



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**South Bersted CE Primary School**

**West Sussex Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 3-4 February 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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## **Contents**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Basic information about the school</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Main findings</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Key issues</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Inspection findings</b>	<b>3</b>
Standards achieved by the pupils	3
The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	6
The quality of education	7
Leadership and management	8
<b>Implementation of the action plan</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix – Information about the inspection</b>	<b>11</b>

## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	South Bersted CE Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Miss J Waelend
Address of school:	Church Lane Bognor Regis West Sussex PO22 9PZ
Telephone:	01243 821678
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr A Grainge
Local education authority area:	West Sussex
Unique reference number:	125973
Name of reporting inspector:	Mrs J Ward HMI
Dates of inspection:	3-4 February 2004

## Introduction

1. South Bersted CE Primary School is situated in Bognor Regis. There are 269 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is small. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are 44 pupils on the register of special educational needs, who have a wide range of needs. Five of them have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is slightly below average. Forty one pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. The pupils come from a range of backgrounds, but there are more, particularly higher up the school, from areas of social deprivation than is often the case. The school's intake is beginning to change and the children entering now have a better grounding in basic skills than has been the case in the past. The pupils in the present reception class have broadly average attainment.
2. The school was inspected in October 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of October 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on two occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In February 2004 two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of October 2002.

## Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:
    - standards in English, mathematics and science are steadily improving throughout the school;
    - the pupils' attainment in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 over the past two years has risen and is now much closer to the national figures. Standards in mathematics improved significantly in 2003 and exceeded the national figure;
    - the standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved in English and science but remain lower than the national figure in English. Standards in mathematics are well below those found nationally;
    - the pupils enter the school with average skills; the pupils in the present reception year are working at levels which are at least commensurate with their ages. The quality of education and the progress the pupils in the Foundation Stage make is good;
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- standards in lessons reflect the improved levels attained in tests and assessments. Most pupils have made steady or better progress during the past year and are now working at levels which are broadly average, except in Year 6 where standards are lower than those expected for their ages;
- standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved considerably throughout the school. At the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 the pupils are achieving standards similar to age-related expectations. At Key Stage 2, standards in some elements of the ICT curriculum are satisfactory, but there are gaps in the pupils' skills and understanding due to past weaknesses in the planning and teaching of this subject;
- the provision for pupils who have special educational needs is well organised and appropriately monitored. The progress they make is sound and carefully recorded. The quality of the pupils' individual education plans is good;
- the quality of the education is now good overall. The quality of teaching was sound or better in all the lessons seen; almost two thirds was good or very good. Consistent strengths were evident in all lessons, reflecting a successful coaching initiative. Assessment procedures are well established and beginning to be effective in raising the teachers' understanding and expectations of the level the pupils can attain. There remains room to develop day-to-day assessment to ensure that all tasks fully challenge all the pupils;
- the pupils' response in class is good. Most pupils are attentive, persevere and concentrate, work well co-operatively and show interest in the work they do. Many pupils behave well and are developing the ability to work sensibly and independently of adult support;
- the headteacher gives very clear educational direction to the work of the school. She has effectively led the staff in implementing a practical and well-paced improvement plan. Her leadership and management have been both strong and sensitive; she has successfully developed a team of teaching and supporting staff who are committed to the school's further improvement, including a sharper focus on the pupils' learning and achievement;
- the role of the senior managers has strengthened during the past year; the deputy headteacher has effectively led the improvement in the quality of the teaching through a well-organised and efficiently managed coaching programme;
- most subject co-ordinators are in the early stages of developing their skills in leading and managing their subjects;
- some very useful work has gone into planning the curriculum, determining school policies, providing in-service training for teachers and establishing a number of effective monitoring procedures. The school's evaluation of teaching, through teachers' plans and from regular classroom observations, is now well established;

- the governors are developing a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The chair of governors has been very supportive of the headteacher and staff, and has focused his fellow governors on school improvement. The governors are evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses, including interpreting and analysing performance data with greater understanding;
- the local education authority (LEA) has provided a good level of funding to support training managers, governors and subject co-ordinators;
- the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good. The teachers manage the pupils fairly and consistently. The teachers provide regular opportunities for the pupils to develop their understanding of cultures other than their own and to deepen their awareness of the world around them;
- the ethos of the school is a strength; good links with the parents and the community have been established and pupils speak very positively about the school. The parents are consulted and actively involved on many issues; for example, some are part of the working party on homework. The school is well regarded in the local community;
- the pupils' attendance is rigorously monitored and follow-up procedures to improve attendance and punctuality are proving effective;
- the school gives satisfactory value for money.

