

Hawthorns First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125950
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381157
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2011
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracy Gayler
Headteacher	Kathy Offer
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2009
School address	Poplar Road Durrington Worthing BN13 3EZ
Telephone number	01903 268174
Fax number	01903 693074
Email address	head@hawthorns.w-sussex.sch.uk

Age group	3–8
Inspection date(s)	15–16 September 2011
Inspection number	381157

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. During the inspection, 14 lessons and seven teachers were observed. Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, parents, carers and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the governing body minutes. In addition, questionnaires from 79 parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils, were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies for assessment in providing for pupils' individual needs, and the level of achievement of the current pupils.
- Pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of the school's measures to enhance levels of attendance and pupils' cultural development.
- Whether the school's priorities for improving teaching and learning have been achieved and contributed to the overall outcomes for pupils.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels, including the governors, are enabling the necessary continuity and improvement.

Information about the school

Hawthorns is a smaller than average school with six classes in the main school, and two classes in the Little Owls Nursery. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with many choosing to come to the school from some distance away. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. A significant, and increasing, proportion of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These needs include behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The number of pupils leaving and entering the school other than at the usual time is also above the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in separate Nursery and Reception classes. Hawthorns has Artsmark Gold and International School (Foundation Level) awards.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hawthorns is a good school which is improving rapidly. Pupils benefit a great deal from how well the school is led and managed as well as from the strong links with parents, carers and the local community. This is evident from pupils' good personal development and well-being, the wide-ranging effective curriculum and their high level of enjoyment. Parents and carers are particularly impressed with the good quality of care and education their children receive right from the Nursery. One parent summed up the views of almost all by writing, 'There have been many positive changes in the last year that make me believe that the leadership of the school is definitely going in the right direction.'

The school's positive reputation in the community and improved pupil outcomes reflect the headteacher's and staff's shared aspirations and ambition for the school. The wide range of systems and strategies put into place to address the school's well-identified priorities has resulted in considerable progress in the last year and improvement since the last inspection. For example, there has been marked improvement in the overall quality of teaching, and in the effectiveness of monitoring procedures. Given its track record of improvement, rising standards and innovation in many areas, together with its detailed and effective self-evaluation procedures, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Due to the effective organisation and careful early assessments, pupils begin to make good progress from the moment they enter the Nursery. This is built on well throughout the rest of the school. Pupils' attainment is now average and the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2011 were in line with the school's records and expectations, and significantly above those in the two previous years. As the leaders had identified, the standards reached in writing were below those in other subjects. The planned changes and systems they have put in place to improve writing provision have already begun to close the small variation in attainment.

All staff work hard to create attractive classrooms with imaginative displays. A very positive learning environment is evident that stimulates learning. The overall quality of teaching is good and lessons are planned to make sure that all pupils enjoy learning. The curriculum covers all subjects and is enhanced by a very good range of additional activities, visits and visitors. Although there is much good and outstanding teaching and learning, on occasions, opportunities to provide pupils with activities that excite, interest and are relevant to them are missed and the pace and rate of learning slows. Also, although pupils have targets to aim for and receive feedback on

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

their work, not all clearly understand what they need to do to improve.

Safeguarding procedures are good and pupils' safety and well-being are paramount at all times. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and say that they feel very safe, reflecting the staff's high expectations and effective level of care and moral guidance. Pupils have a good awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Due to the school's efforts and good care and support, and pupils' great enjoyment of school, attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

Leaders and managers at all levels evaluate the quality of the school's work accurately and produce detailed plans of how they want the school to progress. However, due to the school's rigorous focus on improving teaching and learning this year, some of their policy documents are not up-to-date and are not understood sufficiently well by all staff on how they will impact on provision and outcomes. Nevertheless, the school has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly improving teaching, raising standards and the level of attendance.

