

Sompting Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134896
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381755
Inspection dates	29 February–1 March 2012
Lead inspector	David Marshall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Leng
Headteacher	Richard Cave
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 June 2009
School address	White Styles Road Lancing West Sussex BN15 0BU
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Marshall Additional inspector

Gillian Bosschaert Additional inspector

Jonathan Cooper Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out at two days' notice. The inspectors spent nine hours observing teaching, which included visiting 19 class lessons and a number of smaller teaching groups. In all, 16 teachers were observed. In addition, discussions were held with different groups of pupils, governors, the headteacher, most staff members and a number of parents and carers. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance and progress, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, school policies and curriculum planning documents. In addition, questionnaires from 121 parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils, were analysed.

Information about the school

Sompting is larger than the average-sized primary school. It opened as an all-through primary in September 2008, following the amalgamation of a first school and a middle school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The number that come from minority ethnic backgrounds is growing. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above that found nationally. In 2011, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Sompting Village Primary is a good school. It has improved rapidly in a number of key areas since it opened just over three years ago, indicating a good capacity for sustained improvement. Parents and carers are very pleased with all the school does for their children. The school is not yet outstanding because there are variations in the quality of teaching that mean that in some lessons, not all pupils are enabled to make the progress they could.
- The rates of pupils' progress and their achievements have improved every year since 2009. The pupils leaving the school in Year 6 in 2011 made good progress overall, and the standards they achieved in English and mathematics were average, from their well below expected levels when they began school. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children make an excellent start to their schooling.
- Teaching is good and continuing to improve. Very occasionally, learning is less successful when the pace slows in lessons. Teachers know pupils' academic development well through the good use of assessment, and pupils' progress is tracked carefully.
- Behaviour is outstanding and attendance has improved markedly since the school opened. Attendance is now above average. The strategies introduced to manage behaviour have ensured that pupils are aware of what is expected of them.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how to keep pupils very safe. A rigorous focus on the quality of teaching, an effective programme of performance management and utilisation of professional development opportunities are successfully reducing variations in teaching that remain across the school. The school has rightly identified the sharing of best teaching practice amongst staff as a strategy for further enhancing pupils' progress. The exciting curriculum enables pupils to enjoy an extensive range of activities that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by July 2013, focusing on:
 - improving the pace of learning in some lessons
 - extending opportunities for staff to observe the best practice in the school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils join the school with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. Throughout the school, all groups of pupils achieve well and they are prepared well for the next stage of their education. As the school records show, and inspection evidence confirms, all pupils, regardless of their ability, are now making at least good progress.

Effective organisation and careful assessments enable children to make excellent progress very quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This exceptional start is built upon well so that by the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is now consistently in line with expectations for their age. Pupils' standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are average. This year's national assessments for pupils in Year 6 showed them achieving average standards in mathematics, but above average levels in reading and in writing, and making good progress based on their results in Year 2. The higher-attaining pupils were enabled to achieve above average standards.

In mathematics, pupils' past work and work observed within lessons illustrates their growing confidence in basic and more advanced number calculations and problem solving. Throughout the school, the pupils' work on display and in their books clearly shows the good progress they make across other subjects. The fact that a whole year group won the performance prize in a regional dance and drama competition was no great surprise to the staff.

Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. This stems from the high priority the school gives to meeting their needs. Any gaps in progress between them and their peers are closed effectively. Evidence in lessons, from pupils' books and the school's assessment data indicates that the growing number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are making equally good progress.

Parents and carers expressed a high level of satisfaction in the progress their children make and are appreciative of the efforts the school makes to involve them in their children's learning. Inspection evidence fully concurs with the parents' very positive views.

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Quality of teaching

The teaching observed on the inspection was good overall, and sometimes outstanding. Teaching is good over time as staff prepare lessons carefully, matching the work well to pupils' different needs and linking different aspects of learning. They use learning resources effectively to assist the pupils' understanding. Teachers' good knowledge of the content they teach enables them to pose questions effectively and also answer pupils' questions fully. In a Year 3 class lesson, the way the pupils' study of Victorian times was linked effectively to their literacy work and design and technology was enhanced by their discussions.

Staff provide welcoming, interesting and attractive classroom environments which support learning well. Very occasionally learning opportunities are missed as the pace of the lessons drops, and as a result, learning dips. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the wide range of activities for the outdoor area enhances different aspects of the children's development, including interesting opportunities for their physical development. Lessons in the Reception classes are very well paced, with good use of time. Pupils in the Reception and Year 1 classes develop good skills in reading and use an effective range of strategies to enhance their knowledge of letter sounds to read unknown or difficult words.

Throughout the school, staff have excellent strategies to manage behaviour. Teachers regularly use paired talk which supports pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively and also their social development through negotiating ideas. This was very evident in a Year 6 class where the pupils' responses to difficult questions related to Beowulf were a surprise to them all. Marking is helpful and supports the pupils' next steps in learning. Staff keep detailed records of pupils' progress and use them to ensure pupils are well challenged in most lessons.

