

Bramber First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125968
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293418
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	4–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Gilbert
Headteacher	Vivien Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2002
School address	Bramber Road Worthing BN14 8QB
Telephone number	01903 219277
Fax number	01903 219097

Age group	4–8
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2007
Inspection number	293418

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils join this average sized school with abilities that are typical for their ages. An above average number have learning difficulties or disabilities. Art was separately inspected in this school in July 2006.

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 with many outstanding features. The headteacher and leadership team have succeeded in creating a stimulating learning environment where children feel secure and want to do well. A consistent picture comes through from parents of 'a caring school that really does concentrate on the well-being and learning of its children'.

Provision is good in the Reception Year because the school ensures, as a parent perceptively describes, that 'the right foundations are in place for a good education, balancing the children's educational and emotional needs'. As a result, children make good progress and standards are above average. Good teaching and learning throughout the school ensure that pupils of all abilities make steadily good progress and achieve well. Standards are significantly above average in the Year 2 tests and when pupils move on to middle school at the end of Year 3. Standards are not as high in mathematics as they are in reading and writing. This is because teachers are more confident teaching English than mathematics, so mathematics lessons are not always as pacy and pupils do not progress at the same rapid rate that they do in English and other subjects. Teachers are skilled at finding ways to use and develop pupils' literacy skills across other subjects but do not devise so many similar opportunities to use and apply pupils' numeracy skills. Even though standards in mathematics are good, the school knows that it is mathematics that needs to be further improved to make this an outstanding school.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and staff work together exceptionally well as a team with a shared commitment to make this successful school even better. Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored so that school leaders have a very accurate picture of how well the school is doing and what the school needs to do to do better. Pupils too know how to improve their work. This is because of the 'I can' targets they are given and the helpful feedback they get through marking. It is the quality of this academic guidance, coupled with the very strong welfare support, especially for the most needy pupils, that makes care, guidance and support outstanding. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding as a result, and also because an outstanding curriculum excites the children's interest. This is not just in the basics but also across a wide range of subjects and fun activities. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning and are enthusiastic in lessons.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' confidence in devising mathematical activities so that they make maximum use of teaching time and ensure that pupils' numeracy skills are applied in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. They do especially well in reading and writing. Although pupils make reasonable progress in mathematics, they do not do quite as well in this subject as they do in English. When art was inspected in July 2006, the standards in that subject were found to be well above average and pupils' progress in art was judged to be outstanding.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year. By the end of the Foundation Stage, almost all children reach the early learning goals expected for their ages and many exceed them. Significantly, children benefit from a good introduction to school life and the orderly routines

that help them to learn and make good progress when they start on the National Curriculum in Year 1. Scores in the Year 2 national assessments have been above average in most of the years since the last inspection. Achievement is good for pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress in Year 3. Parents describe how their children have 'come on in leaps and bounds'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils show a real enjoyment of school; so much so, that Year 3 pupils voice sadness at the thought that they will soon be leaving. This is because they like their teachers and find the school 'welcoming and safe', but it is also because of the school's success in making learning fun through an exciting curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons. They work hard and are keen to do their best. They like taking responsibility within the school community, for example, as junior governors 'helping to make the school even better'. The good standards attained in core literacy and numeracy skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and future success.

Even the youngest children have a very clear appreciation of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. The inspection coincided with the school's 'Get Fit Week' and so there was a particular school focus on exercise and healthy eating. Pupils readily extol the virtues of a balanced diet. One Year 3 pupil questioned the appropriateness of serving pizza at the school's lunchbox club, but a Year 2 pupil pointed out that it had healthy toppings.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures. Parents are pleased that 'the children show respect for each other and good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded'. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils say that they are confident that on the rare occasions that someone is hurtful or unkind, teachers quickly sort it out. Attendance is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is effective because teachers plan and organise most lessons well and take particular care to match work to pupils' needs. They know their pupils very well. The very good relationships that teachers and the very effective teaching assistants have with pupils help to motivate them. Many pupils work hard and are quick to volunteer answers to teachers' questions because they like the staff and are eager to please them. A notable strength of teaching is the emphasis given to developing pupils' independence and, therefore, their self-confidence. Even the youngest children are helped to learn through independent and co-operative play, for example, as firemen in the Reception Year 'fire station'. Throughout the school, pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their own learning through both 'I can' statements and the use of 'traffic lights' to indicate their level of understanding.

