



Fishbourne CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125983
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293424
Inspection date 13 February 2007
Reporting inspector Julia Coop

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

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| Type of school | Primary | School address | Roman Way |
| School category | Voluntary controlled | | Fishbourne |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 | | Chichester PO19 3QS |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01243 785974 |
| Number on roll (school) | 198 | Fax number | 01243 530676 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Jean Howes |
| | | Headteacher | Nick Sharp |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 May 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves a mixed area on the outskirts of Chichester. Almost all pupils are White British. A very small number of pupils from minority ethnic families are new to speaking English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Overall, children start in Reception with average skills, but this varies each year. Until recently, in line with the local authority's guidelines, children started full time in Reception in the term in which they reached age five. Current admission arrangements mean that spring- and summer-born children now start full time in Reception in January each year. The number of pupils who start in the school at other than the normal time is above average. There has been significant staff turnover in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fishbourne is a good school that is improving rapidly. Parents are correct to consider that this is a 'caring and forward-thinking school' that provides a 'good moral and social foundation' for the pupils. As a result, the pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and have an outstanding awareness of how to keep safe. The school's good reputation is due to good leadership and management and the hard work of all staff and governors who share the headteacher's values and ambitions for the school. The headteacher's drive and determination has ensured that, despite numerous staff changes, pupils are making much better progress than in the past. As a result, standards have risen significantly and are exceptionally high in Year 6.

The school knows itself well and its plans for future development are well thought out. Consequently, there has been a sensible shift in emphasis in relation to the subject leaders' roles. They are now rightly seen as 'leaders of learning'. Some have begun to check on the quality of teaching so as to ensure learning is maximised, but this is at the early stages of development. The school knows that there is more to do to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil this important role in raising achievement still further.

Children start in Reception with average skills and make good progress. Parents comment that their children's progress 'has been marked since they started', because the children have settled and 'quickly felt at home'. There is a good balance of teacher-directed activities and activities that children choose for themselves, but the potential of the outdoor area as a learning environment, especially for Reception and Year 1 pupils, is not yet fully realised. The school recognises that some younger children who have not benefited from three terms' full-time education in Reception are not quite ready for a more formal Year 1 curriculum. Some adaptations have been made to ensure a smoother transition into Year 1, but there is still scope to ensure that planning matches the developmental and learning needs of these young pupils even more closely.

The overall curriculum is good. All groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities and different starting points because good teaching and planning in most lessons grabs their interest. Pupils say they 'really enjoy learning', especially the carousel of different activities one afternoon a week and the exciting educational visits. In addition, pupils are cared for, guided and supported well. Consequently they are happy, settled learners and because they have developed good relationships with their teachers and each other, they try hard to do well and to help each other learn. Coupled with good behaviour and mature attitudes, this provides an effective platform for learning. These strengths of the school, and the impact they have on pupils' all-round development, can be summed up by one parent who said: 'My child has blossomed at the school; not only has she made good progress academically, but she has developed into a sensible, caring young person'.

What the school should do to improve further

- develop the monitoring role of subject leaders to aid the process of raising achievement further
- develop the use of the outdoor area as a learning environment, particularly in Reception and Year 1, ensuring the Year 1 curriculum meets the developmental needs of the pupils more closely.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are exceptionally high at the end of Year 6 and have improved significantly. Overall, all groups of pupils make good progress and their achievement is good in relation to their capabilities. Pupils make excellent progress in science because of the very good emphasis on developing investigational skills.

Children start with average skills and make good progress in Reception. They reach the expected goals at the start of Year 1, although many older, and some more able spring- and summer-born, children exceed the expected goals. Progress in creative development is not as marked and this in part reflects the limited use made of the outdoor area to support this aspect of learning. Overall, standards on entry to Year 1 reflect the proportion of younger children in the class. This also has a knock-on effect on standards at the end of Year 2, which are just above average. Although all pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, there remains a gap between the standards attained by the oldest and youngest pupils in the year group. This year, the gap is closing rapidly in Year 2 because teaching is matched very carefully to pupils' different abilities. Even so, there is more to do to help the younger pupils catch up with their older classmates lower down the school.

Pupils new to speaking English receive well-targeted support and quickly gain the essential language skills to benefit from all that the school offers. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities also make good progress because lessons are well adapted to meet their different learning needs. Those with more complex learning needs benefit from a well-planned personalised curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school motto is 'Enjoying Learning Together' which the pupils themselves say they 'do everyday'. Their good attendance and happy faces in lessons and around the school are a testament to this. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture and have a developing and satisfactory understanding of life in a multi-faith society. The school successfully instils in pupils a strong social and moral understanding which accounts for their good behaviour and positive attitudes to school. Pupils follow the school's courtesy code well and are polite to staff, visitors and each other. Although the school is working hard to promote constructive play through playground zoning and the use of

play-leaders, there can be some rough and tumble on the playground and occasionally pupils with complex learning needs can display challenging behaviour. The pupils themselves say 'this is not a big issue' because they understand that each one is special in their own right; as one pupil wrote, 'it's what's inside that counts, not the outside'.

