



St Helen's Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118169
LEA Isle of Wight LEA
Inspection number 280253
Inspection dates 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Thrussell AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Broomlands Close
School category	Community		St Helens
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Ryde PO33 1XH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01983872442
Number on roll	64	Fax number	01983872442
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Gwyneth Mitchell
Date of previous inspection	6 December 1999	Headteacher	Miss Jane Loader

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Helen's is a very small primary school serving the town and surrounding area. The majority of pupils come from average social backgrounds. A high proportion is eligible for free school meals. Almost all have British White heritage and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is much less than in most other schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

its effectiveness. The inspection finds this to be a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Pupils' personal development is good. They are extremely well cared for, feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Very good links with parents, other schools and agencies reinforce this high level of care. Children receive a good start to their education in Reception and make good progress. The quality of education throughout the rest of the school is also good. Pupils make good progress; they generally attain above average results at the end of Year 2 and when they leave the school in Year 4. Standards in writing, especially for the more able, are not as good as in reading and mathematics. The school has begun to tackle this issue. Teaching is good, supported by the very effective work of teaching assistants. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and encouraged to consider how well they are doing. Although lessons are well prepared, the school lacks sufficient computers to support learning. Very good links with other schools contribute to the outstanding enrichment of the curriculum. The leadership of the head teacher is very good. She is well supported by her staff and governing body. The school has clearly identified its strengths and where it could improve further, and is well placed to build upon its success.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise standards in writing especially for more able pupils * Increase the number of computers so that better use of information and communication technology (ICT) can be made to support pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards on entry to Reception vary from year to year but are average overall. Children get a good start to their education; they make good progress and most achieve the learning goals expected by the time they start in Year 1. A significant number exceed them. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in meeting the challenging targets set for them. The school's performance in national tests for Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, with small numbers in each year, fluctuates from year to year, but is generally above average. In Years 3 and 4, good progress is maintained with a significant proportion of pupils continuing to attain standards which are above those expected for their age. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties make good progress in meeting their targets due to the good support given to them. In the 2005 Year 2 tests, although standards in writing were above average, but they should have been better given the pupils' prior attainment. The school quickly identified this and recently adopted a study programme throughout the school, designed to raise attainment in writing. This helps pupils to understand how they can develop their writing and is beginning to bring about an improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, equipping them suitably for their move to other schools and their future. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and have very positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is good as they move about the school and in assemblies. They are confident, polite and courteous. Parents say that their children enjoy school, and pupils confirm this. They enjoy all lessons and particularly appreciate after school clubs. The school council gives opportunities for them to express their views and contribute to the life of the school community. Pupils were pleased that their ideas for improving lining up and coming into school safely after playtimes were carried through. One pupil commented, 'We need to do things properly'. They have a good understanding of healthy living. They know the importance of eating the right things, both in snacks and school lunches, and taking plenty of exercise. There are strengths in pupils' moral and social development. This is seen in the very good relationships, the care and consideration older pupils show for younger ones, and in charity fund raising. Their good spiritual development is seen in their appreciation of daily assemblies and their pride in receiving certificates during celebration assemblies. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Although they learn about different world cultures, they are not sufficiently aware of the cultural diversity in Britain today.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, helping all pupils to achieve well and develop very positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are well prepared with a good range of activities. These take careful account of pupils' ages and abilities so that all are appropriately challenged and interest is fully sustained. Lessons are well managed with pupils quick to follow instructions and settle to work with little time wasted. Pupils work well independently and co-operatively, allowing adults to focus their support on different groups of learners. Teaching assistants take an active role in supporting groups of learners. In most lessons, teachers effectively share with pupils what they are going to be learning; careful questioning encourages pupils to think about this throughout lessons and consider at the end how well they have done. The use of ICT to introduce lessons and support pupils' learning is hindered by a lack of resources.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum with a wide range of interesting activities. The Reception class is now taught separately from Years 1 and 2 and consequently the staff more readily provide learning experiences which meet the needs of younger children. In music, pupils have the opportunity for good instrumental tuition. Planning

takes good account of health and safety through visits by the police, opportunities for sport and exercise, and links with a local hotel that enabled pupils to experience different healthy eating options. The school works closely on curriculum development with the on-site nursery and other local schools. They jointly organise events that contribute to outstanding opportunities for enrichment for this small school. Residential trips, sports days, visits by storytellers and theatre groups, and football coaching by older students, provide rewarding and enjoyable experiences. Good use is made of visits to provide first hand educational opportunities and a range of clubs extends pupils' learning well. Themed days, such as the recent one for Chinese New Year, provide pupils with particularly memorable experiences. Links are made between subjects to draw on different skills and make learning more purposeful.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Parents and pupils wholeheartedly agree that this is an extremely happy and caring school. Pupils know that adults have their well-being at heart. Staff provide good role models and children's confidence and self-esteem are nurtured throughout the school. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and conscientiously observed. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood. The school works closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils with learning needs are carefully supported, allowing them to make good progress in meeting the achievable targets set for them. A minority of parents express some concern about the few pupils with behavioural needs. These pupils are well supported and considerable care is taken to ensure that they do not interrupt the learning of others. All pupils are involved in setting their own personal and learning targets, which they are keen to meet. As an encouragement, stickers are put on cards as pupils progress towards their targets and this has a beneficial impact. The school has recently taken the initiative to introduce a programme designed to help some pupils develop more co-ordinated body movements as an aid to greater concentration in class. This is being monitored closely and its benefits are already apparent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The head teacher provides very good leadership and management. She gives a clear direction for the school's work and focuses very strongly on the all round development of all pupils. The school is mostly accurate in its self-evaluation and makes good use of this information to ensure good improvement.. Staff willingly try out new ideas, such as a programme to support pupils with co-ordination difficulties. There are now good assessment procedures in English and mathematics. Lesson observations are carried out regularly; these evaluations have identified areas for professional development leading to improved teaching. The school improvement plan is well focused, showing costs and how its success is to be measured. These successes illustrate the school's good capacity for further improvement. The head teacher is keen to involve

other members of staff in school management. Teachers contribute effectively to the oversight of the Foundation Stage and to developments in literacy and numeracy. The provision for pupils with learning needs is well led and managed. The work of the governing body is good. Governors are very supportive of the work of the school, increasingly understand its strengths and weaknesses, and ask pertinent questions. Finances are used well and budgeting takes account of possible falling rolls. Links and consultation with parents, other local schools and the community are very good. This is shown in the very strong support given to the work of the school and to children's learning.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing to let you know what I found when I visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. I spoke to many of you during my visit and you were always interesting to talk to, polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. St Helen's is a good school.

I liked these things the most: * You behave well and enjoy school. * You all get on really well together; older pupils always look out for the younger ones. * The school is extremely caring; pupils who need extra help are well supported. * You understand the importance of eating the right things and taking plenty of exercise. * Teachers provide good lessons and you are all very keen to learn. * The school provides lots of interesting and exciting things for you to do. * The school listens to you when you suggest how things could be even better. * Your head teacher does a very good job.

I have asked the school to work on these things now: * Continue to help you to improve your writing. * Provide you with more computers so that you can make fuller use of them in lessons. Thank you again.