

Forest Row Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114504
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	289942
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Marke
Headteacher	I Allison
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002
School address	School Lane Hartfield Road Forest Row RH18 5DZ
Telephone number	01342 823380
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Forest Row CofE Primary School is of average size. The socio-economic circumstances of families are mixed. There are lower numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than expected nationally. The mobility of pupils is relatively high, with a significant intake into various years from other local schools. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low.

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 providing an effective quality of education. Pupils behave impeccably and have excellent attitudes towards their learning. This is because they are taught well, are provided with outstanding pastoral support and are given some very exciting curricular activities. Pupils are proud of their school. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'I don't think I would be as clever if I had gone to another school.'

Pupils start school in the Reception class with broadly average standards and, with the good provision, progress well in the Foundation Stage. Through the rest of the school, achievement is good and pupils leave Year 6 with above average standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In addition, the displays and pupils' work indicate that there are some talented artists, musicians and sportspeople. This good achievement comes about because of the combination of good teaching and an excellent curriculum aimed at providing practical and thought-provoking activities in a real-life context. It improves pupils' independence, makes them think hard and gives them an excellent preparation for their future life.

Personal development is outstanding because of the good care, welfare and support that pupils receive. Relationships between staff, parents and pupils are relaxed and friendly but everybody is expected to play their part and achieve their best. For instance, pupils' written work, while creative, is also expected, in its final copy, to be neat and legible. As they get older, pupils are expected to negotiate their own targets for improvement and, in conjunction with the teacher, to assess whether they have been achieved. Pupils show consideration of others, for example through their 'play zones' during lunchtime. Older pupils have developed different activities such as a small theatre, circus skills and sports, and are already working on how to improve these. The school strives to produce well-rounded individuals. Consequently, the highly effective curriculum provides a very wide range of activities. These include role play, high quality artwork, visitors such as authors and a wealth of after school clubs. Excellent use is made of local specialist secondary schools to enhance the work in science, design and technology and physical education.

The senior team provides good leadership and management where individual strengths complement one another well. This has enabled the school to make the necessary improvements since the last inspection and maintain the good quality of provision. Assessment has been much improved and now provides the detail to enable groups and individuals to be targeted for support. It is ensuring that progress across subjects is consistent. However, the next stage, which is the wider analysis of trends, has not been used precisely enough because of recent staff changes. These have made it difficult for the school to respond confidently to the reasons for any whole-school or individual pupil fluctuations. For example, the school is not clear about what effect the high number of pupils entering in different years has on the school's national test results. The school has rightly given this a high priority and appointed a member of staff to lead on it.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse pupils' performance data more precisely in order to understand and address fluctuations against expected outcomes in pupil achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because they make consistent progress through each year. As a result, pupils gain above average standards in Year 6 across all the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Children in the Reception class make good progress, although the assessments at the end of the Foundation Stage indicate that they have relatively weaker skills in writing and calculating. Through Years 1 and 2, teachers successfully focus on improving these aspects. In the 2006 Year 2 national assessments, pupils achieved broadly average standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, demonstrating good progress. Through Years 3 to 6, there are significant numbers of pupils who join, and the school receives very little previous assessment information. The school's data, combined with national test data, provide some confirmation that these pupils make good progress in their basic skills, but it is more difficult to assess this against their previous achievement. The very good support for pupils with learning difficulties means that they make equally good progress and some manage to achieve the expected levels for their age but from lower starting points. Pupils who show specific talents as artists and musicians also have opportunities to develop these gifts through early identification and good support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The excellent personal development of pupils is ensuring that they are very well prepared for their future well-being. Many are articulate and welcome discussions with visitors. They show great care and understanding of each other. They know how to stay safe and healthy. For instance, in one younger class, the pupils prepared vegetable salads for the staff after highlighting the need to wash their hands and be careful about using knives. Evidence from the inspection confirms the pupils' view that there is almost no bad behaviour and, in discussion, they were adamant that bullying and racism was not tolerated. Attendance has improved and is now at the national average. The school wants further improvement and has appointed a member of staff to focus on ensuring parents see the value in regular attendance.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are equally outstanding. Pupils show an increasing social responsibility. For instance, their support for a school in Ghana has extended not only to fundraising but providing pen-pal letters comparing life in the two countries. This is also helping them have a deeper understanding of other cultures by eliminating potential stereotyping.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good because teachers ensure that planning and the methods they use reflect the needs of individuals. Pupils agree that many lessons are exciting and based on practical experiences, all of which provide challenging experiences. In one older class, for instance, the pupils were undertaking a role play about building a Saxon village. They were asked to 'freeze frame' their actions while others discussed the jobs they were doing. They explained about mining ore for their weapons and about how this was done. Teachers know their pupils well. Work is marked effectively and guides pupils on the next steps in learning. Teachers use data

