



Pells Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 114536
Local Authority East Sussex
Inspection number 289956
Inspection date 3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Landport Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Lewes
Age range of pupils	4–11		BN7 2SU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01273 476708
Number on roll (school)	115	Fax number	01273 473014
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mike Turner
		Headteacher	Stephen Dennis
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	3 October 2006	289956

Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school, smaller than most primary schools, is situated on the Landport housing estate. This is a mixed area that is recognised as having some social and economic disadvantage. The majority of pupils live locally. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average because when they start school many, but not all, have limited language and social skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average; most have speech or communication difficulties. Since the previous inspection, there have been many staff changes and a new permanent headteacher was appointed two years ago. The proportion of pupils joining the school other than at the usual time is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. It is improving because of strong leadership from the headteacher and the effective way that teachers are working together to make it better. The headteacher strikes the right balance between striving for academic achievement and promoting pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory, and is good in English. Parents are pleased with pupils' improving achievement and, as one parent said, 'children's progress has improved in the last two years'. The school's good capacity to improve is reflected in the good rate of recent improvement in standards in English throughout the school and in mathematics in Year 2. The school has a secure knowledge of its strengths and clear plans to tackle weaknesses to achieve success.

In Reception, the quality of teaching and progress are satisfactory, although standards are below those expected for their age. In Reception, there are not enough opportunities for learning through practical activity and talk. Assessment of children's progress is not as good as in the rest of the school and this sometimes prevents teachers building on what children already know.

In Years 1 and 2, good teaching leads to good progress and raises standards to average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This is an improvement on the low standards achieved in recent years. In Years 3 to 6, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory although good teaching in English promotes good progress. By Year 6, standards are average in English but below average in mathematics and science. School leaders keep a close watch on the progress of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and their progress is good. Thorough assessment of pupils' progress leads to demanding but realistic targets and teachers' raised expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Teachers have been well supported in their teaching of English. The rigorous monitoring of English lessons has led to improvement throughout the school. Senior leaders have identified the need to improve checks on teaching in mathematics and science in order to raise standards. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and work hard. They understand the importance of health and exercise for their well-being. The good and lively curriculum, with its good opportunities for sport and ICT, promotes pupils' enjoyment of school. The school has a calm and orderly atmosphere and pupils are kept very safe. The good care, support and guidance and close teamwork with outside specialists promotes the well-being and good personal development of all pupils regardless of their starting points.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is the driving force for school improvement. However, apart from in English and ICT, subject leaders are not yet having enough impact on raising standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure consistently good teaching so pupils reach higher standards in mathematics and science by the time they leave the school

- make better checks in Reception so that children's learning always builds on what they know, and improve opportunities for learning through talk and practical activity
- develop the role of subject leaders in improving standards in mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Children's attainment on entry is below average and, by Year 6, they reach average standards in English but below average standards in mathematics and science. There was a marked improvement in test results for Year 6 pupils in English in 2006.

In Reception, standards are below those expected for their age but, given their starting point, progress is mainly satisfactory. However, progress sometimes slows when they are not given enough opportunities to learn through talk and practical activity. The good progress in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Standards on entry to Year 3 are now far better than those achieved in the last few years.

For many years, Year 2 standards were low, which left a legacy of weak basic skills in Years 4 to 6. In these years, pupils' progress in relation to their starting points is now good in English, where effective subject leadership is driving up standards. Pupils' progress in mathematics and science is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well. They make particularly fast progress in English, although progress in mathematics is only satisfactory because catch-up programmes in mathematics are not as rigorous as in those in literacy. Regular assessments in English and mathematics, and improvements to teaching, have led to challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are well behaved, polite and hardworking. The Christian ethos has a positive effect on pupils' good spiritual and moral development. Support from the local church and its community helps to promote the school's family atmosphere and pupils' strong sense of belonging. Pupils' own contributions to the school and wider community are good. Pupils learn from the good examples of adults who teach them and their effective school council. Pupils feel safe and say that any bullying is dealt with fairly and quickly. Pupils enjoy school and the effective action to improve attendance has led to broadly average attendance. The school is working with parents to further reduce absence for family holidays. Pupils' social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have often started school with limited experiences and the school provides broadening opportunities through visits and visitors. The wide range of sporting activities and focus on healthy eating promote pupils' good understanding of the importance of fitness and their well-being.

