



Carden Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131789
LEA Brighton and Hove
Inspection number 282258
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector Kevin Hodge RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	County Oak Avenue
School category	Community		Brighton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		East Sussex BN1 8LU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01273 293677
Number on roll	415	Fax number	01273 293 677
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs G Beishon
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Corbett

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	282258

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Carden Primary is a large school on the northern edge of Brighton. It houses a nursery and two 'units' catering for twenty pupils with severe speech and language difficulties who attend from different schools. The nursery also provides specialised help for approximately a quarter of its pupils. Many pupils come from areas of high deprivation. The number of pupils with special educational needs is higher than most schools and there is a growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and from Traveller communities. Pupils come to the school with a range of abilities, which are below average. The school has 'Silver Healthy Schools', 'Arts Mark' and 'Active Mark' awards and 'Investors in People' status. It is a recognised centre of excellence for its use of hand signing to aid pupils' learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils. They start well in the nursery and reception classes and reach close to the expected standards as a result of good support. Results in past national tests have often been significantly below average at both ages seven and eleven. They improved significantly in 2004 so that they were close to the national averages in both year groups. This was largely maintained in 2005. Pupils make good progress during their time in the school.

Teaching is good throughout the school, including for pupils with severe speech and language difficulties. Effective relationships, specialist support and good planning are strong features helping pupils to learn effectively. Marking is regular and helpful, but more general information about pupils' progress is not used as effectively to assess improvement. The curriculum is well organised and increasingly exciting as links between subjects are developed. Planning to include multicultural awareness is limited. The good range of extra-curricular activities provided, such as dance and engineering, is enjoyed by pupils. The parents comment very positively upon the care and support generally, and particularly within the speech and language units. The school fosters pupils' personal development very strongly, giving pupils confidence to improve and the school its distinctive caring ethos. The pupils' social and moral development is well promoted and helps develop good relationships at all levels. Pupils enjoy school and behave well.

The school is led very effectively by the headteacher, who supports others well. There has been significant improvement to the environment, use of resources and the progress that pupils make. This is against the backdrop of welcoming pupils with severe learning difficulties. The school has used resources such as staff, outside agencies and the building exceptionally well to cater for pupils' needs. The school reviews its work systematically and knows its overall strengths and weaknesses well. Teaching is monitored regularly, but not always to fullest advantage. The rate of improvement since the last inspection, especially over the past two years, indicates that the school has the capacity to continue improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- use information about pupils' progress more effectively to guide efforts for further improvement
- monitor teaching more precisely to help improve all teaching to the level of the best
- broaden and develop the school's multicultural planning and activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make a good start in nursery and reception classes. They come with very low levels of language and social skills, and reach close to the expected standards in some areas, particularly in their physical and social development. Standards in 2004, as indicated by test results for pupils aged seven and eleven, were broadly in line with

schools nationally. For several years, they had been significantly lower, so this represented a big improvement. In 2005, the test results fell short of the ambitious targets set for the school, but have been broadly maintained from the previous year.

The achievement of pupils is good, and is aided by their enjoyment of school and developing self-confidence. This is a much better picture than at the time of the last inspection, when standards were low. Improvement has been marked, particularly recently. Some differences in standards between boys and girls in the tests were not apparent in their work.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress, particularly those pupils with severe speech and language needs. This is due to well-organised activities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school provides well for the personal development and well-being of all pupils, particularly their social and moral aspects. Pupils feel safe, relationships are very good and they behave well. The school council is effective, and is well respected by pupils. Suggestions such as washroom improvements and having fruit in the infant classes prompted changes. Pupils raise funds for local charities and chose to send the Harvest collection to a local shelter.

