

Field Place First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125864
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293384
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Juliet Ward HMI

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Howcroft-Stemp
Headteacher	Frances Dunkin
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Nelson Road Worthing BN12 6EN
Telephone number	01903 700234
Fax number	01903 249207

Age group	3–8
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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 is a larger than average first school. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is high, as is the proportion of pupils who have additional educational needs. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds although the percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language is increasing and it is higher than the national average. The school has a unit for pupils with severe language disorders. It has 'Investors in People' status and the 'Arts Mark' award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'When I had a tour of the school prior to my daughter starting Nursery, I felt such a warm and friendly atmosphere.' This is a view echoed by many parents who feel that Field Place is a very special school where all the staff work together as a team to ensure the pupils achieve well and enjoy school. This good school has many outstanding features which contribute much to the pupils' outstanding personal development, well-being and levels of care and guidance. A focus on meeting the needs of all pupils is the hallmark of the school's success.

Children make a very good start in the Foundation Stage, benefiting from a well planned, individualised curriculum and highly focused teaching which fosters children's personal and social skills while paying full attention to their academic skills. The outstanding curriculum throughout the school contributes much to the pupils' love of learning. Behaviour and relationships are excellent. Pupils are highly motivated, work productively and achieve well. By the time they leave the school, standards in English, mathematics and science are average, which represents considerable progress. This success owes much to the very good progress in developing early reading and writing skills in Years 1 and 2.

Pupils are prepared very well for the future. Their grasp of how to live healthily through eating well and taking plenty of exercise contributes greatly to their well-being. They confidently participate in a wide range of community events, such as entertaining the local elderly residents to tea, and the school council is involved in a number of activities. Excellent personal qualities are nurtured by the staff who are ambitious to see every child succeed. Good teaching, excellent support for those with learning difficulties and very high levels of support for parents underpin the school's work. The school lives up to its motto, 'We love to learn together,' and a particular strength is the way it hosts family learning courses for parents. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and plan and prepare thoroughly. The school has accurately identified the need to develop the use of assessment. This includes building on pupils' prior knowledge to improve the quality of their learning and to involve them more actively in their learning. Individual targets are not always used effectively to involve pupils in their learning and help them know how to improve. All adults encourage independence and use praise to motivate and inspire.

The leadership and management are outstanding and governors provide much support. Staff work well together and have successfully tackled issues from the previous inspection, leading to good improvement in provision and higher standards. As one parent stated, 'All aspects are well catered for, both for the child and the anxious parent, and after three children at the school, I have learnt with my children.' The school has an outstanding capacity to improve still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to understand how they can use their targets to improve their work.
- Raise the quality of the teaching to that of the best by using day-to-day assessments to improve learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of skills well below those expected for their ages. Many pupils enter the school with language and communication skills that are well below average and in the past this has hindered literacy development and other aspects of learning. Ongoing initiatives are clearly improving pupils' speech and reading skills. Children have a strong start and make at least good progress through the Foundation Stage. The emphasis on personal and social skills in these early years pays dividends in Key Stage 1 where the good progress continues in all academic and personal areas. Standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents considerable progress from pupils' starting points. By the end of Year 3, pupils continue to achieve well and their standards are average. Achievement in reading and writing is very good because of the systematic and focused teaching of basic skills. Progress in reading is particularly good because pupils develop an enjoyment of books and are given many opportunities to read in all subjects. The school is maintaining the upward trend in the national tests results over recent years, except in mathematics. Here, progress is slower than in English because pupils' calculation skills are not well developed. The school identified this as an area for development and improvement is already evident. Pupils achieve well in history, geography and art through the themes they study. Pupils with additional learning needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve very well, making particularly good progress in their reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of parents say their children enjoy school and behave very well. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection when pupils' personal development was judged to be good.

Pupils make outstanding progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their excellent attitudes to learning can be seen in their great enthusiasm and enjoyment for school. Being helped to learn was identified by pupils as one of the best things about the school, alongside their friends. They have a responsible approach to managing their own behaviour and greatly value the rewards they receive. Relationships within lessons and at break times are excellent because pupils are taught to take care of each other and there is little rough play or bullying.

Pupils become confident learners, able to talk about their feelings. Although they are aware of their strengths and areas for improvement they do not generally assess their own work or that of others. Many pupils can explain how they have changed their behaviour to become healthier. Pupils feel safe and know who to go to if they need help. They show great pride in their work and do it neatly and carefully. They contribute very well to the local community, singing in the school choir for charity events and joining other local choirs for concerts.