Pupils' economic understanding is satisfactory. They have a good awareness of the importance of cost and value for money but their below-average numeracy skills restrict them in this area.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, manage their classes well and provide a variety of interesting and enjoyable learning activities. Their planning is thorough and reflects the wide range of ability in each class. However, occasionally, plans are not translated into learning activities that fully challenge more capable pupils. This is because teachers differ in their knowledge of the National Curriculum, especially in mathematics. However, they often have detailed records of their pupils' attainment and carefully monitor pupils' progress. In Reception, improved assessment systems have been introduced this term but these are not fully established and this can prevent activities building on what children already know. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties by helping them to use smaller steps in learning literacy and numeracy skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall but, as yet, is only satisfactory in Reception. Strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills has been effective although numeracy provision is only satisfactory. Plenty of time is given to physical activity, with good opportunities for tuition by outside specialists. Provision for ICT has improved since the previous inspection. It is now good and enhanced by regular specialist teaching. A good range of clubs and outside visits and visitors enhance learning and promote pupils' well-being. The school grounds and conservation area are used well for providing a practical base to pupils' learning in art and science. In Reception, there are not always enough planned opportunities for children to learn through practical activity, and talk and play activities are sometimes mundane.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The calm and warm relationships help pupils to feel secure. Good quality personal and academic support is the main reason why pupils' achievement is improving. Health and safety procedures are good. There is good help for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. This is enhanced by the way in which the school works closely with such outside specialists as those supporting pupils with speech and language difficulties. The school supports later entrants well, and pupils who have had behavioural problems in other schools often settle quickly and catch up from earlier underachievement.

Academic progress is much improved since the previous inspection. Pupils understand their targets and this is helping them improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is leading the school very well because of his clear focus on improving pupils' academic achievement. Strong pastoral leadership provides a secure foundation for everything the school does.

In particular, the strong leadership in English is raising standards throughout the school. The school accepts that more has to be done to extend the role of subject leaders but there are successes. Teachers have been given strong support for improving their subject expertise in English, and the monitoring of teaching is rigorous and systematic. However, leadership of mathematics, whilst satisfactory, has not yet had the same focus. The quality of teaching in mathematics has not been as systematically monitored as in English. Leadership in ICT is secure but science has lagged behind. Improvement in the leadership of the Foundation Stage has begun, although the monitoring of teaching requires closer attention.

Self-evaluation is effective. Thorough analysis of assessments is helping the school to judge how well pupils are doing and whether actions have been successful in bringing about achievements. Governance is satisfactory. Governors show a strong commitment to the school and some are well informed. However, new governors are still developing their roles. Governors' procedures for evaluating the impact of initiatives on raising achievement are not always systematic. The school is well placed to improve further as is shown by the good rate of recent improvement in English.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

As you know, we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed seeing you at work and at play and having lunch with you. The school gives you a satisfactory education and some things are good. The school is working hard to make it better.

These are some of the good things about your school:

- you enjoy your lessons and join in after school activities very well
- you behave well and are helpful to others
- you are doing well in reading and writing
- your headteacher is making many improvements to make it easier for you to learn
- your teachers take good care of you.

A few things could be better, and here are the ways in which we are asking your school to improve:

- help you to reach better standards in mathematics and science by Year 6
- check how well those of you in Reception learn so work is not too easy or hard and you have more opportunities for practical activities work and talking about it
- help teachers in charge of mathematics and science to be more involved in checking up more on how well you are learning.

You can help improve your school as well by working hard to improve your mathematics and always doing your homework.