



Colgate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125825
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293369
Inspection date 8 February 2007
Reporting inspector Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blackhouse Road
School category	Community		Colgate
Age range of pupils	4-11		Horsham RH13 6HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01293 851254
Number on roll (school)	112	Fax number	01293 851165
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Katherine Scott
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2004		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school where most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Most pupils are White British. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties. When it was last inspected, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. Since that time, almost all of the teaching staff have changed. The headteacher joined the school in January 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school has come a long way since its last inspection. Good leadership and management have resulted in rapid improvement. The catalogue of weaknesses that were previously identified has been tackled successfully so that this is now a satisfactory and improving school. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The headteacher has been particularly effective in systematically monitoring every aspect of the school's provision to eliminate underachievement and secure improvement. Through her drive and enthusiasm she has built a staff team with a shared commitment to raise standards and create a climate where pupils want to learn. High staff turnover, which has been a problem that has beset the school since before the last inspection, has not been allowed to disturb the now steady progress that pupils make. Children join the school with average skills. They make sound progress in the Reception Year so that standards are broadly average by the end of this Foundation Stage of children's education. Throughout the school, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with much that is good. Teachers know their pupils well and are especially good at motivating them to work hard. They do not, however, always match work in lessons as carefully as they could to pupils' different abilities. Nonetheless, pupils of all abilities are now achieving satisfactorily and attaining average standards in the national tests. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection that is certainly recognised by parents. A parent who confessed she had some concerns about the school after reading the last Ofsted report commented that she chose the school after meeting the headteacher and staff. She says that she is 'delighted' that she did because her child is 'happy and thriving in this caring village school'.

Many parents voice praise for the measurable improvements they have seen over the past two years, saying, 'We could not ask for a better environment for our child to grow and learn in'. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. When the school's progress was last monitored, it was noted that pupils were often inattentive and unenthusiastic. There is no sign of that now. Pupils listen carefully and are keen to learn because, as one parent put it, 'my child enjoys every minute of her education'. Behaviour is very good and pupils feel safe. They have a good understanding of the need for a healthy diet and lifestyle. They are keen to take on responsibility, for example taking pride in their achievements as school councillors. Arrangements for pupils' welfare are good but the quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory rather than good because pupils are not given consistently good guidance through marking on what they need to do to improve their work. The curriculum is satisfactory. The school is currently developing plans to link subjects together more creatively to further engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm.

The school's self-evaluation is perceptive and accurate, although its assessment of the leadership and management is too modest. It correctly identifies the school's successes and those areas that the headteacher, staff and governors want to be even

better. The very significant improvement since the last inspection demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work in lessons is more closely matched to pupils' different abilities.
- Give pupils clearer guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and this represents satisfactory achievement. Children join the school with average skills. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception Year so that they are broadly average when they start in Year 1. Pupils of all abilities make steady progress as they move through Years 1 to 6. Pupils with learning difficulties are helped to make similar progress to others in the class. The school has become increasingly effective at identifying pupils at risk of underachieving and putting in place support to help these pupils to catch up. This has been done through comprehensive systems of assessing and keeping track of pupils' progress and by carefully analysing any underperformance. For example, the reasons were quickly identified for the disappointingly low Year 6 test results in science in 2005 and swift action taken to improve provision in this subject. As a result, standards in science rose sharply in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are very well behaved and have good attitudes to their work. Their interest and attentiveness in lessons represent a notable improvement since the school was last visited by inspectors. Pupils enjoy being in school and find it a friendly, happy place. As they explained, 'It is easy to make lots of friends here'. Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils feel safe and know that there are adults they can go to if they are worried. They have a good understanding of staying healthy through sensible eating and physical exercise. They are quick to extol the benefits of fresh fruit, vegetables, their healthy lunches, water and regular exercise. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils grow in confidence and show care and consideration for others through, for example, acting as playground buddies. Relationships are good. Pupils work well together in lessons and cooperate well with one another. They willingly take on responsibilities within the school community, such as being school council members, because they 'want to help make things better'. These activities, coupled with their satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy, give them a sound preparation for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although much that was seen during the inspection was good. Teachers have a friendly relationship with their pupils. They organise and manage lessons well and explain clearly what pupils are expected to learn. In turn, the pupils are enthusiastic and concentrate well. Pupils say that they 'enjoy lessons because teachers make learning fun'. In many lessons, good questioning and opportunities for pupils to discuss their work in pairs help pupils to develop their ideas and extend their thinking. Work, however, is not always matched closely enough to pupils' ability, so that pupils of widely different abilities are given the same activities in lessons. Although teachers often make very effective use of questioning to reinforce learning and to check on pupils' understanding, some questioning, particularly in the Foundation Stage, is not focused sharply enough on what the children need to learn and this limits progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The clear routines established for children's social development in the Foundation Stage help them to settle into school well and give them growing confidence. Across the school, the curriculum gives good support to pupils' awareness of healthy and safe practices. For example, pupils in Year 6 take part in cycling proficiency. There is a good range of visits, visitors and well-attended after school clubs that enrich the curriculum. Pupils were particularly effusive about their visit to Groombridge Gardens, the after school football and the German clubs.