Pupils know how to live healthily and recognise that they need to 'eat five a day' but some still find this difficult to achieve. As one boy said, 'I still don't like vegetables, but I am trying'. Pupils have an excellent understanding about how to keep safe and always wear crash helmets when cycling, are very aware of stranger danger and internet safety and are very clear about how to get help if they are unhappy. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community and take their responsibilities as school councillors, playground buddies and school helpers seriously. All these personal attributes, together with the development of team building and problem solving skills, result in pupils being well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this and different teaching approaches successfully to make learning interesting and meaningful. For example, teachers use laptops and specialist resources to help pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities learn effectively. All teachers use interactive whiteboards to make learning relevant, whilst role-play and partner work are regular occurrences that help to bring a variety to lessons. Pupils say that these approaches 'really help us to learn because you never know what is going to happen next'. In addition, aide-memoires, such as 'VCOP' displayed on classroom walls, remind pupils to think carefully about 'vocabulary, connectives, openings and punctuation', which they say helps their writing. The skills of specialist staff are used particularly well so that pupils really enjoy learning about Japanese art, develop good basketball skills and become confident in speaking French.

In Reception, staff plan a good range of practical activities, such as shopping, painting, model and mark making, and support these well. Although the children also enjoy choosing activities for themselves, and especially like playing in the outdoor area, staff do not always interact purposefully in these activities and this is a missed opportunity to extend learning further. In all classes, pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and, in the best lessons, teaching is challenging and brisk-paced so no moment is lost. Occasionally, younger pupils spend too long listening to the teacher so the pace of learning slows. Pupils like their teachers and this, together with good relationships, good support from teaching assistants and firm but friendly class management, ensures a productive learning atmosphere in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has improved and this owes much to the hard work of staff who have ensured that meaningful links are made between subjects to aid learning and the progressive development of subject skills. In addition, an extensive range of visits and visitors helps bring the curriculum to life and make learning enjoyable. Pupils talk eagerly, for example, about trips to a planetarium to help their science, a waterfall to help their project on rivers and the Portsmouth newspaper to create their own front pages. Pupils love projects such as 'Big Writing' and 'Team Building' and especially like the carousel of activities each week, which can include healthy cooking, French, art, basketball and music, all of which are supported well by members of the community, teaching assistants and specialist staff. These opportunities, together with residential outings, many additional clubs, well-planned personal, social and health education, including a social skills group for vulnerable pupils and a 'Safety and ME' day, give pupils an excellent awareness of how to keep safe and how to get along with each other. The school is developing the links between the Reception and Year 1 curriculum and improving the outside environment to better support learning. It recognises the importance of developing this further so as to increase the range of first-hand learning experiences for the youngest pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has a caring, supportive family atmosphere. Consequently, pupils feel very safe and happy in school. Parents of pupils who have joined the school only recently are pleased with how quickly their children have settled. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are met well, one parent commenting that they are very pleased with the 'personalised provision, openness and willingness to help' which has made a 'big difference to the confidence' of their child. Child protection procedures are rigorous. The needs of more vulnerable pupils are met well by effective links with outside agencies and the work of the learning mentor. Pupils new to speaking English receive well targeted support but are not made to feel any different from their classmates.

Pupils know their targets for learning and like collecting the smiley faces that let them know how well they are doing. They say marking helps them to know what they have done well and what they need to work on, although this is not consistent in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very clear educational direction for the school. Since his appointment, he has coped with a high staff turnover due to retirement and other circumstances. Despite this turnover, he has successfully led initiatives to raise achievement and improve behaviour whilst also developing the skills of new staff and

making changes to the accommodation. He has also improved the way that the school tracks pupils' progress and involves parents and pupils in the life of the school. As a result, standards have risen each year, with the school exceeding its challenging targets in 2006. Parents appreciate the headteacher's 'hard work' and value how he has 'moved the school forward'. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior teacher and effective governing body. Together, they form an efficient team who monitor the work of the school well and target resources where they are most needed.

There is an effective and well-conceived plan for further development, including the development of the outside area to enhance and expand learning opportunities. The school also recognises that, after a period of considerable change, the time is now ripe to further devolve and share the leadership and management of the school. Subject leaders have made a start in leading change in their subjects and have begun to gain a better grasp of the quality of teaching and learning, but it is early days. They are receiving good support and training for the development of their roles. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed well. Morale is high, staff work well as a team and there is an atmosphere of high expectations. Consequently, based on the record of improvement, the school is well placed to build on its strengths.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 | 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

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 1 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| 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 | 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? | 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

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| 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 | 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

I liked the friendly way you chatted to me when I visited. Thank you so much for being so polite and helpful. I really enjoyed seeing your smiling faces around the school. I agree with you that Fishbourne is a good school. I was particularly impressed with your ability to speak French, your brilliant Japanese artwork and how well you know how to keep safe. These are the things I liked most:

- you behave well, try hard in lessons and enjoy learning
- your teachers help you learn well and you do very well in science
- you have a good curriculum and lots of visits which help you learn
- your school council works hard
- everyone takes good care of you
- the headteacher and governors lead and manage the school well so there have been a lot of good changes recently.

I know that all of the staff are working hard to make your school a special place to learn but there are two things that I want the staff and governors to do to make Fishbourne even better and they agree with me:

- make sure that teachers who lead subjects look at how well you are doing and use this information to help you do even better
- make sure that the youngest children learn outside more and have activities that help them learn even more.

I hope you go on trying hard and enjoying all of the interesting activities which help you learn and play.