

St Augustine's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126009
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293433
Inspection date	3 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Aplin
Headteacher	Helen Chiasson
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2001
School address	Vicarage Lane Scaynes Hill Haywards Heath RH17 7PB
Telephone number	01444 831371
Fax number	01444 831078

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is considerably smaller than most primary schools. Most children are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Almost a third of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, which is above the national average. A third of pupils join the school after the normal point of entry.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Augustine's is a good school with many outstanding features. Parents appreciate the qualities within the school, reflected in the high rate of return of the inspection questionnaires. Parents recognise that the very welcoming, friendly atmosphere enables their children to grow and develop within a trusting and challenging environment. One comment summarised the views of many others: 'A five star school.' Pupils are similarly satisfied with what the school offers. When asked what they would like to change in the school, pupils commented, 'We like it as it is'. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Within its Christian ethos, the school values each pupil and successfully recognises and develops the gifts and talents of individuals. Pupils are reflective and have a 'can do' attitude. This is a school where pupils are very active, whether at playtimes or in lessons. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils feel safe and say that bullying does not happen but they know exactly what to do if it did or if they felt unsafe in any way. They trust adults in the school because they know them well.

As a result of consistently good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Children settle quickly into school life in the Reception Year or as new entrants in later years. In the first class, children develop a good foundation for later learning. From a below average start, pupils reach standards in the tests in Year 6 that are above and, increasingly, well above national averages. Although there is some variation in standards from year to year because of small numbers and the differing capabilities of pupils, there has been a significant improvement in achievement and standards over the last few years. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities do particularly well, often achieving standards in line with their peers.

All adults provide exceptionally good care, support and guidance for pupils. The systems to track pupils' progress towards their targets are robust and used well to match work closely to pupils' capabilities. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide very good positive feedback. They also give good oral advice on what needs to be improved, because class sizes are small, but do not always record this on written work for pupils to have a more tangible record of what they should do next. Pupils clearly enjoy school and their education because they find the work planned for them interesting. The curriculum is good and teachers are constantly seeking ways of making learning even more interesting for pupils. The wide range of activities undertaken in the school is seen clearly in the vibrant school displays.