The curriculum is planned in a two-year cycle to cater for the mixed-age classes and ensure that pupils are helped to build on what they have learnt before. The school is increasingly developing creative links between different subjects so that pupils can study topics in greater depth and make more use of a range of skills when learning other subjects. However, this development is still at an early stage of implementation and its impact is not yet evident throughout the school. As a consequence, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply and develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Provision for pupils' welfare is good and this contributes well to pupils' enjoyment and well-being. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety, including child protection, are fully in place. Pupils with learning difficulties are given support that is carefully tailored to their needs. As a result, they make similar progress to others. Where it is needed, the school draws well on the contribution of external agencies to support these pupils' needs.

Pupils are given individual targets for English and mathematics that show them what they need to focus on to improve their work. They know their numeracy targets but not all know their literacy ones, possibly because some of the wording is difficult for them to understand. Marking is inconsistent and this has been identified by the school as a priority for improvement. There is some first-rate marking in Years 5 and 6 that gives pupils very clear guidance on what they need to do to improve, but other marking gives pupils insufficient guidance on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The striking improvements in teaching and learning, achievement and in pupils' personal development are testament to the effectiveness of leadership and management in this school. There is, however, no sense of complacency. While justifiably celebrating how far it has come, the headteacher, governors and staff team understand and appreciate that the school still has further to go. School improvement planning is geared towards further improvements in teaching and raising standards. It recognises that some of the initiatives taken to improve the quality of provision are still at an early stage. The school has taken productive advantage of the support provided by the local authority, including some that was needed to help cover staff absence through long-term sickness. The headteacher has been especially successful in harnessing the enthusiasm of teachers by creating a team approach to subject leadership which has proved an effective approach in the particular circumstances of this school.

The school sets challenging targets and keeps a close track on each pupil's progress. These targets are monitored regularly to check that every child is making at least the progress expected. Extra support is given where pupils are identified as slipping behind.

Notable strengths of leadership and management have been in maintaining parental confidence and creating a climate where pupils are happy and want to learn. As one parent put it, 'The first two years of my daughter's schooling so far have been a huge pleasure thanks to the leadership of the school and the clearly visible commitment and enthusiasm of the staff'.

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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	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?	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	3

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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	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	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

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us. We were pleased to see how much your school has improved. We think your school is giving you a sound education. Teachers are helping you to make reasonable progress.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- Your headteacher and staff have been successful in checking how well you are doing and helping any of you that are falling behind.
- You behave well and really enjoy your lessons.
- Staff take good care of you and help you feel safe.
- You like the good range of clubs and other activities on offer.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- Sometimes you are all doing the same work in lessons, when you could be given work that is better matched to what each of you needs to learn.
- Marking could give you clearer guidance on what you need to do to improve.

Each of you can help by making sure you all know about, and concentrate on, achieving the targets in your English and mathematics books and by continuing to work hard.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.