

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Westdene Primary School**

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114380

Headteacher: Mrs D Crossingham

Lead inspector: Marianne Harris

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 260747

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	498
School address:	Bankside Westdene Brighton
Postcode:	BN1 5GN
Telephone number:	01273 294900
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G Meyne
Date of previous inspection:	12 <sup>th</sup> October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Westdene is a popular primary school on the edge of Brighton. When children come into school they have skills and knowledge that are average. Overall pupils come from a mainly advantaged United Kingdom heritage. There are some pupils whose mother tongue is not English, but none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is very low, and the proportion that have special educational needs is broadly in line with national figures. However, the percentage of pupils who have a statement of need is higher than normally seen. The school population is stable and there are very few pupils who have their education interrupted by moving into the school, or by moving away to another school.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23288	Marianne Harris	Lead inspector	Special educational needs, English as an additional language, English, geography and history
9977	Fran Luke	Lay inspector	
1395	Pauline Hoey	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics and religious education
25455	Mary Summers	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, art and design and technology
2731	Penny Holden	Team inspector	Music and physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Westdene is a **very good** school that provides very good value for money. Standards are rising throughout the school and pupils achieve very well. Teaching and learning are very good, and pupils are very keen to learn and take a full part in the life of the school. The leadership of the school is very good and parents are very supportive of all aspects of the school's work. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is very well led and managed and this has resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning are very good and this means that all pupils achieve very well.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is excellent and, as a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum is very broad and balanced with excellent opportunities for pupils to learn beyond lessons, although accommodation is not ideal.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because the support they receive is very good.
- All pupils are very well cared for and have excellent guidance and support for their academic and personal development.
- Staff in the Foundation Stage do not work closely enough to plan provision so that all children have the same very good opportunities.

The school was last inspected in 1998 and has made very good improvement since that time. Some of the issues identified at that time are now among the many strengths of the school. For example, assessment data is analysed thoroughly and planning is very good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	B	A	A
mathematics	D	B	A	C
science	B	B	A	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement for all pupils is **very good**. When they join the school the children in the nursery and reception have skills and knowledge that are expected for their age. The children make good progress and most will reach the expected goals for children at the end of the Reception year, and many will exceed them.

By the end of Year 2 pupils have made very good progress and standards in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics, are well above average.

Pupils continue to make very good progress in Years 3 to 6 so that by the time they leave the school standards remain well above average when compared to all schools nationally and, overall, are above those of similar schools. These standards are reflected in the work seen during the inspection in all subjects where standards could be judged. All pupils achieve very well in order to maintain these high standards.

Pupils' personal qualities are **very good**. They are keen to come to school and have very good attitudes to learning. They behave well. Attendance is similar to the national picture and punctuality is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** with teachers having very secure subject knowledge and high expectations of all pupils achieving very well. Planning for pupils of all abilities is very good and lessons are interesting, so all pupils concentrate well and work hard in lessons. Assessment is very good and lets pupils know how they can improve their work. However, planning and assessment is not as strong for children in the nursery and Reception classes, and this results in some children not having the rich experiences that are available to others.

The curriculum is very rich with many opportunities for pupils to learn beyond lessons. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those who are gifted and talented, is very good. Accommodation is not ideal as about one third of the pupils are taught in temporary classrooms that have no toilet facilities. Links with the local area are very good and this benefits the pupils in school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher leads the school very well and has a very clear vision for the future. Key staff are very good at leading their subject and play a vital role in school improvement. Governors do a very good job. They are very supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory duties well. The school is very well managed.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents have very positive views of the school and are confident that teachers are doing a very good job. They have some concerns over the size of the reception classes, although they know that the school has plans to accommodate these large numbers as the classes move through the school. Pupils feel valued and consulted on many aspects of the work of the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Curriculum planning and assessment in the Foundation Stage.
- Continue to seek support for improving the accommodation.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning**

Standards are above average overall and this represents very good achievement for pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs. Test results have risen over the last year. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well and standards are high.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well in Years 1 to 6.
- Standards are well above average in all subjects.
- Children in the nursery and Reception classes do not do as well as pupils in the rest of the school.

#### **Commentary**

1. Inspectors judge pupils' achievement by looking at the progress they make, in relation to their ability, during their time in school, as well as how well they do in lessons. When children join the school they have a wide range of abilities, including those who are more able as well as those who have special educational needs. Overall, the knowledge and skills they bring into school are average. During their time in the nursery and Reception classes children make good progress and most achieve the expected goals for children's learning, and many will exceed them, by the time they enter Year 1. However, the progress they make during this time is not as good as that made by pupils in the rest of the school because provision in the areas of learning varies between the nursery and Reception classes.

