

Carden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131789
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	381405
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Gavin Jones

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Moody
Headteacher	Catherine Scott
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 January 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. A total of 23 lessons were observed and 20 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including policies, safeguarding arrangements and the school improvement plan. They looked at data showing pupils' assessments and the progress pupils have made over the recent past. They also looked at pupils' current work. Inspectors spoke with a number of parents and carers and analysed 74 parent and carer questionnaires, as well as questionnaires completed by 50 pupils and 44 staff.

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

- The extent to which the school is taking action to raise attainment and improve progress at Key Stage 1.
- The effect that the small amount of satisfactory teaching is having on progress in Key Stage 1.
- Aspects of marking, target setting and pupils' own self-assessment to see if they have improved since the last inspection.
- Methods employed by the governing body to involve themselves further in monitoring the school in action.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average with a small, but growing, proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is twice the national average. The number of pupils with statements for their needs is high when compared to the national average. This is largely, but not solely, due to the school's speech and language centre, a specially resourced provision for up to 20 pupils. These pupils have complex speech, language and communication difficulties. The school manages this provision. A higher-than-average number of pupils enters school at times other than is customary. Most children enter the school through one of the three Nursery classes then move into the two Reception classes for the start of their full-time education. The school has a range of awards including recognition of their excellence in Makaton (a language programme using signs and symbols), Gold Healthy Schools status and an award for its outstanding contribution to physical education and school sport in its local partnership. The school operates a breakfast club as part of its on-site provision.

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

Carden is a good school. It has consolidated its previous successes and addressed all of the issues from the previous inspection and made further improvements. Senior leaders have taken the school forward, sharing a vision for improvement with all staff. The school’s wide-ranging and accurate self-evaluation, together with its improvement plan, which is detailed and accurately reflects the school’s strengths and areas for development, indicates the school has good capacity to sustain its improvements.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and have a very positive effect on pupils’ personal development and progress. This is also very apparent in the way in which the excellent speech and language centre deals with its pupils and helps them make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. This is also noted in the excellent ways in which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles.

Teaching is good overall, particularly for older pupils and those in the specialist language centre. This ensures that the majority of pupils make good progress. Pupils reach at least average levels of attainment by the time they leave, with about one third reaching the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics. However, in a small minority of lessons, the use of assessment to inform planning and to ensure all pupils are challenged appropriately, especially the more able, is not as strong as it typically is elsewhere. Similarly, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is in the process of revising much of its provision as a result of recent training and support, teaching and outcomes are satisfactory. This is because, despite clear strengths in the Nursery, planning in Reception does not build sufficiently on teachers’ assessments of how children are progressing in order to determine what they need to learn next.

The school has positive relationships with its parents and carers, particularly those who would otherwise find it difficult to work with the school. This has had a marked influence on pupils’ behaviour and has helped improve their overall attendance. Support for parents and carers, following requests, has been given through meetings, discussions, hand-outs and the use of a virtual learning platform on the school’s website. These initiatives have enabled them to take more interest in their children’s education at home. Parents and carers appreciate this aspect of the school’s work.

Pupils enjoy the growing cultural diversity in the school, behave very sensibly and

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relate well to each other. By the time they leave the school in Year 6, they are thoughtful, responsible and hard working. However, due to basic skills and attendance being average, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next phase of their education. In spite of this, the school's transition arrangements are of good quality and pupils feel very confident of their ability to cope with their next move.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the small amount of satisfactory teaching by raising it to the standards of that of the best seen across the school by:
 - making certain that assessment is used consistently to inform planning
 - ensuring that more challenging work for more-able pupils is noted more clearly in planning
 - making better use of additional adults to support learning.
- Improve the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that planning for learning reflects more purposefully the information gathered, and points clearly to children's next steps in learning
 - evaluating the success of recent innovations while ensuring that other plans for improvement are brought forward without delay.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and make good progress, which has improved since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those few from minority ethnic heritages, generally achieve well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those from the speech and language centre make at least good progress in their learning. A minority of these pupils make outstanding progress as they reach nationally expected levels for their age. Lessons seen during the inspection confirm that attainment by Year 6 is average in English and mathematics.