Pupils enjoy school. Attendance has been successfully maintained at average levels and the school responds quickly to unexplained absences. The use of exclusion is very clear to both parents and pupils and this has improved behaviour. Cultural development is satisfactory, but pupils' awareness of multicultural issues is limited. Pupils have a very clear picture of what a healthy lifestyle means, such as healthy foods at dinner or taking exercise. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being. They gain basic skills systematically, and younger pupils follow a 'Young Enterprise' citizenship scheme. Older pupils study and discuss people's jobs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. The teachers manage pupils very well and there is a very good emphasis on the social and emotional aspects of learning. The youngest pupils are taught well and given a good start. In the very best lessons, pupils behave very well, know what they need to learn and can judge if they have succeeded. Lesson planning is thorough and activities in a religious education lesson for example, such as exploring what inspired famous people, were very interesting. The use of 'hand signing' across the school enhances learning for all. Work is marked regularly, but the school rightly identifies that assessing pupils' progress is not consistently used well to target overall areas to improve.

Pupils with special educational needs, including those with severe speech and language difficulties, learn well. Teaching is very effective. Specialised staff from outside agencies, along with parental support, significantly enhance pupils' learning. Teaching staff are well supported by the additional specialist helpers within school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well organised, relevant and motivates pupils. French, specialist music and physical education activities broaden the provision effectively. There is also good emphasis on developing key English and mathematical skills. Activities to promote pupils' self-confidence are high profile, effective and greatly influence pupils' future development. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties, including those with speech and language needs, is well matched to their abilities. They are effectively supported by specialists.

The school has a good programme for supporting pupils' capacity to stay healthy and safe. There is a good range of visits to local community events and theatres. After-school clubs offer further experience of, for example, dance, engineering, football and music. The school also organises regular weeks where one topic becomes a focus for all. For example, pupils have benefited from a focus on mathematical activities and "One World" themed weeks. These activities enrich day-to-day activities very well and make a strong contribution to the pupils' enjoyment and their achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils say they "love school" and their "teachers are lovely". This reflects the good care and support provided for them. The school knows that their emotional well-being and confidence are high priority. Arrangements for child protection are good and well monitored. Parents are confident that their children are safe at school. Potential dangers when out visiting are recorded and noted with care.

Pupils with special educational needs, and specific speech and language difficulties, are confident and enjoy school. They are very well supported, both when they are withdrawn for specialist help, or join other classes.

The school promotes healthy living very well. Children in the nursery and reception classes have milk and fruit daily. All pupils have access to fresh water and teachers regularly promote healthy lifestyles through their work in personal and social education, science and physical education lessons. The school has recently achieved a 'Healthy School' silver award.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and have some outstanding features. The desire to improve is strong. The headteacher is a very good leader with

a clear and compelling vision. This is communicated well to all staff, governors and parents. The good improvements since the last inspection are linked to this determination to get better. The governors work effectively with the school to support this drive.

The school makes outstanding use of its resources, such as using its building and all staff to best effect. This includes the excellent use of outside agencies to support and promote extra facilities such as the speech and language units. This approach is very effective at putting the emotional well-being of pupils at the centre of the school's work.

The school evaluates its work carefully and accurately. Its improvement plan is detailed and involves a wide range of people in gathering views and priorities. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly to identify ways it can be improved, although the focus for the observations is sometimes not precise enough to be of full benefit. The school has accurately identified areas to concentrate on and new initiatives, such as developing the pupils' own understanding of their progress, are working well.

The school's capacity to improve is good, as shown by the rise in results, improvement in pupils' progress and the very good ethos of the school.

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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	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	1	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

We enjoyed our visit and the friendly way you greeted us. Here are some of the things we found out while we were with you.

What we liked most about your school

- how you made visitors feel welcome and were proud of your school
- the improvements in the work that you have done over the past couple of years
- how the teachers and you use 'hand signs' to help learning.
- your behaviour in class and around the school
- the way the headteacher and staff care for everyone in the school
- your understanding about the best things to eat and why it's good to take exercise.

What we have asked the school to do now

- get to know better what work you are especially good at and what skills you need to improve
- find out in more detail what your teachers are really good at and what they need to do to be even better
- help you understand more about each other's backgrounds and beliefs.