2. By the end of Year 2 standards overall are well above average and all pupils achieve very well. National test results have improved in reading and writing and this is reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Test results in mathematics have fallen slightly, but still remain above those nationally. This represents very good achievement overall. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in class so that they can make very good progress and many achieve the nationally expected standards. Those pupils who are more able have work that is well matched to their abilities and they achieve high standards. These standards are reflected in the work seen during the inspection.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (15.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.3 (17.7)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 65 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. By the end of Year 6 standards remain well above average in English, mathematics and science, with all pupils achieving very well. These standards are, again, reflected in the work seen during the inspection. All of the results in the national tests have improved since 2002, and this is a result of the very good leadership in all subjects, and of the school overall. Again this represents very good achievement for pupils of all abilities as high standards are maintained across most of the subjects.



4. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, standards overall are well above average. This is a direct result of a vibrant and exciting curriculum that interests all pupils and encourages them to achieve very well.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (28.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.4 (26.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.3 (29.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 67 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

**Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils’ attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils’ attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average.
- Pupils show great interest in learning and have very good attitudes to their work.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good and there is a high degree of racial harmony.
- Pupils have a very good awareness of right and wrong and show respect for others’ feelings and beliefs.
- Pupils’ spiritual development and appreciation of cultural diversity is excellent.

**Commentary**

5. Additional information provided by the school during the inspection confirmed that the level of attendance for the year 2002/2003 was broadly in line with the national median and was therefore satisfactory. A register check during the inspection confirmed this. Staff monitor attendance very closely and receive good support from the education welfare service who visits families when requested. Children whose attendance is poor are identified and the school works hard to ensure that they attend school more regularly. Punctuality to school is good; the majority of parents ensure that their children come to school, and that they arrive on time.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

6. Pupils show great enthusiasm and a very high level of interest and curiosity in lessons and concentrate very well on their work. They are eager to participate in all aspects of school life including the many after-school clubs. Behaviour is good in lessons, around the school and on the playground. Pupils are all very clear about the school and class rules and fully understand the difference between right and wrong. Their moral development is very good; pupils show respect for property and their environment. The pre-inspection questionnaire shows that the vast majority of

parents are happy that their children are free from harassment. Pupils spoken to were very clear that there was always someone they could go to should they ever need support.

7. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to take on additional responsibility and they respond well to them; these include the school council, the eco council, playground buddies and wet play buddies. Pupils are consulted about their views of the school and these have a positive impact on the life of the school. The school council is allocated a budget each year; last year pupils decided to use some of the money to redecorate the children’s toilets. Pupils are happy at school and feel very secure and well cared for.

8. Pupils’ spiritual development is excellent, they have a very high level of respect for the feelings and values of others. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect on these feelings in assembly as well as in class, particularly during PSHE lessons where great empathy was seen. They show a very high level of understanding of and respect for the views of other pupils. Pupils have an excellent understanding of their own culture and are able to experience and have an understanding of life within a multi-cultural society. For example in Art they study a range of artists and visit a range of different facilities including dance workshops, local art galleries and museums. Pupils’ social development is very good, relationships between pupils and with all the staff are very good; pupils get on very well and are able to work and play together collaboratively. Pupils are encouraged to think of others by raising money for a wide range of charities covering local, national and international charities each year.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	459	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

There were no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are very good and the curriculum is vibrant and varied. The school has been very successful in developing an effective partnership with parents. Marking and assessment are very good.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is very good overall, but not as strong in the nursery and reception.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are interesting and involve all of the pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils achieving well.
- Marking is very good.
- Assessment and planning are very good, except in the nursery and Reception classes.

### Commentary

9. Teaching and learning are very good which results in all pupils achieving well. Teachers plan very interesting lessons so that all pupils, whatever their ability, are fully included. Pupils say that they learn new things most of the time and that they enjoy coming to school. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teaching assistants support pupils well and ensure that they are able to make very good progress during lessons and throughout their time in school.

10. Lessons move at a very brisk pace so that pupils learn a lot in the time available. Teachers have high expectations of pupils being fully involved in their learning, behaving well and taking a full part in lessons. This results in pupils working well together and producing carefully presented work. Time is very well used and resources are used imaginatively in order to involve pupils in their learning. A good example of this was in a geography lesson where pupils were being taught mapping skills. The teacher had prepared a range of resources to support pupils' learning and these were carefully matched to the differing abilities of the class. This resulted in pupils working hard and enjoying the lesson.

11. Work in books is generally very well marked. Teachers take the time to comment on each piece of work, letting the pupils know what they have done well. These comments are usually followed up by a short comment on what could be improved and this is clearly linked to the purpose of the lesson. This leads to pupils knowing how to improve their work and has contributed to the rising standards in all subjects across the school.

12. Planning overall is very good. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 experience the same opportunities whatever class they are in and this demonstrates that the school is committed to providing the same learning experiences for all pupils. Tasks are well matched to the abilities of the individuals in each class. Assessment overall is very good, with clear targets being set for individual pupils so that they know what they are aiming for in their work. However, planning and assessment is not as strong in the nursery and Reception classes and children do not experience the same quality of education across the Foundation Stage.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20 (39%)	17 (34%)	14 (27%)	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

## The curriculum

The curriculum is very good. Opportunities for enrichment are excellent. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

- Pupils are given a very engaging, fresh curriculum that means they often become engrossed in their learning and do very well.
- There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to help and be involved in the life of the school so that they become confident, helpful and responsible.
- Trips out of school and visitors to school add a great deal to pupils' understanding.
- Most pupils participate in out of school clubs especially the wide range of sporting activities.
- The school is accommodated in a mixture of permanent and temporary buildings and pupils often have to go outside between lessons, which is difficult in cold and wet weather.

