



West Dean CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126004
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282040
Inspection dates 2 May 2006 to 2 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Capper AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	West Dean
School category	Voluntary controlled		Chichester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		West Sussex PO18 0RJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01243 811247
Number on roll	76	Fax number	01243 811247
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Alan Chapman
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Cook

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small rural primary school takes pupils from the local village as well as surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. There are an average number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities, though these are not distributed equally across the school. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception class is slightly above average overall.

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 that provides good value for money and has outstanding links with parents and the local community. Pupils are confident, articulate and sociable, and take responsibility well. They work hard and behave well, enjoying especially the wide range of art and musical activities available. Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well throughout the school. Provision in the Reception class is good and by the time children start Year 1 they attain standards that are above those found nationally. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6, though test results in writing have consistently lagged behind those for other subjects. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and make learning exciting. They work hard to meet the wide range of abilities in each class. More-able pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities consistently make good progress. However, there are occasions in mathematics lesson when work is not matched closely enough to individual needs, especially for pupils of average ability. This slows the pace of their learning.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has a clear vision of how the school needs to develop and has established good systems for finding out how well the school is doing. This means that there is an accurate understanding of overall effectiveness, which matches the views of the inspectors. Members of staff and governors have begun to use test results and target setting to track pupils' progress over time and have rightly identified that this could be refined still further. The school has successfully addressed weaknesses from the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in writing by ensuring that pupils take more care in how they present their work and avoid careless mistakes in spelling and punctuation.
- Ensure that teachers consistently match work to individual needs in mathematics, especially for average-attaining pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are good. Pupils make good progress in the Reception class from their starting points and, by the end of the Reception year, their attainment is above that found nationally. Pupils make particularly good progress in developing independence and counting skills.

Standards are consistently at least above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, though national test results vary from year to year according to the capability of pupils within each year group. The school sets challenging targets for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 based on prior attainment and, with the exception of writing, these were achieved in 2005. In writing, where standards are broadly average, pupils' work is

sometimes too untidy and has careless mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Speaking and listening skills are good throughout the school.

Most pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6, with the more able doing especially well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well in lessons and make good progress. However, in mathematics, there are occasions when average-attaining pupils make slower progress than other pupils because their work is not always matched closely enough to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and rates of attendance are very high. Pupils are polite and generally behave well in lessons and on the playground. They have good attitudes towards learning, though they do not always take enough care in their written work, and this leads to them making avoidable errors.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils appreciate and respect a range of cultures, including their own. They show they understand the importance of good relationships and they set themselves personal targets such as 'I want to be a good friend' and 'I will play with lots of people at playtime'. Pupils are kind to each other and feel safe at school. They understand the importance of healthy eating and taking regular exercise. Older pupils have a good awareness of health and safety issues such as road safety and basic first aid.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the wider community and take responsibilities very seriously. For example, older pupils in the 'Eco-council' are encouraging their parents to share cars during the school run and to drive slowly in the school grounds. Activities such as these, as well as pupils' generally good basic skills, prepare them well for the next stage of their education and eventually for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively with groups of pupils, helping them to learn well in most lessons. In the Reception class, children become confident and work hard because of the praise and encouragement they regularly receive. Throughout the school, teachers explain clearly what pupils are expected to do and use the interactive whiteboards to maintain interest. For example, in a literacy lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher helped pupils to understand what is meant by effective advertising by showing a series of old television adverts. Teachers have good subject knowledge, promote new vocabulary well and use questioning successfully to encourage pupils to think carefully. Assessment information is generally used well, particularly to challenge the more-able pupils.

However, occasionally work is not adjusted closely enough to match the needs of pupils of broadly average ability in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported effectively.

Throughout the school, teachers have good relationships with their classes and good expectations of what pupils should learn. However, they do not always ensure that pupils' work is tidy enough, nor encourage them to check their written work for inaccuracies.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a good curriculum with outstanding additional activities that support and enrich learning. In the Reception Year, there is a good balance between opportunities for pupils to work independently and to work with adults, both indoors and outside.

Throughout the school, members of staff plan a wide range of interesting and purposeful activities, and good links are made between different subjects. There is generally a sharp focus on developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology, though pupils need more opportunities in lessons to produce good quality writing. The curriculum includes good opportunities for health and safety issues and sex and relationships to be discussed. Creativity and an appreciation of different cultures are promoted very well. For example, one teacher in the school with particular talents in art has worked with each class to make exceptionally attractive wall hangings depicting stories from Asia.

There is an outstanding variety of popular clubs and other activities, including extensive use of local facilities such as an open-air museum and gardens and opportunities for pupils to learn to speak French. Clubs are very well attended; for example, the gardening club has twenty-four members.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support for its pupils. All pupils are treated as part of the 'school family'. Members of staff know the pupils well, and there is a very strong commitment to ensuring their health and safety and to safeguarding their well-being. Members of staff monitor the progress of individual pupils frequently and provide good feedback and support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at risk of falling behind in their learning. Individual targets are set in literacy, numeracy and science, although these are not always sufficiently detailed to help teachers to show progress from year to year.

There are good links with the local pre-school group. The good procedures for supporting children when they first start school in the Reception class help them to settle into school life quickly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has effective procedures for monitoring how well the school is doing and consequently has an accurate understanding of its main strengths and weaknesses. Over the last year, the school has introduced more rigorous systems for tracking how well pupils are doing from year to year. This is beginning to have an impact. For example, through careful analysis of the performance data, members of staff have identified the need to address the comparative weakness in writing and have already begun to deal with this issue by providing more specific guidance to older pupils about how they can improve their work. The school has accurately identified that there is potential to use this information even more extensively, particularly to evaluate pupils' progress over time so that any minor dips can be dealt with as soon as they arise. The school has outstanding links with its parents and consults regularly with them and pupils so that their views can be taken into account when monitoring overall effectiveness. For example, the school worked closely with parents to promote road safety when pupils arrive at or leave school. Parents are very positive about the school, with several commenting that it 'feels more like a family than a school'. The very strong caring atmosphere that is evident in all aspects of school life reflects the headteacher's sensitive leadership. Members of staff and governors work together very well as a team. Although many governors are new, the governing body has good plans to develop its monitoring procedures so that it is in a better position to hold the school to account. Nevertheless, there is a clear and shared vision for the school and a commitment to improving standards. Weaknesses from the last inspection have been successfully addressed and the school is in a good position to improve further.

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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?	1	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	1	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	1	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	3	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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly.

What we liked most about your school:

- You work hard and achieve well.
- We are very pleased that you behave so well and enjoy school and all the activities that the school provides for you.
- You are taught well. Your teachers are very kind and caring and they make school fun.
- The school is good at teaching you about the importance of staying safe and healthy.
- We are pleased that you have a well-organised school council and an eco-council which let you contribute so well to school life and the local community.
- Your headteacher and governors are working hard to make the school even better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- We have asked the teachers to help you to learn even more quickly in writing.
- Make sure that the work you are given in mathematics is neither too easy nor too hard for you.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future.