

# Grays Infant School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114441
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	289913
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steffi Penny HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susan Fears
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Terrey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Western Road Newhaven BN9 9ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 513968
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 611294

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–7
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 July 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	289913

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

The school is on two sites, with the separate nursery building being two miles away from the main school. It has a three-form entry and in 2006 it was of average size, but it is now slightly smaller. The falling rolls have affected the school organisation which has changed to vertical grouping. In the last three years, there has been a significant turnover of staff and in September 2005, a new headteacher was appointed. The school plays a lead role in the East Sussex e-Learning Foundation which enables all of the children in Year 2 to take a laptop computer home with them each week. The school has gained the ArtsMark Gold Award for creative arts, the ActiveMark Award and the silver Healthy Schools Award. The children are mainly of White British heritage, with a few whose mother tongue is not English.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Grays is great!', 'This is a good school that offers good support for children that need extra help', 'techniques used to teach the children are good and consistent', 'staff help the children to be well behaved, polite and practise good manners'. These are the views of many parents and they are right! It is indeed a good school, with some outstanding features. The children are terrific ambassadors for their school, showing outstanding qualities of respect and enthusiastic attitudes to learning. At Grays, every child really matters and is valued as special and precious. In this happy and harmonious family community, all enjoy each other's company and have fun learning together. Children flourish and speak positively about the friendly atmosphere and the ways in which adults explain lessons. The promotion of outstanding personal development and good learning starts with the good progress of children in the nursery and this continues to flow through the rest of the school. At this school, children blossom in the discovery of new learning and play experiences. They are often amazed, showing great curiosity on being shown a starfish and a crab's leg - 'Is it real, is it dead?' They follow instructions carefully and the focus on communication and language helps their confidence in asking and answering questions, having a positive impact on developing basic skills. They enjoy eating fruit and offer friendly help to each other, thus developing a good understanding of responsibility and community. Strong relationships and firm but fair discipline contribute much to children's high levels of enjoyment and help them to feel safe and secure. They relish the opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities and extended visits. These contribute much to their social skills which, along with the successful development of literacy and numeracy skills, will help them in later life. Good teaching and good academic guidance mean that children learn well throughout the school. There is a good focus on supporting and encouraging children with learning difficulties, with the result that they too make good progress. In 2007, children in Year 2 reached the expected standards except in reading, where many demonstrated very high skills. This represents good progress in relation to their starting points and for some, for example in reading, this was outstanding progress. This improvement has been brought about by the hard work of the school in developing children's independence and confidence in their learning. The school is not content to rest on its laurels, and is rightly exploring ways to improve children's writing in Years 1 and 2 further so that even more children reach the higher levels, particularly boys. The school is very outward-looking and works enthusiastically with others to take up exciting new initiatives which are helping it develop and improve its provision. Assessment records in the nursery are not as well developed as for those in Reception and the main school as they do not cover all six areas for learning. The school has made considerable progress over the last eighteen months and, because of its willingness to welcome change and its ability to work hard, its capacity to improve further is outstanding.

### What the school should do to improve further

- accelerate children's progress, especially that of boys and the more able, in writing
- extend the assessment in the nursery to cover all the six areas of learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children enter the nursery termly, with a variable but generally low baseline of social and learning experiences. Current attainment on entry is below expectations for nursery age children. This shows improvement on recent years, where attainment was well below age expectations

