



Glebe Community Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125913
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282019
Inspection dates 1 March 2006 to 2 March 2006
Reporting inspector Carole Skinner AI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary	School address	Church Lane
School category	Community		Brighton
Age range of pupils	8 to 12		West Sussex BN42 4GB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01273 592163
Number on roll	295	Fax number	01273 870169
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Bob White
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Ann Walton

Age group 8 to 12	Inspection dates 1 March 2006 - 2 March 2006	Inspection number 282019
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated a few miles from Brighton in an area which has pockets of social and economic deprivation. It is larger than average for a primary school but smaller than other local middle schools. The number of pupils on roll has declined over the past few years and the school, along with others in the area, is subject to reorganisation proposals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than in most schools. About 10% of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds but most speak English as their first language. The school has had an exceptionally high turnover of staff in the past few years and has been led by six different headteachers, including acting and locum headteachers, since its last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which has made significant improvements despite a high turnover of headteachers and teaching staff in recent years. Senior managers take a more cautious view of the school's effectiveness in their self-evaluation because of the very recent changes that have taken place. However, it is clear that good leadership and management have underpinned a clear focus on raising standards in those areas where underachievement has been identified. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well.

Standards in Year 6 national tests have risen steadily over the past five years and are now broadly average, although pupils do better in mathematics than in English. Standards in writing are not yet high enough, especially for the more able pupils. Lively and well planned lessons make learning interesting and enjoyable for boys and girls alike. Assessment procedures are being developed well in English and mathematics, but are less effective in other subjects. There are some inconsistencies in the way teachers assess and mark pupils' work.

Most pupils' behaviour is good and the school deals effectively with the minority of pupils who do not meet its high expectations. Pupils' personal development is also good. This results from a number of successful initiatives to involve them in various aspects of school and community life. They are cared for and supported well. Increasingly innovative curricular planning ensures that pupils enjoy a wide variety of interesting and worthwhile experiences. The school gives good value for money and is in a strong position to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in writing, particularly for the more able pupils
- Make sure that assessment procedures for English and mathematics are used consistently from class to class, as well as being developed for other subjects
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work shows them clearly what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Many pupils start school with lower than average standards and, in the past, have not always made sufficient progress in Years 4 and 5, leaving much ground to be made up in Year 6. Similarly, the school identified that some pupils in Year 7 were not making enough progress, given their good achievement in Year 6. These weaknesses have been rectified through improvements in teaching and the curriculum so that progress is now more consistent across the school. Pupils are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them. Boys and girls do equally well, and pupils from minority ethnic groups also make good progress.

Standards in Year 6 national tests have risen significantly over the past five years, from exceptionally low to broadly average levels. In 2005, standards in mathematics were above average. Although higher attaining pupils do well in mathematics, science and reading, they do not reach high enough standards in writing. The school has introduced a number of strategies to raise standards in writing and these are beginning to have a positive effect. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are also much improved and now match national expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they are supported well and have clear targets for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and participate with enthusiasm in the wide range of activities the school provides. Most pupils' behaviour is good. The school's 'no tolerance' policy on anti-social behaviour has resulted in a number of pupils being excluded for short periods. As the effective rewards and sanctions systems begin to take effect, the number of exclusions is diminishing. Attendance is satisfactory. It has improved significantly over the past three years as a result of initiatives such as the 'Red, Amber, Green Project'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Social skills are developed well through participation in events such as dance and sports festivals, as well as a good range of after school activities, visits and residential trips. Junior governors make an effective contribution to decision making and all pupils benefit from developing 'class contracts', which reinforce their understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity is enhanced through events such as the recent 'Black History Month'. Teachers recognise that pupils need more opportunities for reflection and exploring feelings.

Pupils understand the benefits of a healthy diet and enjoy taking part in physical activities, both in lessons and after school clubs. Through participation in fund-raising activities and events such as Fair Trade Week and an anti-graffiti campaign, pupils acquire valuable skills for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school has successfully tackled the weaknesses in teaching that were identified as reasons for past underachievement, and as a result the quality of teaching is now good. Following a period of high staff turnover, there is now greater stability, consistency and effective teamwork within year groups.

