

# Lyminster Infant School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 125927         |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | West Sussex    |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 293400         |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 25 April 2007  |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Brenda Spencer |

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

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|---|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Infant                                   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                                |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–7                                      |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                                    |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 99                                       |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                       |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Elizabeth Cairns                         |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Jane Taylor                              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 28 January 2002                          |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Wick Street<br>Littlehampton<br>BN17 7JZ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01903 713642                             |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01903 732013                             |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Lyminster is a small infant school. Attainment on entry is below average and the number of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. The headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Lyminster Infant is a good school with many outstanding features. Pupils blossom in a happy, caring and creative environment. One parent speaks for many in saying that 'Lyminster is a fine example of how a small village school is beneficial to both children and parents'. As a result of good leadership, the school is going from strength to strength and has a good capacity to continue to do so.

There are many reasons why pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well from Reception to Year 2. The work of staff and governors is focused on their well-being and academic achievement. Provision such as family learning is key to this. Outstanding care, guidance and support provide a safe environment, warm relationships are a strong feature and the information gained from assessing pupils' learning is used very well to identify what they need to do next to improve. Parents prize the excellent quality of care above all other aspects of the school's work. The headteacher supports the search for improvement in ways that staff respond to eagerly, rather than defensively. Consequently, the quality of the curriculum is excellent and teaching is typically good and sometimes better. From their below- average starting points, pupils are on track to reach standards which are average in Reception and better than average at the end of Year 2. Spoken language, particularly vocabulary and confidence to speak in a group, remains below average for these older pupils despite recent improvements in provision.

Staff find teaching rewarding because pupils are so responsive. Their behaviour is excellent and their books are delightful to look at because they present their work so well. This is a natural response to the way the staff display pupils' work and make much of their achievements. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and they are well prepared to be successful in the future.

Leadership and management are good. The teamwork and shared vision for the school is strong. Effective self-evaluation provides the school with an accurate picture of its work and forms the basis of the school's plan for improvement. This plan does not set out to measure the success of its actions in terms of impact on pupils' learning and personal development. This limits its use as a tool for improvement to subject leaders and governors.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Maximise the opportunities within lessons for pupils to gain confidence in expressing their views using the new words they are taught.
- Check precisely the impact initiatives have on pupils' learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children enter Reception Year with skills which are below average, but this varies year by year. By the end of the Reception Year, children's personal, social and emotional development has generally been average, and communication and literacy and mathematical development below average, with relatively few higher attainers. The picture is changing partly because of improved provision. In 2007, standards in all areas are on track to be average by the end of Reception Year.

Standards at the end of Year 2 vary considerably from year to year, reflecting the varying attainment on entry. In 2006, they were broadly average in reading and above average in writing

and mathematics. Girls outperformed boys, particularly in reading and writing. However, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, made good progress from their relatively low starting points at the end of the Reception Year in 2004.

