

River Beach Primary School

York Road, Littlehampton, BN17 6EW

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The vast majority of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, learn well across a range of subjects and make good progress.
- Disabled pupils, including the hearing impaired, and those who have special educational needs make good progress as a result of effective care and well-focused provision.
- Teaching is typically good; this is as a result of regular evaluation, monitoring, support and staff training. Pupils enjoy learning, especially in English, where exciting starter activities capture their interest.
- From starting points that are generally low, children make a good start to their learning in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good and their attendance is above average.
- The monitoring and tracking of pupils are rigorous, resulting in good quality support.
- The headteacher, governing body and leaders at all levels are cohesive and effective in driving forward school improvement so that pupils can achieve well. Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development and use these to ensure school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some mathematics lessons, learning activities are not exciting or engaging. In English, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to write at length.
- The quality of written feedback to guide pupils' next steps in their learning is variable and some pupils are unclear about their targets.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 33 parts of lessons taught by 28 different teachers. They listened to pupils reading and talked with groups of pupils about their work and experiences of school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior staff, middle leaders, the coordinator of the special support centre and the coordinator of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They also met the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documents, including the school's information on the progress of pupils, attendance and behaviour records, performance management information, the school's monitoring and self-evaluation documents, safeguarding and a range of pupils' work were scrutinised.
- Account was taken of the responses in 58 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Inspectors took account of 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Sheila Browning, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Haydn Evans	Additional inspector
Carolyn Steer	Additional inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional inspector
Fran Ashworth	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- River Beach is much larger than the average sized primary school. It opened in Summer 2011 after an amalgamation of Elm Grove Infant School, Arun Vale Infant School and Connaught Junior School. The school has provision for Early Years Foundation Stage in a 52 place Nursery and three Reception classes. There are 28 classes in total.
- The school has an integrated special support centre for 11 pupils with hearing impairment, all of whom have statements of special educational needs. The pupils are integrated into mainstream education receiving specialist support in class and are sometimes withdrawn for extra support.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, while the remainder come from a range of backgrounds, the largest being Eastern European, and the second largest being Portuguese. Some 16% speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils leaving or joining the school at times other than at the start of the school year is high.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is lower than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is substantially greater than the national average. There is an independently run breakfast and after-school club but this did not form part of this inspection.
- In 2011, the school's results in national tests for 11-year-olds met the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - planning sufficient time and opportunities for pupils to produce more complex pieces of writing and to write for a sustained period
 - ensuring lessons are lively and exciting to help and motivate pupils to apply their numeracy skills practically.
- Ensure all teachers provide clearer 'next steps' feedback in their marking of pupils' work to help them have a more secure understanding of their targets and how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- On entry to the Nursery and Reception classes, children's skills are generally lower than those expected for their age across most areas of learning, particularly language and number skills. Good teaching and well-established routines enable them to settle quickly, explore learning and make good progress.
- Pupils build on this good progress throughout the school and particularly in Year 6 where teaching is strongest. As a result, attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The amalgamation of the predecessor schools and staff changes presented some difficulties in assessing the starting point of children from the two infant schools; however, evidence indicated that there was some underachievement, particularly in relation to early reading skills. In response to this, leaders took steps to improve provision, including targeted interventions and improved library resources. These actions are already having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Although the school has no historical information to indicate a trend in pupils' attainment, the gap between different groups of pupils, including those in receipt of the pupil premium, has narrowed in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils, including those with hearing impairments, and those with special educational needs make good progress. Those who speak English as an additional language make similarly good progress to classmates in all year groups, reflecting the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- Pupils apply their reading and writing skills in different subjects and particularly enjoy reading. Weaker pupils use their knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) to help decode unfamiliar words when reading.
- In lessons, pupils work well together, in pairs and small groups, and levels of independence are increasing. In English activities, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to develop their writing at length or complexity, and have few lively 'hands on' learning experiences in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the curriculum is usually good and is occasionally outstanding. Teachers consistently demonstrate the features outlined within the nationally agreed 'Teachers' Standards'.
- Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes and Years 1 and 2, the teaching of phonics is effective and is having a positive impact on pupils' reading skills and their reading for pleasure.
- Teachers use a range of strategies through the creative curriculum to engage and inspire pupils. Year 6 pupils went to the local church as 'evacuees', and pupils greatly enjoy days such as 'Flying to Africa' where they learn about passport control, luggage and flight. Pupils enjoyed creating a Roman invasion on the beach which developed their role-play, discussion and historical understanding. Some excellent art work representing the area and River Beach School is displayed. Pupils have also sold their artwork as a commercial enterprise. Working with local artists they have produced superb 'Paint with Light' pictures combining their art, science and technology skills.
- In mathematics, pupils learn best when lessons include solving problems that are interesting, relevant and involve them practically. However, learning activities sometimes lack variety with few 'hands on' opportunities to challenge them further.
- Questioning is, in the main, used effectively and good planning takes account of differing abilities. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in identifying and meeting the particular needs of pupils including disabled pupils, those with hearing impairments and those with special

educational needs.