in all six areas of learning. Children settle quickly into Reception and achieve well in developing their relationships, behaviour and speaking, listening and early writing skills. This is because there is a good balance of exciting, well-planned play and learning activities throughout the Foundation Stage. These have more than a touch of inspirational magic thrown in that grips the imagination of these young children. This successful beginning means that most children in 2007 entered Year 1 with just below the expected levels of attainment. In 2007, children in Year 2 reached average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents good, and sometimes outstanding, achievement, based on their starting points. The school exceeded all of its challenging targets and, for the higher levels of reading, the target was doubled. This exceptional progress was due to the guided reading programme, the good staff training and the involvement of parents. The school is well aware that there remains work to be done to improve children's writing, particularly that of boys at the higher levels. Its use of initiatives such as 'Big Writing', including the shared blog with the local junior school, and 'Kung Fu active punctuation' are already making a significant improvement. Throughout the school, children with learning difficulties achieve as well as their peers because, as several parents appositely commented, 'Children at Grays are well supported and their individual needs are taken into account'.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development is outstanding and contributes positively to children's good progress. Children are keen to attend school and their exemplary behaviour and attitudes in and out of lessons show that they thrive in this supportive environment. Children feel very safe and secure and know that there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem. This is one indication of the excellent relationships within the school community. Children know about many aspects of healthy living. They participate eagerly in the wide range of physical activities, for example swimming in Year 2, and parents have played their part well, improving considerably the children's packed lunches in the light of the school's guidance. Children's social, moral and cultural development is excellent, and they eagerly told of their part in school productions such as 'The Flight of the Bumblesnouts'. Their spiritual development is good, the children responding well to the school's search for 'special moments', for example, in taking the children 'lambing'. Children's knowledge of the local and wider community is extended well by a wide range of visits and visitors, for example participation in the Brighton Festival.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teamwork and the way that all adults are determined to help each child achieve are significant strengths. Adults have a good understanding of children's needs and make learning fun and a positive experience for everyone, boosting enthusiasm so that children are eager for more. Children with learning difficulties get well focussed support, with Makaton signing and symbol use featuring regularly in lessons. Assessment in the nursery concentrates on language, number skills and personal development and the school is aware that this now needs to be extended to the other areas of learning to provide a 'big picture' of progress and even better reports to parents. Children in Reception use their 'caterpillar sheets' well to know what they need to do to improve. Assessment in Key Stage 1 is good, with staff and children having clear targets that are shared well throughout the community.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has developed considerably since the last inspection and is now good. Recent changes to the way that the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are taught have resulted in significant improvements in children's attainment. The focus on and the impact of elearning have been recognised through the school being shortlisted for a national excellence award and this focus has had a massive impact on the school's emphasis on valuing all children. Activities such as the video-conferencing project have had a perceptible impact on children's attainment in literacy. The impact of the school's curriculum for creativity has resulted in children's work of stunning quality being available to enhance the school environment. The school's curriculum has been improved to support children's personal development well, for example through 'Friendship Friday'. There is a good range of enrichment activities and children enthusiastically take part, for example, in 'The Beanies' after-school club, sporting activities and the Internet Café.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The care and support provided for children are outstanding and this reflects the commitment of all staff to ensuring that the children make an excellent start to their education. There are comprehensive arrangements for ensuring that children are kept safe, which are regularly and routinely reviewed. Since the last inspection, the school has improved considerably the guidance it gives to children on what they need to do to meet their academic targets. In the nursery classes, the tracking procedures do not yet give a comprehensive picture of the progress the children have made or the individual learning programme to be put in place to meet their needs. Vulnerable children are identified early and good arrangements are put in place to make sure that they progress at similar rates to those of their peers. Children think that they are prepared well to start at the school and to transfer from the nursery building to the main school site. The school works very well in establishing a culture where children and parents are listened to and small problems are dealt with before they escalate into something major. The school works very well with a range of external agencies such as the police and fire service to promote children's health and safety.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The appointment of the headteacher in 2005 has been a phenomenal success. Her commitment, enthusiasm and joy of young children and their learning permeate the work of the school. She has skilfully created an inclusive and proactive community where everyone is seen as having equal value. The needs of the children are at the heart of all decision-making and their voice matters. Evaluation is honest, although a little modest, and the improvement plan is an excellent tool to make the school even better. Communication with parents is strong; the school listens to their views and acts upon them. The impact of the work of the governing body is good. The school has created fantastic partnerships with external agencies such as Sure Start and The Peacehaven Centre that are helping to drive standards up. In the Foundation Stage, leadership and management also promote the ongoing drive to raise achievement and standards, supporting

children's personal well-being and most importantly, changing parental perceptions of young children's learning.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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**

12 July 2007 Dear Children Inspection of Grays Infant and Nursery School, Newhaven BN9 9ED  
Thank you for the terrific welcome that you gave to my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We really enjoyed joining your lessons, looking at your work and talking with you. It is really clear that you enjoy school very much and like all the interesting things that you do such as numeracy. You are very proud of your school and you should be. It is a good school with some things that are outstanding. We think your behaviour is excellent, especially the way that you help one another your work is really good and you should be very pleased with the progress you are making you told us how active you are and how you like to eat healthily you told us that you feel safe and are pleased that you have got people to talk to if you have a problem. We feel that all the staff do a good job to make sure that you all make good progress in your work and that you are happy at the school. We have talked with them about ways in which the school could be made better. We think some of you could do even better with your writing and we have asked adults in the nursery to record the full range of activities that you do. Very best wishes for the future Steffi Penny Her Majesty's Inspector