day.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and a review of Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Debbie Bennett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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