## **Key issues**

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to raise the pupils' levels of attainment in English, mathematics, science and ICT in lessons and over time, and eliminate underachievement throughout the school, especially by the higher-attaining pupils;
- continue to improve the quality of teaching by building on the good practice which already exists and raising, where necessary, the teachers' expectations of what all pupils can achieve;
- develop further the roles of the middle managers and subject leaders to enable them to effectively lead and manage their subjects and areas of responsibility.

## **Inspection findings**

### **Standards achieved by the pupils**

7. Standards in English, mathematics and science are steadily improving throughout the school. The pupils' attainment in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 over the past

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two years has risen and is now much closer to the national figures. Standards in mathematics improved significantly in 2003 and exceeded the national figure. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved in English and science when compared with those attained in 2001 and 2002, but remain lower than the national figure in English. Standards in mathematics are well below those found nationally.

8. The pupils enter the school with average skills; the pupils in the present reception year are working at levels which are at least commensurate with their ages. The quality of education and the progress the pupils in the Foundation Stage make is good. The pupils make good progress; they are able to retell familiar stories, read key words accurately, and begin to compose their own sentences. The reading corner includes displays which effectively encourage pupils to learn about different authors and illustrators, and there is a good range of books for pupils to read. The reception area has very well-organised role-play areas linked with the class topic. The skills pupils develop in mathematics are sound; most can sort, order and sequence numbers and groups of objects using more than one criteria. There are many good opportunities to discover and investigate the world around them; pupils are discovering the use of different materials and identifying these materials in everyday objects and goods. The level of most pupils' knowledge and understanding of different materials is good and they could confidently describe the characteristics of all the building materials in the 'feely box' to the rest of the class. Most of the pupils can use a range of ICT programs, for example to draw snowmen, and to count objects. They competently use the mouse and select icons accurately. All areas of creative learning are well catered for; pupils have designed and made models, printed and painted pictures mixing their own colours, and drawn pictures from still life using pencil, charcoal and pastels. The quality of the work produced is of a good standard, and the pupils' fine motor skills are developing well. By the time they enter Key Stage 1, pupils listen well and most speak clearly; they understand about the need to share, co-operate and follow agreed codes of classroom practice. This gives a good foundation for later learning.

9. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen carefully and give suitable responses during class discussions. They make sound progress, developing their oral vocabulary and improving in confidence. The pupils have made particularly secure progress with their reading skills; the guided reading sessions are well organised, and the pupils are working to set targets. Some of these targets, especially those set for the higher-attaining pupils, are insufficiently challenging. For example, some of the very fluent readers were not given sufficient opportunities to read challenging fiction and non-fiction texts, and too often were expected to work through all the books in the scheme, even if they were too easy. The teaching time, and that of the support assistants, is directed to improving the pupils' skills in decoding unfamiliar words, using phonics, blends, picture and contextual clues. The pupils follow up their reading in a variety of ways; for instance, by writing book reviews, character profiles and summaries of the stories. All this work has ensured that the pupils are reading and writing for purpose, as well as enjoyment. Most of the pupils make sound progress in developing their writing skills and by the end of the key stage can express their ideas effectively in short pieces of text, usually using full stops and capital letters correctly. Their handwriting is improving, and most pupils in Year 2 are joining their writing neatly, but standards vary between classes. There remains room for further improvement to fully challenge the higher-attaining pupils in all aspects of English.

10. The pupils make sound to good progress in mathematics throughout Key Stage 1; number work is a relative strength. The youngest pupils count confidently in different

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contexts, for example when they use computer programs; they recognise and name mathematical and solid shapes and find these shapes in everyday objects and packets. Good links are made to introduce number skills in other activities, for example, when paying bills using a range of coins. By the end of Year 2 the pupils can use a range of mental strategies to calculate money problems and add up bills. The pupils' skills in mental arithmetic are satisfactorily developed and they are generally confident in using numbers across the curriculum.

