

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Sheepscombe Primary School

Far End, Sheepscombe, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 7RL

Inspection date:

17 December 2024

Outcome

Sheepscombe Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Sheepscombe is a happy school with a family atmosphere. Parents and carers are rightly overwhelmingly positive about the school. This is because their children are happy and do well at Sheepscombe. Parents describe the school as, 'A wonderful, inclusive school with a caring close-knit feeling.'

Pupils enjoy their lessons and get on well together. The school has successfully improved the sequence of learning in all subjects. This is making it easier for pupils to learn and remember important information. Parents rightly appreciate the effective support the school provides for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The support and care that pupils receive prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

The school has high expectations for what all pupils can achieve. Pupils respond well to this. Staff know pupils well and understand what interests and engages them. The school makes good use of this knowledge to ensure lessons and extra-curricular opportunities are of interest to pupils. This helps the school get the best from pupils.

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

The school succeeds in its aim to produce readers, not just children who can read. A carefully thought-out approach to the teaching of reading provides most pupils with the basic skills of reading from an early age. This is enhanced by a school-wide commitment to ensuring that pupils find books interesting and enjoyable. The school does this by exposing pupils to quality texts that they will enjoy. This starts with the rhymes that children learn in the nursery, leading on eventually to the book club on offer to older children in the school. As a result, most pupils in the school quickly become fluent readers

who gain knowledge and pleasure from the books they read. A small number of pupils do not get enough practice in the basics. These pupils struggle to become fluent in reading and writing.

In all areas of the curriculum, the school has carefully thought about the most important information that it wants pupils to learn. This is making it easier for teachers to identify pupils who need extra help. As a result, most pupils are learning the curriculum well and increasing what they know and can do. Typically, staff support pupils with the most complex SEND effectively.

Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are confident and self-assured. Pupils enjoy the variety of clubs, activities and trips on offer to them. They say that there is something for everyone, including sewing, stencilling, reading and building models. Pupils enjoy the many chances that they get to work together. This supports their social and personal development well.

The school provides pupils with regular opportunities to work with older and younger children in the school, often as whole-school projects. These activities successfully promote the family atmosphere that gives pupils a strong sense of belonging. Children in the early years, including those in the Nursery, are well looked after. Staff understand their needs and support them to enjoy school and become independent learners.

The school provides a wealth of different activities to support pupils' personal development. Opportunities to support pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are ever present in the school. This can be seen in the different opportunities for older pupils to exercise responsibility and develop leadership skills. This includes being a playground monitor, reading buddy or school councillor.

Governors keep a watchful eye on pupils' learning and support the school to identify areas for improvement. They regularly visit the school to monitor and understand the experiences of pupils. The school has an increasing focus on analysing the reasons for pupils' persistent absence. More pupils are now attending regularly as a result.

Leadership in the school has improved since the previous inspection. Leaders have a clear vision for the school. This enables staff to work closely together. The team approach ensures that new methods and strategies are introduced effectively. For example, the current range of teaching practices employed to help pupils remember key knowledge. However, sometimes too many improvements are undertaken at the same time. This reduces the effectiveness of new developments.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of pupils struggle to become fluent in reading and writing. These pupils make frequent errors because their phonics knowledge is not reliable. The school should ensure that all pupils gain the secure phonics knowledge that they need to become accurate and confident readers and writers.
- The school is not clear about the most important areas of performance that need to be enhanced. Sometimes more improvements are identified than can be successfully delivered. To develop further the school should ensure that priorities are clearly identified and carefully followed through.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

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

Unique reference number	115534
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10344504
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Debby Thacker and Sachi Hatakenaka (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Vicky Dangerfield
Website	www.sheepscombeschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs an on-site nursery for three- and four-year-olds.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club run by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Phil Minns, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steve Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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