Good leadership and management have been the key to continued improvement. The headteacher has been exceptionally successful in establishing strong teamwork amongst adults and pupils alike and in projecting a clear understanding of how to evaluate the effectiveness of current practice as a means to moving forward. As a result, the school has an accurate understanding of its current strengths and what can be developed further over time. It is well placed to face future challenges, and staff and governors have the skills and commitment to achieve their aim of excellence in all aspects of school life.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve marking to give pupils more advice on precisely what they have to do next to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average in Year 6, which represents pupils' good achievement through the school, given that almost a third of pupils join the school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils make outstanding progress. The attainment of children when they join the Reception Year varies considerably because the number in each year group is small. Overall their attainment is slightly below that normally found for children of their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly developing very positive attitudes to learning and make a smooth transition into Year 1 work. Pupils continue to make good progress, steadily increasing the gap between school and national performance levels so that in some years, the results in the national Year 6 tests are significantly above the national average. In 2006, results were exceptionally high and pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to achieve at similar levels. The school is rightly proud of the progress pupils make in writing in their early years in the school, with many now reaching the higher Level 3 in Year 2. This provides a firm basis for success in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils enter secondary school confidently and this sets them up well for the world of work in the future. The school has steadily increased the progress pupils make over the last three years and has regularly exceeded the challenging targets it set for its performance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are exceptionally enthusiastic about their school and their work. This is reflected in their high levels of concentration and hard work in lessons and the enthusiasm with which they undertake work independently, such as when they research topics for themselves. Attendance is above average in spite of some parents having to take holidays during term time because of the seasonal nature of their occupations.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. Their spiritual development is promoted very successfully through close links with the local church and a well-thought-out series of themes for collective worship. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary, which makes a strong contribution to their personal development and academic achievement. There is a real sense of community; for example, the oldest pupils look after the youngest at lunchtime and encourage them to play happily as part of a 'family' of all age groups. This was seen during the inspection when children had to come inside very quickly because of sudden torrential rain. All settled down immediately and carried on very sensibly, with some pupils helping to assemble stage scenery with adults, while others played games involving all age groups in classrooms. They help each other to stay safe, for example by not running in corridors. Pupils have an exceptional awareness of how to lead healthy lives and try to practise this in the food they eat and through their participation in a wide range of sporting activities. The school council is very effective so pupils are listened to. They are confidently exercising their responsibilities as global citizens, for example by influencing the choice of equipment for the village playground or raising funds for charities abroad. These are only some of the ways in which pupils make a positive contribution to the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good across the school and effectively develops a maturity in pupils so that they become enthusiastic and reflective learners. Pupils understand the routines of learning well and appreciate that they are expected to work hard. Lessons are focused and purposeful. The strength of teamwork is seen in the teachers' capacity to cope with several temporary arrangements during the current year because of staff illness, without these having any adverse impact on pupils' achievements. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils very well and provide constant positive feedback to pupils on their achievements. The work set for them is challenging. Older pupils in particular use target sheets to monitor their own progress and find this helpful. Marking identifies exactly what pupils have achieved, often related to the lesson objective, but does not always identify precisely enough what pupils have to do to improve the work further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and planned well around themes which make very effective links between subjects and areas of learning. This makes learning particularly interesting and enjoyable for pupils. The use of some whole-school themes, for example on Native American life, provides a valuable focus when pupils of different ages enjoy sharing what others are learning about the same topic. Each topic results in pupils completing exceptionally well presented topic books, effectively using a range of literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. The school has identified that the design and technology curriculum does not outline the development of pupils' skills systematically enough. Recent developments have already begun to bring about improvements, but this work remains a priority within the school improvement plan. The curriculum is enriched further by specialist inputs for religious education, and modern foreign languages and sport through links with other schools. Extra-curricular activities are varied and popular. Older pupils gain greatly from residential visits and activities with local secondary schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All adults know pupils very well, and concern for their well-being is central to the school's work. Child protection and safety procedures are firmly established in school practice. Pupils are given exceptional personal support both at a whole-school level through the curriculum and individually, when necessary, by their teacher or the learning mentor. The school is not complacent and is developing the personal, social and health education curriculum further to make it more even relevant to pupils' experiences. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly and the information used very well to act swiftly if a child is not making the expected rate of progress. The school's identification of learning difficulties is accurate and very effective support is provided for individuals experiencing difficulty.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, with some outstanding features. The headteacher has built an exceptionally strong staff team who are supportive of one another and share expertise effectively. Staff recognise and appreciate the support that parents make to pupils' learning. This is a school which listens to the views of parents exceptionally well. For example, the governing body sought parents' suggestions about how to deal with the anticipated fall in numbers for the next academic year. The governing body has undertaken training to improve its efficiency and has an accurate understanding of the school's work. It has taken prompt action to ensure financial viability for the school for the future, when the roll is expected to rise again. The school has refined its systems for monitoring performance and development planning. It uses these well to develop a stimulating curriculum and to take action where it sees that aspects can be improved. The school is constantly seeking ways to improve learning and raise standards. It is achieving significant success and is well placed to continue to improve.

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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	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?	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	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	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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	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?	2
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	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

4 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St. Augustine's Church of England Primary School, Haywards Heath, RH17 7PB

I very much enjoyed visiting your school recently, looking at your work and talking to some of you. Thank you very much for the friendly welcome. I said that I would let you know what I thought.

You are lucky to attend such a good school and I understand why you do not think that anything needs changing. These are just a few of the things I thought were good:

- children settle well into school life in Willow class and begin to learn to read and write well
- your behaviour is excellent and this makes the school a happy place for you to work and play together
- all of the adults look after you exceptionally well so that you are safe and secure in school and know how to look after yourselves
- you have really interesting things to do in lessons and say that you appreciate that teachers try hard to make learning interesting
- the adults in the school help you to make good progress and achieve good standards
- the exercise you take and your understanding of how to eat healthily mean that you are leading healthy lives
- you have a lot of interesting clubs to attend and many of you enjoy these
- you have the support and guidance you need so that you are ready to move on to your next school when the time arrives
- the staff and governors think very carefully about how well the school is doing and do something very quickly if they think that something needs improving.

I have asked your teachers to write down more about what you have to do to make your work better when they mark your work. I hope that you will read their comments carefully and concentrate on these in your next piece of work.

I wish you every success in the future

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead Inspector