to check pupils' performance and to help plan future lessons. Expertise is shared amongst the staff and this enables less experienced teachers to benefit. However, this does not extend to using whole-school assessments to check how well different groups of pupils are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The very wide range of opportunities utilises the expertise of all staff and that of others in partner institutions. For instance, some very intricate moving models, complete with cams, have been made during a visit to a local specialist secondary school. In addition, pupils combine their academic work with moral issues such as through looking at prejudice, racism, tolerance and social groupings. As well as teachers, a number of support staff, parents and specialists are highly involved in clubs and activities. The school orchestra provides musicians with opportunities to play for others, pupils are involved with work at the Tate Gallery and the school was highly commended by a national newspaper for the work producing its own version of the newspaper. As one pupil remarked when asked about the clubs, 'There's so many I can't think of what they all are!'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, welfare and support for pupils are good overall although the school provides excellent pastoral care and guidance. Staff know both the pupils and their families very well, enabling them to resolve any problems quickly. Pupils feel nurtured by the staff and know who to turn to should there be a crisis. For instance, play at lunchtime is relaxed with many different ages joining together and assistants keeping a watchful eye. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and effective.

Assessment, an issue at the last inspection, has greatly improved. Teachers have access to a full range of academic results and use these to target the specific needs of individuals. These also help guide where support for groups is needed. However, assessments are not analysed in sufficient detail to ensure teachers are completely confident that their pupils are on course to make the best possible academic progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management of the school have ensured that the good quality of education has been maintained and the school is increasingly effective. The headteacher provides an experienced and competent oversight of the school's work and uses the expertise of the senior management team well. The governing body also provides effective support and challenge. Finances are tightly controlled, ensuring there are good resources for learning.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and understands where improvements need to be made. Consequently, there is a good capacity for improvement. This is fully supported by the overwhelming majority of parents and is a contributory reason for the increasing numbers. As one said, 'I like the fact that every child can shine in their thing'. The right developments have been put in place to support the general provision of the school and its impact can be seen in the high levels of personal development and in the overall improvement in achievement. However, as the school recognises, there has been insufficient analysis of assessment information

at a more strategic level to confirm the school's own judgements about how much difference the improvement measures have had.

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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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	1

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?	2

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	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

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forest Row CofE Primary School, Forest Row, RH18 5DZ

Thank you for looking after me so well during my recent visit. I very much enjoyed meeting you all and hearing about the things you do. As I promised some of you, this letter contains some of the main points that I have included in the report.

- You told me how much you enjoyed school and I can see why. It is a good school with many exciting things happening.
- I think that you behave extremely well. You have excellent attitudes to your work and obviously try very hard to do your best. As a result, you achieve good standards. From the displays, I can see there are also a number of budding artists, musicians and sportspeople. Perhaps I will see some of you in the 2012 Olympics!
- You told me that you felt you were taught well, and I agree. Your teachers work hard to ensure that you do your best and are well prepared for when you move school.
- You also told me that you felt you were looked after well by the staff and again I agree. In fact, I have said that some of the systems for caring for you are excellent.
- When I walked around the school it seemed to me that you have some really exciting things to do in each subject. There are so many examples of practical and interesting activities. I also heard that this does not stop in the classroom but that there are loads of clubs for you to get involved with. I am surprised you can fit it all in.
- Your headteacher and the rest of his staff are leading the school well. They know how to make the right improvements so that your school gets even better. I have asked that they try and have a closer look at all the assessment information they have about you so that your teachers can make your work even more challenging.

Finally I wish you all the best for the future. You can play your part in helping make things better by making sure you are always at school, continuing to behave so well and by helping everybody else.

Yours faithfully

David Collard Lead inspector