

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Little Common School

Shepherds Close, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN39 4SQ

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 June 2025

Outcome

Little Common School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Louise Moor. The school is part of The Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mark Talbot, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nick Taunt.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff and pupils are rightly proud of their school. Effective support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve highly alongside their peers. Pupils are supported to strive for excellence in everything that they do. They actively pursue the school's values to be confident, resilient, ambitious, creative, considerate and healthy. Pupils thrive in the many opportunities to carry out leadership roles, such as buddies and play leaders. Staff recognise and celebrate pupils' efforts routinely, building pupils' confidence and a shared sense of belonging. For example, pupils are commended as 'Heroes of Little Common' for the strong positive impact they make on the life of the school, and each other.

Behaviour is exemplary. Staff have high and clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and apply the behaviour policy fairly and consistently. Pupils know the school's routines thoroughly. If pupils find managing their own behaviour challenging, they receive the help that they need to succeed. Pupils attend school regularly.

Staff have the highest expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils reach and exceed these expectations consistently. Staff are highly skilled in leading and implementing the curriculum, often sharing best practice within and beyond the school. There is no ceiling

on pupils' learning. Pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education.

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

The curriculum is highly ambitious. Staff identify the precise knowledge and key vocabulary that they want pupils to learn. Lessons build pupils' knowledge and understanding cumulatively. For example, in music pupils learn the pentatonic scale and staff notation confidently, building on their prior learning well. In art, pupils use and apply their knowledge of Impressionism to create their own artwork skilfully. Wider curriculum subjects such as history, art and design and physical education (PE) inspire and motivate pupils, helping them to achieve well.

Staff have expert subject knowledge. They check pupils' understanding systematically. They offer precise feedback which helps pupils to identify their own misconceptions to become increasingly accurate in their work. For example, spelling and punctuation errors are revisited, corrected routinely, and not repeated. Staff give clear feedback to pupils to support this. The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and ensures that the curriculum is adapted to match their needs closely.

Children make a strong start from the beginning of Reception Year. They are deeply engaged and highly motivated in their learning. Children sustain high levels of concentration. They are taught to share and cooperate well. Children learn writing skills systematically, such as pencil grip, letter formation and word spacing to become increasingly skilled and proficient. They love the nursery rhymes, songs and stories they share and are enthused by the inspirational learning provided that makes the early years irresistible to them.

Work in pupils' books is presented carefully and to a high standard. Pupils love reading, books and literature. Staff use ambitious texts that help pupils to develop their reading proficiently, including heritage texts, traditional nursery rhymes and fairy tales. These texts are carefully built on from the early years. Phonics is taught expertly. If any pupils fall behind their peers, they receive timely support and catch up quickly.

Behaviour across the school is exemplary. In classrooms and around the school there is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils show respect for adults and for each other. Staff and pupils have very positive relationships. Routines and expectations are embedded from the early years through to the end of key stage 2. At breaktimes, thoughtful use of the environment, equipment and resources means that pupils can access team and/or independent activities and enjoy successful playtimes together. The environment is vibrant, respectful and full of joy.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. The personal, social and health education programme is particularly strong, helping to develop pupils' character, confidence and resilience in an exemplary way. The school provides a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' talents and interests. Educational trips and visits help pupils to remember the curriculum and build rich cultural experiences meaningfully. These opportunities are monitored

closely to ensure that all pupils are fully involved throughout their time at the school. Further opportunities to perform such as a re-enactment of the Battle of Hastings and choir concerts provide pupils with the chance to grow in their sense of belonging and self-belief.

Trustees and governors understand their roles and responsibilities well. Staff value the ways the school engages with them and helps them to manage workload successfully. Leaders create excellent opportunities for staff to enhance their professional development. This helps to inform ways to further enhance the already exceptional educational offer to pupils. It develops staff's expertise and helps them to refine their practice, while ensuring that their workload is manageable. This gives staff the confidence to adopt teaching approaches that get the best from pupils. Staff value the care, support and training that the school provides them

Parents and carers are supportive of the school. One parent summarised the thoughts of many others, saying, 'Brilliant school. Everyone works so hard, and they are all appreciated.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 outstanding 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 predecessor school, Little Common School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

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	149894
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10379949
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	618
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Taunt
CEO of the trust	Mark Talbot
Headteacher	Louise Moor
Website	www.littlecommon.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Little Common School converted to become an academy school in October 2023. When its predecessor school, Little Common School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding for overall effectiveness.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the CEO, trustees and members of the local governing body and other senior staff.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and 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' interest 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

Paul Bateman

Ofsted Inspector

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