In an outstanding lesson in Year 5, pupils writing an instructional text understood the steps they had to take to reach the lesson objective and were able to check against these steps as they did their work. Pupils achieved well in creating a game for younger pupils because the work was engaging and relevant to them. Similarly in a Year 2 lesson, pupils' high achievement was evident through the teacher's proficient use of Makaton signing and questioning to check their understanding.

Behaviour in lessons is nearly always good and sometimes exemplary, with mentors supporting any pupils at risk of misbehaving. This is also the case at playtimes. Pupils are proud of their school and say they feel extremely safe, recognising how the school looks after them and knowing that there is always someone to talk to about any problems. This is confirmed in both the pupil and parent and carer questionnaires. A good many pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities, with the school council taking an active role in looking at traffic issues locally for example. Pupils' active involvement in healthy activities enables them to talk very sensibly

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about diet and exercise. Pupils show respect for each other, understand the difference between right and wrong and make good use of opportunities to reflect on their own lives and those of others. They have a good understanding of similarities and differences between their own and others’ cultures which is promoted well through links with other schools at home and abroad.

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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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?

Outstanding care, guidance and support are at the heart of the school’s provision for its pupils and have a very positive effect on learning. The school’s innovative use of sociograms to plan for pupils’ move to their next classes ensures all have friends and support. One pupil noted, ‘I thought it would be really scary to move to Year 3. But it’s not, it’s really good!’

Pupils, whose circumstances make them vulnerable, receive outstanding levels of support. This support was equally outstanding in the speech and language centre as parents and carers readily agree. The school’s rigorous safeguarding ensures safety for all attending the school. Effective strategies to improve attendance have seen it improve from low to average over the very recent past. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day through its play and social eating areas. It was here that a pupil said, ‘Trust me. We get on really well with each other. We love it at Carden!’

Overall, teaching is good and, on occasion, is outstanding in lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, supporting their behaviour management

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

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techniques which produce good behaviour in all parts of the school. In this respect, additional adults are very active in their support. In a small number of lessons, some teachers have not yet developed the strengths so clearly embedded elsewhere. For example, in most, but not all lessons, learning objectives are shared with pupils and they are helped to check their work so that they can themselves understand how they might be successful at their tasks and improve further. Marking is regular and in many classes teachers describe how pupils might improve. Checks on progress are made during lessons and most teachers make use of previous assessments in order to plan what pupils might learn next. In a very small number of lessons, whilst different activities are given to more-able pupils, they are not always sufficiently challenging. Additional adults do not always receive sufficient guidance on how their support can be best used.

The curriculum has been adapted well to support learning for all groups of pupils including those taught in the speech and language centre. It provides a broad range of experiences which contribute well to pupils’ personal and academic development. Personal development is supported very well through the school’s personal and social education programmes. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is now more widely used, although pupils’ time in the ICT suite is limited. The curriculum is enriched well by visits and visitors and pupils are offered a wide range of out-of-school club activities, which are well attended. The school has gained an award for its physical education programme and sporting activities.

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 relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the strong direction of the headteacher, well supported by senior leaders and managers, her clear vision and drive for improvement have been shared by staff and gains have been made in a number of key areas, such as pupils’ progress, attendance, care, guidance and support and healthy outcomes. Target setting is robust and subsequent tracking highlights those in need of intervention programmes. This results in good progress for all groups of pupils. Pupils’ and parents’ comments confirm these positive views on leadership and management. The leadership of the school has been very successful at improving teaching and learning, evidenced by pupils’ recent good progress. With several new teachers in the school, the overall pattern of teaching still remains good, but with a very small number of satisfactory lessons at this early part of the year. Outstanding leadership in the speech and language centre and in the leadership and management of pupils with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities in the rest of the school, ensures that the clear ambitions for improvement have already resulted in all pupils making at least good progress, with some making excellent progress.

The school engages well with its parents and carers, which in turn supports pupils' good progress. The school seeks the views of parents and carers, with several examples of how these views have been taken into account by the school. Workshops, information packs and meetings have stemmed from these suggestions.