The impact of the well-planned curriculum on the quality of teaching is clearly evident; communication skills are developed well through the teaching approach. Teaching of basic skills is good, is applied across the curriculum, and contributes to the pupils' good progress. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are taught effectively across the curriculum. Teaching assistants are deployed well. Thanks to the very effective work of the special educational needs coordinator, extra teaching expertise for pupils who have difficulties in reading and mathematics is utilised well and helps specific pupils catch up. Pupils often contribute effectively to this process and suggest extra pointers for success before they begin the activity. Parents' and carers' views that teaching is good are confirmed by the inspection.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils in class and around the school is outstanding and all evidence shows that this is typical over time. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying but say there is no bullying of any description in the school as they are all friends. They are confident that if any issues or concerns around bullying did arise,

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they would be dealt with swiftly and sensitively; as one older pupil observed in discussion, and all others agreed with him, 'The teachers all care about you very much.' Throughout the school, pupils are enthusiastic learners. Attendance is above average, as pupils enjoy all their time at school.

The school has devised an extremely broad curriculum that also focuses on pupils working with others. This strategy was demonstrated particularly effectively in a session where the Year 4 pupils moved quickly and quietly into the large area outside their classroom to work out fractions with cubes. The enthusiasm and ability they showed in working together in doing this was impressive.

Pupils show very caring attitudes to each other and know there is always someone they can turn to in moments of difficulty, either academic or personal. They acquire an outstanding awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils were keen to show how much they enjoy the responsibility of the school council or being buddies at lunchtimes with pupils in other classes. The school council is justifiably proud of the input it has made to influence changes. Almost all parents and carers report that standards of behaviour in the school are high and, without exception, they agree that their children are kept safe at all times.

Leadership and management

Consistent and rigorous leadership and a focus on the correct priorities have resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection. The whole-school commitment to do the best for the pupils, led by the exemplary leadership of the headteacher, is clearly evident in the strength of relationships and the staff's dedication to their work. Governors bring a wide range of skills to their planning and take specific responsibilities. They challenge and ask questions. Their visits to school keep them fully aware of the school's development. School self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. The school improvement plan focuses clearly on raising standards and teaching even further. Senior and middle leaders play a pivotal role in the rigorous monitoring of teaching and in seeking to address any inconsistencies between classes. The school has accurately identified the necessity for teachers to learn further from one another by sharing and observing best practice in each other's teaching. The rising results, the significant improvement since the last inspection, the commitment of staff and governors, together with the clear vision of leaders, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Almost without exception, parents and carers hold the school in high regard. They commented on their children's enjoyment of learning, the way the school welcomes all children and the care shown by all staff. Inspection evidence supports these views. As one parent wrote, reflecting the views of many, 'You will notice when you enter the building what a special place the school is, from the friendly and professional staff to the happy, well-behaved children to the beautiful displays and well-kept classrooms. The school has a real 'family' atmosphere and a wonderful sense of community. I also feel that the school is particularly well led by the head and deputy who are easily accessible and always very visible to parents and carers.'

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The good curriculum is well planned, with a secure focus on key areas of learning. Different subjects are integrated together in a natural way. The range of extra-curricular clubs is really enjoyed by the pupils. They benefit from sporting opportunities which support their healthy lifestyles. These activities assist the acquisition of pupils' knowledge and support their understanding well. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly, and links with other schools are a strong feature of the school's philosophy.

Excellent attention is paid by leaders and managers at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safeguarding for the pupils. Pupils' safety and well-being are paramount at all times, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be in. The senior leaders and governors, supported well by all staff, have very good systems in place to tackle discrimination should it occur and in ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils across all aspects of the school's work.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

3 March 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Sompting Village Primary School, Lancing BN15 0BU

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would now like to tell you what we found out about your school. We agree with what you told us – Sompting is a good school. These are the main reasons why we thought the school was good:

- You make good progress because of good teaching and you really try hard at all times. We were impressed that most of you knew what to do to make your work even better.
- We saw that you are very appreciative of the many activities you experience both during and after school.
- Your headteacher and staff do a really good job in organising the school.
- You all really enjoy being in school. Many of you try very hard to help others. For instance, the school council and Buddies at lunchtime do a great job.
- You behave exceptionally well, work hard and listen very carefully to your teachers – all of this helps you to succeed.
- All the adults in the school look after you very carefully. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.

I have agreed with your headteacher and teachers that even in a good school, there are some things that will help it to become even better. We have asked them to make sure that, no matter which class you are in, all your lessons are as good as the best and keep you actively involved at all times. We know your teachers are all working hard to be the best they can be and we want them to learn good practice from each other as well.

You can help too by listening carefully and taking note of what your teachers say. Then you will all make even better progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Lead inspector

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