11. Science is appropriately represented in Years 1 and 2. Good quality, interest tables and displays are available for the pupils to explore a range of materials and to group and set them to different criteria. Overall, the pupils' knowledge and understanding in science are good but their skills in using and applying that knowledge are underdeveloped.

12. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 build effectively upon their attainments from Key Stage 1; this represents a considerable improvement in the quality of the education provided for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Most have an appropriate range of English skills for their age. In one lesson the pupils had good opportunities to discuss the setting for a story, and by working in pairs all the pupils were involved. However, independent writing skills, and the pupils' understanding and effective use of phonics and word attack skills to decode unfamiliar words are relatively weak.

13. Older pupils have yet to make up sufficient lost ground and their attainments across English as a whole is generally below average by the end of the key stage, but is improving. Though they speak confidently enough in class discussions, they too seldom do so at length or with a sufficiently wide vocabulary. Recent improvements to the English curriculum are beginning to address this and other issues; progress in all the lessons seen was satisfactory or good. Nevertheless, the older pupils have restricted reading and writing skills. Their reading books are often simple for their age and their insights into the texts are sometimes superficial. The school has implemented effective guided reading sessions to address these weaknesses, with a marked degree of success. For example, more pupils are able to draw conclusions about the personalities of key characters in a story although they lack sufficient experience to cope easily with both fiction and non-fiction texts. Reference skills are improving, enabling pupils to use dictionaries and other factual sources more independently. Provision has been enhanced through the literacy strategy and the regular target-setting sessions which identify what the pupils have learnt and what they need to do next. Writing skills are underdeveloped. Written work is generally immature and lacks structure. However, there are signs that the progress the pupils have made since the start of the school year has been sound and sometimes good; some exciting and well-constructed reporting of historical events has been produced by Year 5 and 6 pupils.

14. Key Stage 2 pupils generally make sound progress in mathematics; however their overall attainment is much lower than it should be. Younger pupils can apply their knowledge effectively in, for example, telling the time and using money. They are confident with numbers and have a reasonable recall of basic number facts. Older pupils' mathematical skills are relatively less well developed. Though they are generally able to identify and use the properties of mathematical shapes, and make target numbers using specific digits, they lack sufficient dexterity with numbers. Their pattern-spotting and investigational skills are relatively weak, and they rely too heavily on prompting from adults to adopt quick mental strategies.

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15. Standards in science have improved, although there are gaps in the pupils' skills and ability to apply their knowledge. A scrutiny of the pupils' workbooks showed there is a need to develop investigational skills; the progression of pupils' competencies when faced with making choices, selecting equipment, designing, investigating and recording information are just satisfactory. A good lesson was observed when pupils designed an appropriate circuit to light up a clown's eyes and sound a buzzer.

16. Standards in ICT have improved considerably throughout the school. At the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 the pupils are achieving standards similar to age-related expectations. At Key Stage 2, standards in some elements of the ICT curriculum are satisfactory, but there are gaps in the pupils' skills and understanding due to past weaknesses in the planning and teaching of this subject. Good and very good lessons were observed where the pupils set up programs to sort and categorise shapes.

17. The pupils are attaining satisfactory standards in most subjects. Some good and very good quality work has been produced in art and design, and in design and technology. Good cross-curricular links are being made; for example, pupils designed and made pictures which involved painting, textile work and the application of a range of skills.

18. The pupils make sound to good progress in lessons and over time. Some pupils have made significant gains in the levels they have attained in all core subjects. Throughout the school, the standards attained and the rate of progress the pupils make have improved. The pupils' rate of progress has been slowly increasing at Key Stage 1 over the past year. The overall improvements at Key Stage 2 have been more recent, and there remain some patches of slower progress. Most pupils have made steady or better progress during the past year and are now working at levels which are broadly average except in Year 6 where standards are lower than those expected for their ages.

19. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is well organised and appropriately monitored. The progress they make is sound and carefully recorded. The quality of the pupils' individual education plans is good. The school is developing its policy and procedures appropriately. A programme of support for these pupils is being implemented; this intervention is well planned so that, wherever possible, the pupils are not removed from the normal curriculum. Most teachers have improved their planning and teaching skills to support the range of needs presented by the pupils.