## **Commentary**

13. Pupils learn very well because they have very interesting and thoughtfully planned programmes of study. Imaginative links are made between subjects where this helps pupils understand better or where it makes their learning more interesting. For example, in physical education, pupils are investigating blood pressure and pulse rates and in art pupils are using a trip to the beach in Brighton as a stimulus for art and dance. The school whilst focusing on the core curriculum subjects of English, mathematics and science has continued to develop and keep alive all the other subjects. This has given pupils a very rich learning experience and developed their skills across the curriculum.

14. There is some very good provision offered to gifted and talented students including problem solving mathematical master classes at the local secondary school, sports master classes, and art trips to the Tate Modern.

15. Playground buddies, school council and eco council all give pupils the opportunity to take responsibility in the school and beyond. Pupils learn a wide range of skills through these activities that are not usually found in lessons and this develops them as individuals. Opportunities to learn and take part in a wide variety of activity outside the classroom are also excellent. Pupils work with a wide variety of outside experts including teachers from local secondary schools and universities as well as National Trust Rangers and parents such as the parent teaching Spanish songs. A hearing impaired teacher and students visited to demonstrate sign language. Musicians, dancers and artists visit the school and pupils visit studios, theatres, places of worship, stately homes and places of interest. Photography is used well as a stimulus for creative work, as narrative in describing a story, to celebrate achievements and as a record of important events.

16. The accommodation has developed over time in a rather disjointed fashion, with a third of pupils taught in temporary accommodation that is not attached to the main building. However, the school and the pupils manage this very well and do not allow it to hinder the education provided. It does, however, hamper the pleasure of this experience particularly on cold and wet days. Staffing and resources are used very well to help pupils learn effectively.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of pupils' achievement is excellent. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The induction arrangements for pupils entering the school in the nursery as well as pupils starting in the main school are very good.
- There are very good procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
- Adults know pupils well and provide excellent levels of care for their wellbeing.
- The school has excellent systems to monitor pupils' personal development.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is very good.

## **Commentary**

17. There are very good induction arrangements for all pupils when they start at the school. These procedures include opportunities for parents and children to visit the school before they start to meet other pupils and staff and get to know the school. As a result, children get off to a flying start at school, settle in quickly and happily and make good progress.

18. The school has very good health and safety procedures in place. Governors and staff make regular health and safety checks and trained staff carry out full risk assessments. Regular checks are made to grounds, buildings and equipment. Child protection procedures are now fully in place, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) is the nominated officer for child protection procedures; she has been appropriately trained and has ensured that all other staff have also received training. Regular discussion ensures that all staff are kept aware of the need to inform the SENCo should they have any concerns. The school also follows the correct procedures for looked-after children. The arrangements for first aid are appropriate with several trained first aiders and staff also know pupils' allergies and dietary requirements, this helps pupils to feel safe and secure at school.

19. All adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know them extremely well and provide an excellent level of care for them. All staff provide good role models for behaviour. Discussions with pupils show that they feel very safe and secure and can turn to a number of adults if they need help or comfort. There are very good arrangements for seeking the views of pupils about different aspects of school life and pupils actively participate in the opportunities given to them.

20. The school's very good systems to monitor the pupils' personal development include regular discussions between staff and pupils, and constant monitoring of those who are highlighted as in need of nurturing. This leads to an excellent level of care for all pupils, particularly the more vulnerable.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with parents are very good. The school has very good links with the local community. There are very good links with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The school provides parents with very good information about the curriculum and how to help their children at home.
- Very good links with other local schools provide many benefits for pupils.
- Written reports on pupils' progress are good and clearly show how pupils are progressing.
- There are very good links with the local community from which pupils gain great benefit.

## **Commentary**

21. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school. The school works very well with parents, encouraging them to support the school through the Friends' Association which raises significant funds on behalf of the school, and encouraging parents to help their children at home. A good number of parents also support their children and the school by helping in the classroom on a regular basis. Comments at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and the responses to the questionnaire show that parents have a high level of regard for the school. Although there were some concerns over the size of the reception classes, the school has clear plans to accommodate the large classes as they move through the school. The high level of staffing will be maintained as long as possible and the classes will continue to receive the very good level of support.

22. The school provides a very good range of information for parents about the curriculum and how they can help their children at home. Curriculum information is sent out at the beginning of each year informing parents what will be happening in the class over the coming term, in addition regular newsletters inform them of what is happening in school. Parents feel well informed and welcome in the school and their views are sought on a range of issues so they feel valued.

23. There are good opportunities for parents to meet staff to discuss their children's progress. Written annual reports for parents are good, they inform parents what their children know, understand and can do, and inform parents where their children are in relation to national expectations. Pupils have the opportunity to reflect on the past year and parents are also able to contribute.

