

St Luke's Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114374
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	289889
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Annette Bell
Headteacher	Jonathan Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003
School address	St Luke's Terrace Brighton BN2 9ZE
Telephone number	01273 675080
Fax number	01273 625473

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average school has a three-form entry and most pupils come from St Luke's Infant School, which occupies part of the same building. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Slightly more pupils than the national average are eligible for free school meals. Comparatively few pupils have English as an additional language. A wide range of ethnic groups is represented, although the vast majority are of White British heritage.

The school has plans for a new building to house a breakfast club as part of the extended schools project. It will have 28 places and there are 79 applicants. This work is currently on hold owing to the extensive external building repairs to the school. The building is in a constant state of disrepair. This raises many unexpected building concerns, which have an unpredictable impact on the budget as well as hindering the work of the school. Tensions exist between the building being architecturally listed and the needs and requirements of a modern school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Pupils at St Luke's leave school bright-eyed and enthusiastic about life, for the school builds a real respect and sense of belonging without repressing individuality', said a parent and she is right! The school develops its pupils as confident, caring, independent and thoughtful learners.

This is a very happy school that provides a good quality of education with many outstanding features. Exceptional care, guidance and support for the pupils and a focus on the individual are central to all that the school does. This is a key to its success and it contributes strongly to the pupils' outstanding personal development. Parents concur with inspection evidence that a strong and consistent message is delivered to the pupils about the importance of kindness, helpfulness and politeness. Parents rightly say, 'There is a strong emphasis on educating children to be responsible and active members of their community'. Pupils are kept well informed of key world-wide events, which also helps to develop their strong sense of social responsibility. They behave extremely well and show very positive attitudes to learning. Giving pupils meaningful opportunities, such as taking responsibility for organising playground play and fund raising for a school in Zambia, helps them to prepare well for life beyond school.

Pupils take good advantage of the wide range of opportunities, participating fully in community, city-wide and national sporting and cultural events. They are able to do this because of the commitment of staff, who take part and support these events out of the school day. Through this and formal curriculum work, pupils know exceptionally well about the importance of diet and exercise in healthy living and have an outstanding awareness of how to stay safe.

Standards and achievement are good because of good and sometimes better quality teaching and learning. The teachers keep a close check on how well their pupils are doing, and use this knowledge to ensure that lessons are interesting and that work is suitably challenging. Most pupils know how their targets relate to their learning but a few do not. The quality of written presentation in all subjects does not consistently match the quality of the content. Whilst the quality of marking for other subjects is precise, marking of writing when used in these subjects is less so. This is a specific policy of the school and it means that pupils can concentrate fully on the content of what they are writing and demonstrate their subject knowledge. An evaluation of this policy would help the school to be sure that older pupils are fully prepared for the different working practices in secondary schools. Teachers create a beautiful climate for learning in their classrooms and in displays. These have, on occasions, been marred by water penetration, highlighting the need for new windows and building repairs.

Parents and carers are kept fully informed of the teaching methods and skills for learning that the school is using so that they are in a position to help their children and support the work of the school. One parent wrote, 'My daughter's father is now adept at subtracting by using the expanded column method' (part of a homework project). Pupils apply what they learn in school to other aspects of their lives. For example, one child tried to sort out a disagreement at home recently using the 'peaceful problem-solving process', and at a bicycle course lately the child informed her mother that the level of challenge was appropriate.

Strong, determined leadership and careful management ensure that all staff work with a common purpose and in harmony. The school has made good progress since its last inspection. The way it has maintained good standards with rising achievements and its excellent self-evaluation are a clear indication of its outstanding capacity for continuous improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Evaluate the impact of the marking policy for written work in all subjects.
- Ensure that the quality of written presentation in all subjects consistently matches the quality of the content.
- Ensure all pupils know and understand their targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are at least good throughout the school and sometimes better. Challenging targets are set not only by staff but by the pupils themselves on a daily basis. Standards continue to be above the national average and are steadily improving overall. In 2006 the standards in science and mathematics were significantly better than the national average, particularly for the highest levels. The school recognised that writing needed to be improved. School data now shows that the strategies and interventions that were put in place have been very successful, with different groups of pupils achieving equally well. The predictions for the higher levels at the end of Year 6 for 2007 represent at least good and in many cases outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are exemplary because of the school's commitment. Pupils' extremely positive attitudes are reflected in their high levels of enjoyment and in their outstanding behaviour. Attendance is slightly below the national average because a small minority of parents is failing to give full support to the school's excellent efforts to minimise absence. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. They enjoy excellent relationships and have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. Relationships in the playground are exemplary and, as one pupil commented, 'Everyone at St Luke's is so friendly and kind'. Pupils are deeply thoughtful and in assembly they carefully reflected on what it takes to be a good friend. In the past, a number of parents and pupils expressed concerns over bullying but this has now changed. Pupils are highly supportive of the school's excellent procedures for keeping them safe from bullying and parental concerns have all but disappeared. Pupils give their strong support for healthy lifestyles by overwhelmingly opting for healthy eating at break and lunch time. Likewise, they readily choose to be physically active through the many opportunities provided by the school. This work has led to the school gaining Healthy Schools accreditation. Pupils make outstanding contributions to school and the wider community because staff provide great encouragement and excellent opportunities. For example, pupils act as play leaders, monitors and council members and they run charity fund-raising events for a Zambian school. Pupils develop outstanding personal qualities such as teamwork and co-operation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and teachers' planning is meticulous so as to ensure all pupils make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for all pupils and work well