Pupils' reading and writing are boosted by the opportunities teachers give them to use these skills when learning in other subjects. Teachers are less successful at finding similar opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their numeracy skills. Although brisk pace is a characteristic of many lessons, this is not always so evident in mathematics. For example, where pupils have a

limited amount of time to solve a numeracy problem, teachers do not always make pupils aware of the time limit. This means that pupils work with less urgency than they would if they could see the timer ticking away.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school makes very effective use of its attractive buildings, facilities and site to create a stimulating environment where children want to learn. From Reception to Year 3, the curriculum is thoroughly and thoughtfully planned through topics that ensure that learning is made interesting and fun, and which help the pupils to build on what they have learnt before. The curriculum is enhanced extremely well by themed weeks such as 'Get Fit Week' where pupils engage in a wide variety of physical activities and learn about the foods that keep them healthy. As the art inspection confirmed, the school certainly does not just concentrate on reading, writing and mathematics. There are many and varied opportunities for enrichment through visits linked to topics, such as the visit to Preston Manor when studying the Victorians, and a remarkable range of school clubs in which pupils participate enthusiastically. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is very good and this contributes to the good progress they make.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents greatly appreciate the high quality of care their children receive. Children are visited in their homes before they start school and this helps them to settle in well. The very good level of care in Reception helps the children to quickly become confident learners. The school caters extremely well for its most vulnerable pupils. It ensures their needs are comprehensively met through very close partnership with parents, drawing well on external agencies when needed. Procedures are securely in place for child protection and to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils.

Pupils' progress is tracked systematically and the information used very well to ensure that work is planned for pupils' different abilities. Parents voice particular praise for the extra support that is given where it is needed. One told of how their child had initially struggled with reading but was now an avid reader. The pupils know what they need to do to improve because they have targets in English and mathematics and because marking gives them very clear guidance on how they can make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has been very successful in creating a stimulating learning environment where pupils and staff alike feel valued and are challenged to give of their best. The leadership team, supported by subject leaders, set very clear direction for the work of the school through a very detailed school improvement plan. They follow this through with regular and incisive monitoring. Self-evaluation is built into all aspects of the school's work as it strives to achieve excellence in all it provides for its pupils. The rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning ensures consistently effective teaching. It has identified that pupils could be making even better progress in mathematics and has already put in place measures to further raise achievement in this

subject, for example, through the introduction of setting in Years 2 and 3 to help teachers to better match work to pupils' abilities. Governors make a good contribution to the work of the school. They ensure they are well informed through their committees and regular visits. Leadership and management have been exceptionally effective in ensuring an exciting curriculum and excellent attention to pupils' care and personal development. This, and the constant striving to improve and raise standards, demonstrates the school's excellent capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
--	-----------------------

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?	2
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	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	2
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	2
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	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

Annex B**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 could see how proud you are of your school and how much you all enjoyed 'Get Fit Week'. Some of the Year 3 pupils told us how sad they were at the thought that they would soon have to leave to go on to their next school.

We think Bramber First is a good school with many outstanding features.

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

- Your headteacher and staff make the school a fun place to be where you are helped to feel safe and want to do well.
- You behave well and really enjoy your lessons.
- You make good progress in lessons and do especially well in reading and writing.
- Your teachers show you what you need to do to do even better.
- You like the good range of clubs and other activities on offer.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- Although you do well in mathematics, your numeracy is not as good as your work in English. We think you could work even faster in some mathematics lessons. We would like you to have more chance to use what you learn in numeracy in the work you do in other subjects.

Each of you can help by making sure you continue to work hard and do your best.

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