20. The pupils and their parents or carers are being included in the formulation of the individual education plans; this is a positive development and most of the pupils know what their targets are. The management of the teaching assistants has improved so that they are clearer about their roles, responsibilities and deployment. They continue to offer sensitive support to the pupils and are developing their abilities in formative assessment and in recording progress.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

21. The ethos of the school is a strength. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The teachers manage the pupils fairly and consistently. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to develop their understanding of cultures other than their own and to deepen their awareness of the world around them. Year 6 pupils spoke very positively about their school.

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22. The behaviour of the pupils is good overall. They respond positively to the teachers' higher expectations of them and a purposeful atmosphere is established in most lessons. The days start very well and pupils settle quickly to initial tasks during registration. There have been major improvements in the pupils' attitudes to learning and their response to teaching. The pupils' positive attitudes to the school and their application to work are good throughout the school. Pupils are attentive, willing participants in class lessons and they collaborate very effectively in smaller groups. There remain a very small number of pupils who occasionally present challenging behaviour but the teachers manage this well. The school has successfully introduced an agreed code of conduct which is consistently and effectively applied by all the staff, and understood and adhered to by the pupils.

23. A high level of care and attention is paid to the pupils' personal development, and relationships are good throughout the school. The pupils are aware of the need to respect others and to care for those less fortunate than themselves. These values are constantly reinforced in lessons, assemblies, at play and at lunchtime. The stronger links the school has with the local community have encouraged the pupils to engage successfully with other pupils in different situations.

24. The school provides the pupils with many very good opportunities to attend extracurricular clubs; these activities encompass a very wide range of sporting, social and creative pursuits. Many of these activities have included support from the parents. All these opportunities have contributed to improving the pupils' attitudes and behaviour in many situations, particularly with regard to taking responsibility for their own actions.

25. The school environment is stimulating and exciting. Interesting, and lively displays of pupils' work can be seen in corridors and central areas. The pupils are proud of this work and show much greater care and respect for their school, the work on display and the equipment they use. The school has taken advantage of a number of opportunities to improve the environment with the support of the parents and using pupils' creative work.

26. The school works very well with parents. Much has been achieved to build strong and productive links with the pupils' families and the local community. The positive feedback from the parents through informal and formal meetings, and their comments to staff, demonstrate how much progress the school has made in gaining their trust and support. The parents are consulted and actively involved on many issues; for example, some are part of the working party on homework. The school is well regarded in the local community.

27. The pupils' attendance is rigorously monitored and follow-up procedures to improve attendance and punctuality are proving effective.

### **The quality of education**

28. The quality of education is now good overall. The quality of teaching was sound or better in all the lessons seen; almost two thirds was good or very good. Consistent strengths were evident in all lessons, reflecting the success of a coaching initiative. Assessment procedures are well established and beginning to be effective in raising the teachers' understanding and expectations of the levels the pupils can attain. There remains room to develop day-to-day assessment to ensure that all tasks fully challenge all the pupils.

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29. The teachers plan and review their work very conscientiously. Expectations of pupils are higher than found a year ago, both in terms of their conduct and their anticipated levels of achievement, and the best lessons have a brisk pace. Work is carefully structured but sometimes takes too little account of the needs of those pupils with higher abilities; there is a tendency to deal with this matter through the quantity of work which is required, rather than adjusting the difficulty of the task or presenting the work in a different way. There were some very good examples of teachers using a wider range of strategies in their lessons, having benefited from the school's focus on this aspect within its coaching programme. The deputy headteacher has led this innovative and highly successful programme, and the LEA has funded it well to enable her to be non-class based. In a relatively short period of time, the coaching has enabled the teachers to understand and apply specific strategies to their lessons to improve the quality of the pupils' learning.

30. The school has developed effective systems for tracking the pupils' attainment and progress over time. This helps the teachers to set targets for the pupils to improve their work and senior managers to monitor and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. There are appropriate arrangements for the longer-term, as well as the day-to-day, assessment of pupils' progress. Progress within the units of work in most subjects is recorded against the learning objectives. National Curriculum and other test results are recorded on individual pupil proformas to track progress through the school. Individual and school-wide target-setting approaches for the pupils' performance are developing well; these targets are well considered, but not always sufficiently challenging. They contribute to raising the expectations of pupils and to the gains in standards across the school. The teachers have improved the quality of their marking, and there are examples of excellent guidance given in pupils' books to help them improve, but this practice is not yet consistent throughout the school.