The current Year 2 are making good progress and are on track to reach standards which are above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. This reflects their higher starting points compared to the previous year and the effect of improvements in the curriculum, academic guidance and teaching. Standards in art and design are above average because of the rich curriculum. Pupils' spoken language across the school, despite being an increased focus in planning and provision, remains below average. Pupils' starting points are low and the curriculum has only relatively recently been revised. It has therefore not had time to have a significant impact on the standards of spoken language of the older pupils, but it is bringing about a noticeable improvement in the skills of the children in Reception.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are clearly very involved in their activities. One parent speaks for others in saying, 'Seeing what the children do and how they enjoy it makes me glad I have chosen this school'. Attendance is average because it has been depressed recently by an outbreak of illness. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, at break and when they move around the schools is excellent. They present their work beautifully. This and the standards they reach at the end of Year 2 mean pupils are well placed to do well in the future. Pupils feel safe and supported by their peers and adults. This reflects the excellent spiritual, moral and social development, which means kindness, thoughtfulness and freedom from threat are the norm. Pupils are very helpful to one another and make a good contribution to local life through Arts Week and local festivals. Pupils know about the benefits of exercise and drinking and eating healthily but a few admit they are not too keen to practise what is preached.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is typically good. One parent observes, 'The school gets stronger and better in educating our children'. This reflects how well staff constructively review each other's lessons. Teaching is often inspirational and supported very well by an exciting curriculum. This, and the sense of purpose in classes, means pupils work with motivation. Relationships are very strong so pupils help one another and feel confident to tackle new learning. In order to promote intellectual development, from Reception class through to Year 2, staff are working hard to extend pupils' vocabulary and to expand their learning with challenging questions. What pupils do well is noticed, creating a positive atmosphere so the climate for learning is excellent. Pupils' work is marked helpfully so they know how to improve. Consequently, pupils make good progress. They also feel valued because their work is displayed with such care. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to be independent. However, occasionally staff tell pupils things they could work out for themselves. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to learning but this is not exploited fully enough in every lesson.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent and much improved since the last inspection. The school accurately describes it as 'rich, varied and imaginative'. One parent commented of her son, 'The new creative curriculum has really captured his imagination'. Activities such as building the houses of London and setting fire to them to see how the Great Fire spread in 1666 mean the learning is never forgotten. No wonder pupils are enthused by their lessons. The progress children make in Foundation Stage has recently accelerated because of the improved opportunities they have to work inside and outside and to choose what they do. Greater emphasis is also being given to communication, emotional and personal development throughout the school to very good effect. Extensive effort is made to ensure that pupils continue to make progress as they move from one class to another. This is achieved through a thoughtful curriculum plan. Pupils benefit from special themed weeks and the interesting programme of visitors and extra-curricular activities. Since the last inspection, there is much-improved provision in art, geography, music and religious education to explore the diversity of cultures.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Many parents were moved to write about how well pupils are looked after. They use words like 'extremely caring and helpful' to describe the support of their children and families and talk appreciatively about concerns being dealt with 'quickly and efficiently'. The family learning programme is a key feature in creating a partnership between school and parents in supporting pupils' learning. There are all the necessary procedures in place to safeguard pupils and to ensure they are in the care of suitable adults.

Staff are highly committed to pupils' welfare and happiness. There are detailed analyses of reasons for absence and action is taken quickly if there is any cause for concern. Pupils' academic and personal progress is accurately assessed and reviewed formally each term so that timely intervention is made to keep pupils on track. This information is used very well to move pupils on. In lessons, staff respond quickly to pupils' immediate difficulties and interests and identify very well the key aspects of learning which will help them to improve. Consequently, pupils achieve well.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because of the commitment of staff and governors to create a supportive and stimulating school. A parent describes the headteacher as a 'fantastic presence' in the school. Since her appointment, the headteacher has successfully developed the curriculum, extended the role of subject coordinators and gained the overwhelming support of parents. Coordinators have taken on their increased responsibilities with relish. This, and improvements in Foundation Stage provision made in partnership with the local authority, has led to recent acceleration of progress and improving standards, particularly in personal development. Weaknesses at the time of the last inspection have been tackled successfully.

Governors participate actively in strategic roles, such as influencing decisions made locally about the organisation of primary education. Their role in acting as critical friends, for example,

considering budget allocations, is good. They are increasingly playing an influential part in improving the school.

Because of the extensive ways the school reviews its effectiveness, including seeking the views of parents, it has an accurate view of its strengths and what it needs to improve. This information feeds into a well-targeted school improvement plan aimed at raising pupils' achievement. Presently this plan does not enable staff and governors to analyse their success in terms of the effects of past actions on pupils' achievements. This slows their journey to excellence.

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## 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?  | 2   |
| 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 |
| 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   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 3 |
| 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> | 1 |
| <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 | 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**

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Lyminster Infant School, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 7JZ

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I came to your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you. Particular thanks go to those of you who gave up your time to talk to me during your lunch break.

You are fortunate to go to such a good school that you leave able to read, write and do your mathematics well. That is not all. I was very impressed by how well you present your work, your excellent behaviour and how helpful you are to one another. You try hard in your lessons and this is not surprising as your teachers work very hard and teach you such interesting things in exciting ways. I won't forget the photographs of the houses you burnt in learning about the Fire of London. You are cared for so well that many of your parents wrote me notes to comment on it.

The school is run very well. The staff and governors plan carefully to improve it. I have asked them to think about how to help you become more confident in expressing your views using the new words you are taught. Also they will think about how the changes they make have helped you to be better at all the things that you do. I hope you will help them by giving your opinions and continuing to enjoy all your experiences in school.

Please thank your parents for kindly sending in the questionnaires and letters. These helped me to understand how well the school is doing.

Yours faithfully,

Brenda Spencer Lead inspector