24. Pupils transfer to secondary school very easily. This is partly because of the formal procedures in place and because the school has established some very good links with three local secondary schools. Liaison includes sharing workshops and clubs, in-service training and team teaching, all of which enhances provision for the pupils and allows them to adjust to the change of school more easily at the age of 11.

25. The school has very good links with the local community; the school arranges for a wide range of visitors to come into school and work with the children as well as arranging many visits to the local area to enhance the curriculum. These include Year 4 pupils working with the National Trust to look at the history and work with the Rangers at the Devil's Dyke. Pupils also take part in the Brighton Festival and the school choir go out and sing to local community groups.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good.

Governance, leadership and management are all very good and are all focused on ensuring all pupils have the very best experience they can from school.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well with other staff to continually improve pupils' standards of achievement.
- The governing body knows the school very well and contributes to its continued improvement.
- Everyone who works in the school takes responsibility for their part in successes and areas that need improvement.
- Self-evaluation is carried out very thoughtfully and is accurate in all aspects of school life except the nursery where it did not identify the need to improve planning as well as assessment.
- All of the staff ensure that all pupils are included very effectively.

### **Commentary**

26. In the three years the headteacher has been at the school she has led the school in important improvements focused on raising standards in all subjects. She has been keen to involve everyone in the development of the school and this has become a characteristic of the way the school works. Improvements that are needed are identified through careful analysis of performance and other data. They are included clearly in the development plan which sets out a sensible agenda for affordable action that is consistently achieved. All members of staff share the responsibility for school improvement and co-ordinators have an infectious enthusiasm for the developments they have made in their subjects. Co-ordinators work in very effective teams interacting well to improve the opportunities offered to pupils in their subject so that they raise pupils' achievements. They observe lessons, look at pupils' work and use the information they get from these activities to make changes to lesson content and provide training in teaching skills. The deputy headteacher and the headteacher have formed an effective partnership using the monitoring of pupils' work, observing

lessons, performance management and professional development as very effective strategies for making changes that benefit the pupils. The outcomes of these tactics are the high standards pupils achieve in the rich and interesting curriculum, and the very inclusive nature of the school.

27. The self evaluation carried out by the school is effective and rigorous except in judging the experience given to the youngest children. Here the conclusions are incomplete, as the school accepted judgements given by outside consultants without checking them rigorously themselves. The school improvement plan recognises the need to improve assessment, but not planning for children in the foundation stage. However, the enthusiasm and commitment shown by senior and middle managers to improve this area is good evidence of the school's excellent capability for improvement.

28. The governing body has the same aspirations for the school as the headteacher and staff. It is committed to raising standards and continually improving the opportunities for pupils. The governing body uses the good information given by the school to test out new ideas and to follow the strategies that are judged important. It is proud of the school's ethos, the standards pupils achieve and the way every child is included in all the school offers. It also cites as positive achievements the rich and interesting curriculum where links are made between subjects if it will help pupils understand better and where visits and visitors make their learning experience richer. All these are strengths of the school. The governing body is also well aware of the budget difficulties the school works with and explores ways of getting best value without limiting the pupils' education. Where there are ways of modifying a project to achieve a little more at no extra cost to the school it pushes to do so. For example, slight changes to the building plans allowed the school to have additional small group rooms which have had a positive effect on provision. Accommodation continues to be an area the school wishes to improve as five classes are in temporary classrooms and pupils have to go outside to use the lavatories or enter the main building. These problems are all dealt with well so that pupils' attainment is not affected but they do mar pupils' experiences.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	999,476
Total expenditure	932,479
Expenditure per pupil	2,360

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	62,481
Balance carried forward to the next	66,997



## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good relationships adults form with children provide a sense of security.
- Good home links are initiated through visits.
- Support staff make a valuable contribution to children's learning.
- Assessment in the Foundation Stage is not in line with that in the rest of the school.
- The planning lacks a coherent structure.
- The outdoor play provision is at an early stage of development.

Children are admitted to the nursery class on a part time basis in the term after they become three years of age. They enter with a range of well-developed skills and many life experiences. All staff are caring and emphasise attributes such as co-operation and sharing. The induction programme plays a vital part in building an effective communication bridge between home and school. The staff establish effective relationships with parents and carers and encourage them to become involved in their children's learning. Parents play a valuable role in supporting children's learning in the Reception classes. There is a good working partnership between the staff and parents. The assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage lack the rigour and analysis that are major strengths in the rest of the school. Staff use a range of strategies to make judgements about children's progress, achievement and areas for development. Observation is an integral part of assessment in the key stage. This results in a plethora of paperwork that is unmanageable. The quality of teaching in the nursery is less successful than in the reception classes, mainly because the learning environment is not as stimulating and rich in the nursery, which is housed in a temporary building, as it is in the other classes. There is a fragmented approach to planning in the Foundation Stage, because nursery and Reception are seen as two discrete units rather than a whole key stage.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for personal, social, and emotional development is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The staff establish a supportive environment.
- Children are very well behaved and have a strong sense of their own identity.
- Some activities do not build effectively on children's previous experiences.