31. The curriculum is organised effectively and managed efficiently. Shared planning results in good levels of support for the teachers. The teachers are now making well-thought-out cross-curricular links across several subjects. For example, the work seen in design and technology had involved the pupils in using ICT to collate their findings, note taking and report writing, and in some instances, collating their findings as graphs.

### **Leadership and management**

32. The school is well led; the headteacher gives very clear educational direction to the work of the school and has successfully steered its improvement. Well-defined structures are in place for monitoring the school's performance in addressing the targets in the action plan. She has effectively led the staff in implementing a practical and well-paced improvement plan which ensures that the progress the school has made is monitored with increased rigour and that the improvements are assessed accurately. Her leadership and management have been both strong and sensitive and she has successfully developed a team of teaching and support staff who are committed to the school's further improvement, including a much sharper focus on pupils' learning and achievement. The schedule of senior management and general staff meetings has developed well over the past year, and all staff are beginning to have a greater role in the school's curriculum development.

33. The role of the senior managers has strengthened during the past year; the deputy headteacher has effectively led the improvement in the quality of the teaching through a well-organised and efficiently managed coaching programme. The senior managers and subject

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co-ordinators have clear action plans for their roles and responsibilities. There are some weaknesses in the leadership and management of Key Stage 1; the Key Stage 1 manager is not sufficiently focused on ensuring that the quality of education is consistent across all Year 1 and 2 classes.

34. Most subject co-ordinators are gradually developing skills to lead and manage their subjects effectively in specific key stages, including monitoring pupils' attainment, but not yet throughout the school. In part, this is due to the recent appointment of several subject co-ordinators to their roles, and the plans to develop their expertise are well-founded.

35. Some very useful work has gone into planning the curriculum, determining school policies, providing in-service training for teachers and establishing a number of effective monitoring procedures. The school's evaluation of teaching, through teachers' plans and from regular classroom observations, is now well established.

36. The governors are developing a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The chair of governors has been very supportive of the headteacher and staff, and has focused his fellow governors on school improvement. The governors are evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses, including interpreting and analysing performance data with greater understanding.

37. The school's management and improvement plan usefully guides the short and longer-term work of the school. Self-evaluation by the school is considerably stronger and places it in a secure position to identify future training and support requirements, including the role the LEA can usefully play in supporting these needs. The school and LEA have worked well in partnership to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning, particularly over the past 12 months, especially in raising teachers' skills. It is now timely for the school to fine tune the support the LEA can provide to suit the specific needs within the curriculum. The school's financial position is not yet secure; the LEA has submitted a support plan to address the school's continued development. However, there remain concerns about the prospective pupil numbers on roll for the school, and the LEA has made a commitment of continued financial support. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

### **Implementation of the action plan**

38. The inspection report of 2002 required the school to address four key issues. These principally related to: improving the quality of teaching; planning the curriculum better; developing the use of assessment; and strengthening leadership and management. Overall, the school has made good progress in tackling the key issues.

39. The quality of the teaching and learning is at least good overall, with several very good features. The coaching programme has effectively improved the teachers' skills. Particular strengths can be seen in how carefully the teachers plan and structure lesson, and encourage all the pupils to contribute in introductory and plenary sessions.

40. The overall curricular planning is good. The structures for long, medium and short-term planning are well honed and are effectively supporting the teachers in their lessons. Rigorous attention to the fine detail in short-term planning is ensuring consistency between classes and across year groups.

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41. Assessment and recording systems are well structured, carefully maintained and accurately track the pupils' progress over time. These improvements have meant that the school has been able to identify target groups for additional support and increased challenge, although not consistently in all lessons for higher-attaining pupils.

42. Together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher demonstrate a determined drive for improvement; they review the school's performance regularly and evaluate the impact of actions systematically. Subject leaders have been appointed and are beginning to determine the future development of their areas of responsibility. The governors are an effective body: minutes of meetings are informative, with clear actions identified, and strong systems to follow up actions.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in October 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in May and October 2003 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of October 2002.

In February 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Twenty lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies and two registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair of governors, a parent governor and representatives from the LEA. Informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of October 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

**Notes**