Two key features stand out. Teachers' consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour allow lessons to proceed at a brisk pace with few interruptions. In addition,

teachers use a good variety of strategies and resources to make lessons interesting and enjoyable for both girls and boys, which also ensures that pupils are actively involved in learning.

Lessons are well planned and organised, and activities are tailored to the differing needs and capabilities of the pupils. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is particularly good. Well chosen targets are set and reviewed each term and pupils are given good additional support by well qualified and trained assistants in lessons. In most lessons, teachers provide good challenge for higher attaining pupils, but this remains an area for improvement in writing.

Assessment procedures, although improving and developing well in English and mathematics, are not yet implemented consistently across all classes and subjects. The marking of pupils' written work is also variable and does not always show pupils clearly how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is already good but continues to evolve as teachers seek ways to make interesting links between subjects in order to increase creativity and enjoyment. This is being done successfully in Year 4 and is highlighted as an area for further development through the school. Grouping pupils by ability in mathematics and English has proved effective at raising standards in Year 6. The use of literacy and ICT in other subjects is helping to extend pupils' skills.

The visual and performing arts greatly enrich pupils' learning and the high standards achieved are evident in eye-catching displays around the school. Provision for ICT has significantly improved following the installation of a superb computer suite and interactive whiteboards in some classrooms. Similarly, the purpose-built practical science room enhances teaching and learning for all pupils, but especially those in Year 7, for whom the school also provides French lessons. Good provision for pupils with learning difficulties includes the 'GEMS' group for those who find mathematics a bit of a struggle, while the 'PEARLS' initiative offers greater challenge for pupils with particular gifts and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and receive good support and guidance as they move through the school. Effective systems for tracking pupils' progress, which are gradually being refined, help teachers to ensure all pupils meet challenging targets. Pupils are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and to walk or cycle to school and take part in sports. The school nurse provides a lunchtime drop-in service to discuss aspects of healthy living and pupils in Years 4 and 5 benefit from the cycling safety club. Close links with parents and outside agencies enhance the support given to vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties. Designated play zones and 'buddies' for the youngest pupils successfully support their transition from first school, while a common room for Year

7 pupils has helped to ease some lunchtime tensions. There are robust procedures for ensuring pupils' safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have sustained the school through a period of instability caused by high staff turnover, including several changes of headteacher. It is to the credit of the staff, governors and all who have led the school during the past 18 months that they have successfully maintained the momentum of improvement and have sustained a clear focus on raising standards. Now, with a new headteacher, a strong leadership team and a committed, hardworking staff, the school is well placed to reach even higher standards in the future.

Staff and governors have been extremely rigorous in evaluating the school's effectiveness and identifying priorities for improvement. This has resulted in overly conservative judgements which reflect the high expectations of the leadership team. They have taken prompt and effective action to deal with identified shortcomings in teaching and learning in Years 4 and 7 which has already made a significant difference to the pupils' rate of progress. The school regularly surveys parents' views but is keen to find even better ways of taking these into account. Most parents are delighted with the school and feel their children are making good progress.

The roles of year group and subject leaders are developing well and play an important part in raising standards. This is particularly evident in mathematics. Leadership of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also very strong and ensures that these pupils receive good, well targeted support.

Governors are effective in monitoring how well the school is doing and provide both challenge and support to senior managers. Good financial management has ensured the school is well resourced, especially in ICT and in the provision of a science room and well stocked library.

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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	NA	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	3	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	2	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?	2	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	Yes
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

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school. We were impressed by your friendliness and helpfulness and we enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you think of your school.

These are some of the good things we found:

You work hard and make good progress in your work.

You enjoy learning because teachers make lessons fun and there are many activities for you to take part in.

Most of you behave well and look after each other.

Your headteacher and all the staff are a good team who work hard to make sure you all do well.

All of the adults care for you well and help you to grow into responsible young people.

We think there are two main things that could be improved:

You could do better in writing, especially those of you who are capable of reaching high standards.

Your teachers are developing some good ways of assessing your work in order to see whether you are making enough progress, but not all teachers do this the same way in all subjects.

Also, when teachers mark your work, they could explain how to make it better more clearly.

You can help your teachers make these improvements by making sure you know and use your writing targets. You could also make sure you read the comments that teachers write in your books and use them to help you improve your work.

We are sure that you will work with your teachers to make your school even better in the future.