The school rigorously implements strategies to tackle discrimination and offer an inclusive learning environment. Sustained and significant improvements in progress for all groups of pupils are testament to its success. The governing body is playing its part in the development of the school and has made significant changes to its structure in order to be in a better position to challenge and support the school. Its safeguarding procedures are thorough. They are reviewed regularly and updated. Child protection procedures are of good quality and well-managed. Staff are well trained in procedures for risk assessment and the school site is secure. As a result, pupils feel very safe.

The school has a very good understanding of its context and has created a very harmonious school. There are effective links with groups in the local community and other schools both nationally and internationally. Partnerships with other providers and agencies have supported pupils' development well. This has been particularly successful in developing sporting activities provided by the local school partnership.

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	3
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 tackles discrimination	2
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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the Nursery and are made to feel welcome by the caring staff. They enjoy a colourful environment. In both the Nursery and Reception classes children enjoy initiating their own learning. This is a developing area of provision and a few of the many adults are still a little uncertain as to when they should intervene in children’s learning. Children’s outcomes fluctuate across the areas of learning. In the Nursery, children make good progress. In Reception progress is satisfactory. Children’s communication skills and aspects of their mathematical development, low on entry, develop steadily, with a new planning system now focusing more closely on learning rather than activities. When children enter Year 1 they are still well behind levels of skills expected for their age. Accurate observations are made regularly, but do not always feed into the planning process. Behaviour management and support for learning are strengths, with clear consistent messages delivered by all staff. Through the good care and support seen, children become confident and eager learners, but do not always get enough opportunities to be independent learners. Children play and learn together well. However, their access to the outdoor classroom was limited during the inspection period. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, although better in the Nursery where adults have more successfully ensured that planning for learning reflects the information gathered on progress and points clearly to children’s next steps in learning. Here there is currently better evaluation of the success of recent innovations. Children are looked after well and are themselves aware of dangers and behave well. Recent training is now beginning to have an impact on developing skills of the staff in assessment for learning, for example. All adults work well as a team and have created excellent links with parents and carers. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and focuses well on the transition between the Reception and Year 1 classes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Only a few parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all responses were positive, supporting the school’s work. Parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive in over half of the questions, especially those relating to enjoyment, safety, teaching and meeting their child’s particular needs. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that their children were not well prepared for the next stage of their

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education, moving school or changing classes. Inspectors investigated this concern and noted that while pupils' basic skills were average, the transition between classes and schools was well organised and pupils felt happy with these arrangements. A few parents and carers said that the school did not take account of their suggestions. Inspectors looked at a range of evidence and saw that parents and carers had suggested a number of changes to school booklets, such as the advice when starting Nursery or Reception, a welcome pack for families who speak English is an additional language and the starting of a writing club for Year 2 pupils. The school has acted on all of these suggestions and more.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Carden Primary 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 420 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	76	17	23	0	0	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	72	20	27	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	41	55	29	39	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	62	26	35	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	69	22	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	53	72	18	24	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	64	23	31	3	4	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)	38	51	26	35	5	7	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	48	65	24	32	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	59	25	34	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	49	30	41	4	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	50	30	41	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	52	70	19	26	1	1	0	0

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.



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Carden Primary School, Brighton BN1 8LU

It was lovely to talk to so many of you when we visited your school. We judged that the school is good. You leave the school with similar standards to those of most other children of your age, having made good progress during your time at school. This is mainly because of good teaching.

You feel very safe because you receive excellent care and support from all staff at the school. It is this care and guidance that help you develop excellent attitudes to health and exercise.

The school has made improvements since the last inspection and your parents and carers recognise this and know that you enjoy school even more now.

To make sure improvements continue and standards rise further, we have asked the school to do two things.

- We want the school to improve the small amount of satisfactory teaching to help you gain higher standards and make more rapid progress towards your targets. We have asked your teachers to use the information they have about your progress to help them plan what you should learn next. We want adults in a small number of classes to be more involved in helping you and in planning challenging work for you.
- We want the Early Years Foundation Stage to be more effective by helping children make faster progress in their learning too. We also want staff to put in place the ideas they already have for making further improvements.

You can all help by continuing to attend regularly and doing your best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones
Lead inspector

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