The school does much to promote its place in the local community and has good partnerships with many organisations and local businesses. Its audit of community cohesion, undertaken by governors and staff, is underpinned by a careful analysis of the school's context. Effective links exist with other schools and these have led to the school's International award and increased pupils' awareness and understanding of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure over the next year that recent changes are embedded and all teaching is as good as the best by:
 - consistently giving pupils clear guidance so that they know how and what must be improved
 - ensuring exciting and relevant activities are always provided to maintain pupils' interest and concentration so that the pace and rate of learning never slows.
- Ensure that policy documents used to promote improvement in the school are up-to-date and that all staff understand the impact of provision on school outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Lesson observations indicate that all groups of pupils, regardless of their ability, are now making at least good progress. The school's own monitoring and inspection findings confirm that there are many strengths in learning and pupil outcomes are good. Pupils enter the school with basic skills that are below those expected for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is average and the more-able pupils are doing especially well. Pupils' increased success in reading is due to the school's strong

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

emphasis on developing speaking, listening and reading skills across different subjects. This was evident in a good Year 2 lesson where the teacher very skilfully drew pupils’ attention to the shape of letters while teaching numbers and coordinates, and learning was consolidated by making pupils listen carefully to each other’s responses. There is good achievement across a range of subjects and all groups of pupils achieve good outcomes. For instance, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and art are key strengths, reflected in the school’s Artsmark award and the displays showing pupils’ talents to good effect.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make consistently good progress. This is because they benefit from tailored individual or small group support that is appropriately matched to their specific learning needs. Targeted support is particularly effective in developing pupils’ writing skills. Activities that involve them using all of their senses to learn letter sounds, and clusters of sounds, aid their confidence in writing for different purposes. This has a positive effect on their learning in all other subjects.

The pupils’ keenness to succeed at school was demonstrated admirably by the Year 1 classes in their responses to the mysterious arrival during the inspection of a ‘treasure chest’ found in a castle for their attention in the school hall. This well-organised link to their topic on castles enabled pupils to further develop their reading and writing skills while focusing on the activities associated with the treasure chest. Pupils’ knowledge of how to keep safe is good. They are given a good grounding in citizenship and contribute to the community through being buddies, or members of the pupils’ opinion group (POGS). These efforts, and those of the ECO Council, have ensured that pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and environmental matters. The improved standards reached by pupils, combined with their keen appetite for teamwork, and their interest in learning, suitably prepare them for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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

The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good. In many lessons, there are strong elements that help pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Teachers are a keen and enthusiastic team who strongly encourage pupils in their learning. They use a range of techniques, such as good use of interactive computer whiteboards, to make lessons enjoyable. Most teachers keep up a brisk pace, provide interesting and relevant activities, and help pupils to meet their high expectations by asking questions that encourage them to think hard. In a series of good lessons in Year 1, the teachers gave high-quality feedback to test pupils' understanding, introduced extra challenges and used praise effectively to raise pupils' expectations of what they were capable of achieving. In these lessons, pupils were given the opportunity to assess their own and each other's work, identifying what to do next. This helped them to understand what they need to do to improve. However, these effective aspects of teaching are not yet consistently seen throughout the school.

Assessment procedures to check pupils' progress have improved markedly since the previous inspection. This information is being used more consistently to plan activities that generally meet pupils' differing needs and fire their enthusiasm. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well through very effective personal, social and health education, and there is a good focus on using visits to widen pupils' life experiences. The school's strong emphasis on promoting pupils' emotional well-being results in them feeling secure and parents and carers agree that children are looked after well. Induction programmes are excellent for those who arrive throughout the year. Good support for vulnerable pupils and close partnerships with outside agencies ensure that the needs of these pupils are met effectively.

Throughout the school, positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the supportive ethos for study. As a result, the atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is caring and supportive. The impact of the school's effective support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils' good standards of behaviour and social skills.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where	2

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

relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher’s leadership is outstandingly effective and, with the complementary skills of the assistant headteacher and senior leadership team, significant strides forward have been made this year. All staff follow their lead and teamwork is an aspect stressed by all in the school. One way in which everyone follows their lead is to relate extremely effectively with all pupils, parents, carers and the local community. Management at all levels is good and strongly committed to the continuing professional development of staff. This is reflected in their desire to improve the consistency of teaching, recognising that planning needs to be further refined to ensure that all lessons meet the needs of individual pupils.