- Each class has a junior interpreter to help support those learning English; additionally, Portuguese and Russian speaking teaching assistants support pupils. Several teachers and teaching assistants use their sign language skills when working with deaf pupils so all are fully included.
- In most lessons the pace of learning is brisk and teachers use interactive whiteboards to demonstrate and explain learning. Assessment is generally used effectively by staff, although teachers' marking is sometimes variable in quality. Some very good practice is evident, but this is not consistently the case, and pupils are not always secure about their targets and levels they are working at or need to aspire to.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- From the moment they start school in the Nursery, pupils' positive attitudes towards learning are nurtured. These positive attitudes and their good behaviour in lessons are key factors in their successful learning. Pupils behave well, are courteous and kind to each other. This contributes to a very safe, caring, supportive and inclusive school.
- Pupils confirm that behaviour is typically good, although in a minority of lessons where activities are less engaging there is occasionally some low-level off task behaviour. There have been no exclusions. Good systems are in place to deal with any inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying and any incidents are rare and dealt with promptly.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and show a good understanding of e-safety. Pupils are involved in the school council and, as part of their work on the travel plan committee, they undertook traffic surveys and suggested safer routes to school. They are very proud of their school and value greatly each other's contribution as monitors, house captains and junior interpreters.
- Pupils enjoy attending but any dip in attendance rates is picked up quickly. Pupils come in before school starts to do early work and parents and carers often come and read with their children.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their spiritual, moral and social awareness and their wider cultural development is fostered effectively, for example, through links in a school in Sri Lanka and focus events such as international week.
- Pupils' positive views about school are supported by the vast majority of parents and carers responding to the on-line Parent View survey and in the school's own parent survey conducted recently.

The leadership and management are good

- The vision and leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders have been pivotal in establishing this cohesive happy school. The school motto, 'Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day' underpins their ambition to try and secure the best opportunities for pupils.
- Systems, procedures and policies formed from the best practice across all three schools have been tailored to meet the distinct needs of pupils at River Beach. The headteacher promotes high expectations and rigorous self-evaluation to sustain pupil achievement and school improvement.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning through learning walks, work scrutiny and talking with pupils ensures leaders have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders at all levels, as well as teachers and other staff, are involved in self-evaluation processes and are held to account for their areas of responsibility.
- The local authority gives effective challenge and support, for example by providing advanced skills teachers to model best practice and to share advice and expertise.
- Ongoing professional development for all staff is focused on raising standards. Tailored

programmes are carefully matched to school priorities and the personal development needs of the staff. Together with perceptive performance management routines, these are having a positive impact on improving provision and pupils' achievement. While there is some good sharing of expertise among staff, this has not extended to the best practice evident when marking pupils' work, and ensuring pupils know and understand how to improve their work using 'next steps' and simple target setting.

- Pupils are taught key skills in literacy, numeracy and communication and there are good opportunities for their creative, physical and social development through other subjects, visits, visitors and clubs. Nonetheless, opportunities to write at length or in depth and to be engaged in lively practical mathematics activities are not consistently in place.
- Relationships, pupils' attitudes to learning and their generally good behaviour contribute positively to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The planning of provision for those in the special support centre, including the use of adult expertise, ensures that these pupils receive good quality specialist support. Good liaison with parents and carers, extensive home visits and transition arrangements mean that pupils are well integrated and thrive.
- Responses to the on-line Parent View questionnaire and the school's own parent surveys are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work reflecting the good links that the school has with parents and carers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body demonstrates a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and where it needs to improve. It challenges and supports the school and uses its expertise effectively. Financial management is strong.
 - All statutory safeguarding and vetting procedures are met. Training is in place and regularly updated to ensure that the governing body is up to date in its knowledge and understanding of school routines and its responsibilities.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135808
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	400260

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	812
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Fuke
Headteacher	Judy Grevett
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01903725500
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