#### **Commentary**

29. The nursery is a welcoming place where children feel secure. They enter the nursery with well-developed social skills and quickly understand its routines and practices. They are confident to try things and initiate ideas. The experiences and activities provide children with the opportunities to make choices and take decisions. However, not all these challenge children and enable them to develop wider horizons. Children are adaptable and resourceful in Reception with a sense of fun in all they do. The very good teaching and the high quality relationships lead to children's good progress in this area of learning.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children express their views clearly and confidently.
- A wide variety of books is available.
- Children use and control a variety of writing materials well.
- There is a lack of challenge in some elements of the learning programme for three-year-olds.

### Commentary

30. Children enter the nursery with above average speaking and listening skills. Three-year-olds join in conversations and talk confidently about what is happening in their play. They enjoy talking about their immediate experiences. The activities provided in the language-rich Reception classes extend children's vocabulary effectively so that they communicate well in a variety of situations.

31. The quality of provision for reading and writing activities varies. Where there are opportunities for children to write for a purpose the children make appropriate progress and understand that writing conveys a message. For example, in a role-play activity, children were able to experience the satisfaction of using writing to draw a response from others as they took orders for a Chinese meal. The experiences children have in their homes provide a good jumping off point for developing reading. As a result, children enjoy browsing through books and know that books tell a story. Three-year-olds become aware of the sounds letters make as they take part in rhyming activities. However, a more structured programme is not introduced until the summer term. Such an approach does not take into account that some children are ready to begin the programme before that date. Careful planning and effective management of language activities result in children developing appropriate reading strategies in Reception. The majority of children achieve in line with national expectations in this area and a few achieve above.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the nursery, as opportunities arise, adults frequently involve children in counting objects and other resources.
- Children show curiosity about numbers, patterns, and measurement.
- In Reception classes, previous learning is used well to develop understanding further.
- Occasionally, younger children's learning is insufficiently extended.

### Commentary

32. In the nursery, number rhymes and songs are used as enjoyable ways of learning about sequence and pattern in number. Sometimes a chance event offers a valuable starting point. However, on some occasions, the significant oral and mental work possible is not fully exploited to help children gain the vocabulary and language skills closely linked with practical activity. In the Reception classes, the well-planned provision effectively promotes children's learning. Every day there is a clear focus on one aspect of mathematical development and the resources selected are designed to encourage children to work systematically and logically. By the time they are five the majority of children achieve in line with the national expectations. A few exceed these.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Activities stimulate children's interest in their world and increase their general knowledge.
- The quality of provision varies in the nursery and Reception classes.

### **Commentary**

33. Children in the Foundation Stage are provided with a range of opportunities to explore the environment outside the school with chances to ask questions and observe the world around them. Teachers link these experiences to activities in the classroom by getting the children to talk, draw, paint and model using a variety of materials. There is inconsistency in the key stage in the quality of provision. Where it is exciting and stimulating children become aware of cause and consequence, suggest explanations and ask pertinent questions. They are encouraged to look closely at the similarities and differences in things from the natural and manufactured worlds. They design and make models and constructions. Children use computers with confidence as soon as they join the nursery and handle the mouse with increasing dexterity to select items on the screen. The children's sense of time is promoted through regular routines and the celebration of festivals.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- The majority of children will meet the national expectations for physical development.
- Good hand and eye co-ordination is encouraged in a variety of activities that require the use of small hand tools and writing materials.
- The outdoor provision is just being developed in the reception classes for more active work.

### **Commentary**

34. The provision for this area of learning is included in all activities and experiences offered. The indoor provision is generally more successful than the outdoor. Children enter the nursery with good physical skills. They are confident, well co-ordinated and agile. The children are taught effectively how to use small tools and equipment. The children clearly enjoy their activities in the outdoor area. The sense of fun coupled with appropriate praise contribute equally to children's social development as well as their physical skills. Children enthusiastically explore the open spaces and experiment with different ways of using the climbing apparatus and other equipment. The use of the outdoor space is at an early stage of development. It lacks an imaginative planning structure and does not provide a sufficient range of stimulating experiences to enable children to learn effectively as they work on a larger more active scale than is possible indoors. By the time they enter Year 1, most children will have reached the expected goals and some will have exceeded them.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good provision is made for role-play in the Reception classes.
- On occasions, children's skills are not developed appropriately.

### Commentary

35. The provision for creative development gives children the opportunity to explore colour and texture effectively through a wide range of resources and sensory experiences. The staff give children the scope to select materials for themselves, time for them to experiment, and only intervene at appropriate times to teach specific skills. However, the intermittent intervention by some adults in children's activities is not sufficiently challenging and means that children do not go on to refine what they have made. Some role-play areas contain enough stimulating artefacts to encourage children to act out familiar experiences. The Chinese restaurant creates a sense of excitement as children take orders, prepare and serve meals. By the time they enter Year 1 most of the children will have reached the expected goals in this area of learning and many will have exceeded them.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are well above average and pupils achieve very well.
- Lessons are interesting for all pupils.
- Weaknesses have been identified and tackled very successfully.

### Commentary

36. Pupils enjoy English lessons and all achieve very well in lessons and during their time in school. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are well above average. These standards are reflected in the work seen during the inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils read confidently and write clearly and neatly. Their work includes poetry as well as stories and accounts. When speaking to a large group they are confident and express themselves clearly. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made very good progress and standards remain well above average. Their written work is of a high standard and many use paragraphs and exciting words in their stories and poems. They are confident when reading aloud and use expression very effectively to interest their audience. In large group sessions, such as circle time, pupils of all abilities speak clearly and express their ideas confidently. As a result, pupils listen to each other and make good contributions in discussions.

37. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan their lessons very well so that all pupils are fully included. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported so that they can make very good progress, and many achieve the nationally expected standards in English. Those pupils who are more able have work that is both interesting and challenging, so that they can reach the high standards of which they are capable. Teachers have high expectations of pupils working hard in lessons. As a result pupils are keen to learn and play an active part in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 were working on creating their own newspaper. The very good subject knowledge of the teacher, combined with the very good use of resources to interest the pupils, meant that all made very good progress during the lesson. They were very keen to share what they

had done with the rest of the class. Marking is a particular strength of teaching and involves the pupils in the assessment of their work. When teachers mark work they give very good encouragement to the pupils, giving praise for what they have done well. They also point out what could be improved. Pupils respond positively by writing comments in their books, showing that they have understood what the teachers have written about their work. Speaking and listening are very well promoted. This is especially noticeable in history lessons, for example. Pupils in Year 2 were able to ask questions of a teacher dressed as Samuel Pepys in order to find out what happened during the Great Fire of London. The very high expectations the teachers had of the pupils being able to ask relevant questions and listen attentively meant that they learnt a lot about this historical event. Most lessons move along at a brisk pace and pupils have many opportunities to write and discuss their work.

38. English is very well led and has resulted in standards rising. Test results are analysed in detail and any weaknesses are tackled effectively. Trends in test results, and attainment of different groups of pupils, are tracked to make sure that all pupils are achieving well. Resources are used very well to ensure that lessons are interesting. There has been very good improvement since the time of the last inspection.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

39. Skills in English are promoted very well in other subjects. Pupils write at length in subjects such as history and religious education and use their knowledge well to produce thoughtful work. In geography pupils look at news stories and find out where events are happening in the world and this further encourages their cultural development as they begin to understand customs in other countries.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**. The National Numeracy Strategy is well embedded in the school's practice.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Pupils achieve well above the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils are keen to learn and do well in lessons.
- Teaching assistants give valuable support.
- Time and resources are used effectively to promote learning.
- Booster groups are effective.

### **Commentary**

40. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 is well above the national average.

41. A significant characteristic of the work in mathematics is the emphasis given to teaching the pupils to apply the knowledge and skills gained to real life problems so that they can see the relevance of what they are being taught. The school constantly seeks ways to increase further pupils' confidence and ability in decision-making and problem-solving.

42. One of the main reasons for the pupils' very good attainment in mathematics is the school's rigorous procedures for tracking and recording pupils' progress. The critical analysis of the results of national tests and regular school assessment tasks establish and address weaknesses successfully. As a result, the very good teaching is based on secure information of pupils' needs. Therefore, teachers plan effectively the "next steps" appropriate for each pupil. Questions and work are pitched at the right level and pupils produce very good work of which they are proud.

43. The school provides significant additional support to enable pupils to reach appropriate attainment levels for their age group. Those who achieve the national standards with ease benefit from enrichment and extension programmes. The teaching in the booster and topic groups is particularly noteworthy.

44. Planning is very clear and thorough. It is based on national guidance and indicates appropriately challenging activities for different ability groups. The school's inclusive climate for learning promotes good attitudes towards the subject in all pupils. This contributes well to their overall learning and achievement. Pupils with flair in mathematics are encouraged well.

45. Lessons are brisk and the intentions are shared with pupils so that they are true partners in learning. Teachers place considerable emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of vocabulary and this extends learning effectively. This is reflected in the high level of fluency shown by pupils when explaining their ideas. Co-operative work is a strong and distinctive feature of the work with pupils working together seeking for a solution to an intellectual or practical problem.

46. The management of the subject is very good. The use of resources and the contributions from teaching assistants, supporting groups for particular reasons, are good elements that help pupils enjoy the subject. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

47. Links between mathematics and other areas of the curriculum provide many opportunities for collecting data and applying mathematical skills in realistic and interesting contexts.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- The subject is led and managed well with a strong focus on raising pupils' achievement.
- Pupils learn very well because teachers make the lessons interesting by providing many opportunities for practical, investigative activities.

### **Commentary**

48. Standards in the work seen in science are well above average in both Years 2 and 6. This reflects the standards gained by Year 6 pupils in the national tests in 2003. Teachers assessed standards in Year 2 to be above average in 2003 but inspection evidence suggests that these standards are even better this year.