There is a clear understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school’s self-evaluation is very effective. The school improvement plan provides very clear guidance on relevant issues for raising standards and takes into consideration support and initiatives from all sources. The governing body is effective. It is fully involved in monitoring the school’s work and the governors bring a wide range of skills to bear by challenging decisions and requesting explanations where this is judged to be necessary.

The school takes its duty to promote equal opportunities seriously. It values the opinions of parents, carers and pupils, and acts upon these to ensure that all are treated fairly. Effective work has been done to improve pupils’ attainment and reduce any gaps in performance between different groups. Procedures to safeguard pupils’ well-being, safety and health are rigorous, and all members of staff are well trained in child protection procedures and their implementation. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils’ understanding from a local perspective. The school has expanded its links to provide national and global perspectives, too.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and	2

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

tackles discrimination	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their schooling in the Nursery and Reception classes and achieve well. They settle happily into school because of good links with parents and carers and because of the strong nurturing environment. Staff make every effort to make all children feel welcome. As one parent observed, summing up the comments of many, 'We are happy and my child is happy since starting school, not having known anyone. He was made very welcome and settled in very well.' The good parental relationships are maintained on a daily basis and through meetings, so parents and carers understand how and what their children are learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well and clear priorities are set for improvement. Planning is generally good because careful account is taken of the regular on-going assessments of children's progress. Effective teamwork provides good routines, high expectations of behaviour and achievement, and excellent relationships. Consequently, children develop well personally and academically, and engage well with their learning.

Stimulating and interesting activities are provided and there is a suitable mix of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. In the Reception class, children's language skills are being developed very well, with a clear focus on improving vocabulary and sentence structure. However, on occasions, the use of questioning to consolidate and extend learning, and opportunities to challenge the children's thinking, are missed. The outdoor area is excellent and used very effectively to support learning. Children thoroughly enjoy learning in the outside area, where activities are carefully enhanced by the use of richer language, such as signs and questions, and by linking the tasks carefully to those taking place indoors.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

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

An above-average proportion of parents or carers returned the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority, and those who spoke to the inspection team, are very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and the headteacher leads and manages the school very well. They say that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere, and almost all feel that their children make good progress. Inspection evidence shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good or better progress. Parents and carers are particularly impressed with the pastoral support their children receive. This reflects the findings of the inspection. The very small number of constructive parental criticisms were shared and discussed with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hawthorns First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 127 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	68	22	28	2	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	56	71	22	28	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	41	52	30	38	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	46	35	44	4	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	49	36	46	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	37	47	36	46	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	63	27	34	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	52	31	39	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	39	49	33	42	4	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	37	39	49	6	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	47	34	43	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	58	26	33	3	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	54	68	20	25	4	5	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



19 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hawthorns First School, Durrington, Worthing BN13 3EZ

I am writing to thank you for your help when we inspected your school and to let you know what we found out. We spent time in some of your lessons and talked to some of you. We also looked at the work of the school and talked to many of the staff and some of the school governors. We were interested in what your parents and carers think of your school, and we enjoyed listening to what you had to say.

The headteacher and staff at the school work hard to help you learn and enjoy school. Hawthorns is a good school. These are some of the things the school does particularly well.

- The school looks after you very well and most of you are making good progress in your learning.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start at school.
- The way the school works with your parents and carers is good.
- The way you behave is good and you work and play well together.
- You feel very safe at school and you know how to be healthy.
- You have a good understanding of right and wrong, look after each other well, and help your school to be a happy and better place to play and learn.
- The school provides you with lots of different things to do.

Even in a good school, some things could be better. We have asked your teachers to make sure that all your lessons are not just good, but better, if possible. We want staff to make lessons interesting, and ensure activities are relevant and meet your needs, so that you continue to learn and work at a good pace. We also want teachers to ensure that you know what must be improved. School documents must be kept up-to-date, and staff should understand what is in them and know how well the school is doing.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**