together to provide work that is both challenging and stimulating. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards. They introduce and continually reinforce demanding vocabulary. As a result, pupils talk to adults with confidence and assurance. In one science lesson, for example, pupils had no difficulty using terms such as 'upthrust' to explain why objects float on water. Teachers know their pupils very well and generally set challenging targets. As a result, pupils achieve well so that standards are consistently above average. Teachers mark work regularly and provide pupils with subject-specific comments to help them progress further. The quality of presentation and written work in some subjects is not as good as the quality of the content.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

One of the reasons that pupils enjoy coming to school is the good, exciting curriculum that meets their interests and needs. Themed weeks, such as 'Writing Week', provide pupils with an opportunity to link subjects such as art and language. In their re-telling of *An African Tale*, the pupils, inspired by African art, produced their own books with highly distinctive printed covers.

Personal, social and health education, SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) and citizenship are the bedrock of the school and contribute to outstanding personal development. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also for the gifted and talented pupils, is good and this ensures these pupils make good progress.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the many and varied clubs such as the French and Spanish sessions that they can attend both before and after school. Exciting opportunities, such as visiting The Globe Theatre and The Tate Modern, clearly kindled the pupils' enthusiasm and this is reflected in the stimulating displays and school performances such as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

Specialist teaching, for example, in physical education and music, contributes well to the quality of the curriculum. Links with a local secondary school broaden the scope of the school's curriculum by offering more specialised facilities and activities. Pupils' work shows that information and communication technology is being used in a variety of inspiring ways to support other aspects of the curriculum. For example, pupils have created their own CD covers and have produced multiple images of faces in the style of the artist Andy Warhol. The expressive arts play an important part in the life of the school and enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's procedures for safeguarding the well-being of pupils are outstanding. Checks made on staff and other adults at school are rightly very rigorous. Possible risks at school and on trips are clearly identified and managed very well in order to protect pupils. The pastoral care of pupils is exemplary and reflects the highly caring ethos of the school. Vulnerable pupils are identified swiftly and they are stunningly supported, as are their families.

The school monitors and assesses the pupils' academic progress in a highly effective and systematic way in order to ensure individual needs are met. Teachers regularly mark their pupils' work, telling them how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to progress further. Most pupils have a very clear understanding of their targets and what they are expected to achieve; however, a few pupils lack an awareness of their targets and how they directly relate to their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Over the last few years the school has needed to restructure a large part of its leadership team and governance. The result is that individuals now play to their strengths in a closely knit team with a shared core sense of purpose. The headteacher is outstanding. His drive and determination are evident throughout all the work of the school. His assemblies are spiritually moving and demonstrate his staggering level of skill and rapport with staff and pupils, creating a tangible community spirit. Parents and staff appreciate all he has brought to the school. He and his deputy know all the children well and pupils say that they are great. They work very hard together, challenging and supporting extremely well and in a sensitive manner. The administration and support staff are excellent and they make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning needs.

The school has evaluated its performance extremely well and the areas for improvement reflect the inspection judgements. An evaluation of the marking policy would help the school to be sure that older pupils are fully prepared for the different working practices in secondary schools. The governors have a good understanding of the school because they directly monitor what the school provides and the outcomes of development initiatives. There are outstanding relationships between the school and external partners. All members of the school community are valued equally and as a result there is an impressive team spirit.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Luke's Junior School, St Luke's Terrace, Brighton East Sussex BN2 9ZE

Thank you for being so friendly when we inspected your school. We believe it is a good school which is continuing to improve and has some outstanding features. Your headteacher and staff have worked so hard to ensure you are well cared for and happy in school. You are excellent ambassadors for your school. A special big thank you to all those of you who shared your thoughts and took care of us on the playground.

Your lessons are very well prepared and teachers make sure that teaching new things is as exciting as it can be. Your teachers expect you to work very hard and you all make good progress because of this.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that you take care with the presentation of your work in order to make sure it is as good as your understanding of the subjects you study. We also asked your teachers to make sure all of you know your targets and to evaluate the way your work is marked. Perhaps you could think of ways to help them to do this?

You all work exceptionally well together and have achieved a good deal. Well done!

Thank you for being so polite and helpful during the visit. I hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and do your best. Please thank your parents for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

With my very best wishes for your future,

Steffi Penny Her Majesty's Inspector