49. All pupils achieve very well in science. They learn rapidly in lessons because teachers make sure that the activities and work meet their needs, whether they have a special aptitude for science or whether they learn more slowly. This is because of good assessment systems which enable teachers to know exactly where pupils are in their levels of knowledge and understanding.

50. Science lessons are usually based around an investigation so that pupils quickly become accustomed to working in a scientific way. Young pupils in Year 2, for example, test out where the warmest part of the room is by putting blocks of ice in different places and measuring the amount of water collected in the bottom of their containers. Careful timetabling ensures that the pupils have plenty of time to measure, tabulate results and form conclusions from the information. Skilful intervention and questioning from the teacher extends the skills and understanding of the brightest pupils, so that they begin to understand the principles of fair testing.

51. Teachers have very high expectations and pupils rise to the challenges they present with great enthusiasm. Investigations into, 'Which is the best lubricant for helping a skateboard do a grinder on the kerb?' excite the pupils who work together extremely well to plan and carry out a careful investigation. Teachers insist on the pupils using correct scientific vocabulary and recording their work in a scientific manner. The least able pupils receive careful support to enable them to get a great deal from the investigation whilst the brightest pupils work independently, with the teacher intervening as necessary to encourage them to think more deeply about their work.

52. The subject is led and managed very well and this has resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection. Provision is now carefully monitored and results analysed to identify areas where pupils need further support so that teachers can plan to help them. A recent audit identified that pupils needed more opportunities to really understand the principles of planning a fair, scientific investigation and inspection evidence shows that this is currently being addressed in classes.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Teachers organise their classes well in the ICT suite so that pupils can work independently as well as in pairs when appropriate.
- Pupils use their ICT skills very well as part of their ongoing work in many subjects; they understand how technology can help them learn.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards in ICT are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. This is better than at the time of the last inspection, when standards were assessed as average.

54. Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 where they show advanced skills in their PowerPoint demonstrations of book reviews. They consider the theme of the book when choosing the background and cleverly combine Word and Clip Art to produce a very professional effect. Pupils respond well to the challenges presented by teachers, for example when, for their homework, they plan 'sound bites' to include in their demonstrations. Pupils' keyboard skills are very good and reflect the amount of practice, as well as their high levels of independence and confidence.

55. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. Pupils build well upon their existing skills although occasionally the most able pupils do not make enough progress because work is not always sufficiently challenging for them.

56. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are well organised and often involve half the pupils working on computers and the other half in the adjacent library; groups then change over so that all have equal access. This means that pupils have a concentrated amount of time to work independently. On some occasions, paired use encourages pupils to evaluate each other's work and make helpful suggestions about how to improve it.

57. The subject is led and managed well and this is why standards have improved since the last inspection. Although the ICT suite is small for a school this size, teachers work hard to make sure this does not restrict pupils' opportunities. Classrooms are well-equipped with computers and teachers ensure that these are used fully to support pupils' work in class. Often they are used to help pupils with special educational needs so they are not restricted in their learning in, for example, science, by weaker literacy skills.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. Pupils use their ICT skills very well to support their learning in many subjects. Pupils search the Internet for information about keeping a healthy heart as part of their work in science. Pupils are able to practise their literacy skills regularly when they write reports and poems, publish pamphlets and make PowerPoint demonstrations. They also learn how technology can be used within art when they use software to make book illustrations and digital photography to focus on aspects of design in the local environment.

## HUMANITIES

There were too few lessons in **history** and **geography** to make an overall judgement on provision and teaching. However, from looking at work and talking to pupils and staff standards are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. In the lessons seen pupils enjoyed their work and were engrossed in the activities. In history, teachers made the work on the fire of London very interesting for the pupils by pretending to be Samuel Pepys and talking to the pupils and answering their questions about the fire and how he had recorded what he saw. Very good use is made of the local manor house to introduce pupils to what life was like in days gone by, and pupils talk enthusiastically about their day there. In the geography lessons seen, pupils learnt about the local area and how they would improve the environment. Pupils in Year 4 learnt about the local village and how it has grown in recent years. By Year 6 pupils link history and geography lessons effectively so that they learn about the geographical features of Ancient Egypt.

## Religious Education

The provision for religious education is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The inclusive school ethos promotes respect and compassion.
- Pupils' very good behaviour in lessons, positive attitudes, and response contribute to the high standards.
- The programme for religious education is well structured.
- The management of the subject is very good.

## Commentary

59. The school ethos that promotes good relationships and mutual respect provides an ideal basis from which to develop pupils' understanding of the relationship between religious teachings and social and moral behaviour. These strands are drawn together successfully in the school's programme for religious education. Pupils show respect for the values and beliefs of the different faith communities and are very good at relating issues to their own lives. They are helped to gain an understanding that religion has a practical application in people's everyday lives. This results in standards being well above average throughout the school, and all pupils achieving very well.

60. The most successful lessons combine a strong element of direct teaching and skilful questioning for the whole class with the setting of purposeful and straightforward tasks aimed at pupils with different levels of attainment.

61. Teachers make sure that pupils have a clear understanding of world faiths through the exploration of similarities and differences between religions. Pupils demonstrate a mature and thoughtful approach as they discuss religious issues. They are clearly developing personal views of these and are beginning to analyse and evaluate their own and others' beliefs. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils can make considered judgements in the light of their own experience and express their views with a high degree of integrity.



62. Teachers make effective links with literacy by encouraging pupils to read and listen carefully. Opportunities are provided for extended writing to give pupils the time to develop an idea and explore an issue in depth.

63. The management of the subject is very good. The committed and enthusiastic co-ordinators effectively evaluate the teaching and learning and support staff in their work. Through the process of monitoring, the school ensures breadth, balance, and progression in religious education. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

Only one lesson was seen in **design and technology** but inspectors looked at pupils' work and teachers' plans. The evidence suggests that pupils are taught all the National Curriculum requirements for the subject but it was not possible to judge standards or the quality of teaching and learning. Only two **music** lessons were seen, and therefore no provision judgement can be made. However, pupils sing enthusiastically and say that they enjoy lessons.

### **ART AND DESIGN**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Standards are well above average.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable.
- The subject is very well led.

#### **Commentary**

64. Standards of work in Years 2 and 6 are well above average and reflect good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement in all year groups is very good. All pupils gain a great deal from the rich variety of experiences offered within the subject. Often, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and gain a great deal of confidence and self esteem from their work. Pupils with a special talent for art are catered for extremely well through extension activities such as visits to galleries, museums and artists' studios. These provide the necessary first hand experiences for pupils to produce work of very high quality.

65. Teachers show great enthusiasm and excitement for the subject. Their high levels of knowledge and skill allow them to present lessons confidently, with great attention to detail. They know when to intervene and when to let pupils work alone. They draw pupils' attention to important points, for example how human joints move, when Year 2 pupils sketch simple figures. Pupils follow their teacher's example, making flowing pencil movements to create simple, yet very effective outlines. Drawing skills are extended as pupils become older so that by the time they are in Year 6, they produce excellent pen and ink drawings of feathers, driftwood, shells, and seaweed and cuttlefish bone. The drawings show beautiful detail, using deft pen work in crosshatching and other advanced drawing techniques.

66. Specific skills are taught very well and pupils become confident and practised artists. Older pupils can combine skills such as curled paper and papier mache work to produce very original masks as part of their work on 'Jabberwocky'.

67. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Teachers benefit from the co-ordinator working alongside them regularly in lessons and thus develop high level skills and knowledge themselves. Art lessons are nearly always linked to pupils' work in other subjects and this adds coherence to pupils' learning.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Physical education is very good both in lessons and after school.
- Teaching is consistently good and pupils' standards are very good.
- Over 70 per cent of pupils take part in a sports activity out of school time during the school year.
- Pupils are involved in physical education activities in the local area and in other schools.
- The sports co-ordinator for the area works extremely well with the physical education co-ordinator team and other staff at Westdene to continually improve sporting opportunities for pupils.

### **Commentary.**

68. Physical education is strong both in lessons and after school as teachers are all involved in improving choice and the quality of activities. Pupils take part in an unusually broad range of physical education activities, including dance, during their time at the school. This results in standards in physical education being well above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Unusually, most pupils in the school go swimming and most are confident in water, learning to swim from an early age. Standards have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection.

69. Teaching is consistently good and pupils' standards are very high. One of the characteristics of physical education lessons is the very good subject knowledge shown by teachers in lessons and the interesting and effective way the lessons are planned. Teachers use the expertise of the sports co-ordinator linked to the school extremely effectively to develop their physical education expertise and to help them plan stimulating lessons. Teachers watch lessons taught by the sport specialist and teach alongside him thus developing both their confidence and their understanding. Teachers make very good links between physical education and other subjects where it will help pupils' understand better. For example, the Year 6 classes are linking physical education with science and human biology. A feature of lessons is the enthusiasm and involvement of pupils who through the consistently good teaching learn well and really enjoy their lessons.

70. A very large majority of pupils take part in a sports activity out of school time during the school year. These range from swimming to netball, sports master classes to trampolining. They allow those who are gifted and talented in their sport to participate at a high level and those who just enjoy the activity to take part. Many of the class teachers at Westdene also help run after school sports activities.

71. The sports co-ordinator for the area works extremely well with the physical education co-ordinator team and other staff at Westdene to continually improve sporting opportunities and links. This means that pupils are involved in physical education not just at school but in sporting activities in the local area and in other schools. In this way pupils get extremely good opportunities to take part at a high level, in local championships for example, and have involvement in very special occasions such as area games.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Personal, social and health education**

There were too few lessons seen in this subject to make an overall judgement on provision. However, the school has planned provision for sex and drug education and provides very well for pupils' personal development. Through well-planned circle time sessions pupils learn about the views and feelings of others and accept that there are views different to their own.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*