There have been huge efforts to improve attendance since the last inspection and attendance is now satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features. The school's focus on supporting pupils' learning is evident in the school's monitoring of teaching and that seen during the inspection, and contributes to pupils' good achievement. Rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress enable teachers to set targets and monitor progress. Lessons are well planned and actively engage pupils in their learning. Teachers make work challenging, interesting and enjoyable, factors which contribute to pupils' very good response and excellent behaviour. Teachers know their pupils very well and use the good ratio of experienced teaching assistants very effectively. Excellent relationships encourage pupils to listen well to adults and to each other and contribute to the purposeful discussion seen in lessons. This reflects the school's successful emphasis on learning through 'talk' in developing pupils' literacy skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school offers an outstanding curriculum. It successfully develops links between subjects and makes learning purposeful and enjoyable. In planning this rich curriculum teachers take account of pupils' interests and of the locality, so that they can learn skills and acquire personal qualities they need to be successful learners. Visits and visitors to the school contribute significantly to the pupils' enthusiasm for learning. For example, pupils speak enthusiastically about the theatre group which involved them in role playing events from World War Two. The school celebrates cultural diversity through theme weeks which, amongst other experiences, include performing arts. Planned personal and social programmes contribute to raising pupils' self-esteem and ensure they have a good understanding of being healthy and safe. A good range of out-of-school activities is widely enjoyed. The very good Foundation Stage curriculum focuses on children's individual needs and their personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils. One pupil reported that the best thing about the school was that the teachers cared about the children. This judgement is fully endorsed by parents. Every adult is committed to providing the best possible care for pupils. Teaching assistants play a key role in promoting learning, working in partnership with teachers. Recognising that pupils need to feel secure and settled in order to learn, excellent attention is paid to their emotional, social and physical development. Health and safety checks and assessments are carried out rigorously, and safeguarding procedures are robust. Great emphasis is placed on developing children's personal and social skills in the Foundation Stage to prepare them for learning in Key Stage 1. Additionally, there is an impressive range of interventions, introduced as necessary throughout the school, to support pupils' individual learning needs. The Special Support Centre is an excellent resource and works seamlessly with the co-ordinator for pupils with additional educational needs. As a result, pupils with additional educational needs, the high number of pupils in danger of underachieving and the vulnerable pupils are promptly identified and supported very well throughout the school. The school's excellent systems for monitoring pupils' progress, combined with its positive behaviour policy, help pupils to understand their strengths and areas for development. A key strength is the

extensive involvement of parents through family learning where parents and pupils work together. The benefits for pupils are enormous, contributing significantly to their enjoyment of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The outstanding leadership and management are the keys to the school's good improvement since the last inspection and mean that it is well set to do even better. Pupils and parents feel their views are valued and that staff respond to their ideas. The headteacher makes her vision for the school's future clear to all staff and has a sharp awareness of how to raise standards. Self-evaluation systems are outstanding and informed accurately by detailed analyses of pupils' standards and progress. Recent improvements in the teaching and learning of reading, for example, were the result of prompt action to rectify weaknesses in pupils' skills in reading unfamiliar words. The headteacher has high expectations of what everyone can achieve but at the same time considers the workload of staff very carefully. This has helped create an excellent team spirit where all members of the school are working extremely well together. There is regular monitoring of lessons and excellent support for colleagues new to teaching. The school has developed very good partnerships with other schools and universities that provide valuable expertise as well as useful sharing of ideas and facilities. Governance is good. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are not afraid to hold it to account. All these factors combine to create an excellent capacity to improve.

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	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	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	1

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?	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 July 2007

Dear Girls and Boys,

Inspection of Field Place First School, Worthing BN12 6EN

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know what we found out about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do.

It was very clear from what you said that you love all of the clubs and activities and are especially proud of how well you do in reading lots of books. One of the things I will remember about the school is your very good behaviour. You listen well to other people's views and also pay very careful attention in lessons. I thought that the fun sentence-making lesson in Year 2 was particularly good and you obviously enjoyed making funny sentences. Because you work hard and your teachers are good at explaining things, you are doing well in tests. It was lovely to see that children who sometimes struggle with learning can also do really well.

We were really pleased to see how many of your mums and dads come to learn with you, such as in the sessions using the computers. Your parents think Field Place is a great school which looks after all of you very well.

Your headteacher and the staff work very hard and have done much to improve the school in the last few years. Even in really good schools there are things to do. I have asked the teachers to give you more advice about how you might improve your work. I know you will always continue to do your best.

I hope that you will always be as happy at school as you obviously are at Field Place.

With best wishes,

Juliet Ward Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools