



Littlegreen School, Compton

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126156
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293476
Inspection date 30 January 2007
Reporting inspector Michael Megee

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Compton
School category	Community special		Chichester
Age range of pupils	7–14		PO18 9NW
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	02392 631259
Number on roll (school)	41	Fax number	02392 631740
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Headteacher	Susan Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
7–14	30 January 2007	293476

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Littlegreen School takes pupils from the southern half of West Sussex. All of the pupils have statements of special educational need, and are identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition, about half of the pupils have more complex difficulties, such as autism. The school offers boarding provision for up to 12 pupils for stays of one night or more as a consequence of prior negotiation with parents or other involved agencies. Full-time boarding is not offered. The school forms part of a federation with another special school, with a joint governing body. There is a further close link with a local mainstream secondary school to share expertise and resources. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The executive headteacher of the federation has recently left, and a new appointment has not yet been made. There is an acting headteacher presently in post at Littlegreen School. The federation is currently reorganising its leadership structure and plans to have a permanent leadership team in place within the next few months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Littlegreen School is a satisfactory school that effectively supports good personal development. Members of staff take good care of pupils, and pupils respond to this by being friendly and polite and by behaving well in lessons. They develop good social skills and happily take on classroom responsibilities, read prayers in assemblies and take part in the school council. Parents report that the school has turned around the lives of their children. One parent said, 'Attending Littlegreen has meant a huge improvement in home and family life as well as in my son's education. It has been a life-saver for us all.'

All pupils and their families receive welcome and effective personal support from the home-school liaison worker. There is a satisfactory curriculum that is suitably enriched by the out-of-school activities and visits. Pupils especially enjoy the sporting and practical activities that the school provides for them.

Standards are especially low when compared to those found nationally, which is unsurprising given the pupils' past experiences and their special educational needs. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and make good use of new technology such as the interactive whiteboards to teach new skills. Teaching assistants effectively ensure that all pupils take a full part in lessons, but teaching, although satisfactory overall, does not always stretch the pupils. While pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory, progress is not as fast as it could be, especially in writing. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to write at length and this slows the pace at which skills improve, especially for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The calm and happy atmosphere in school reflects the cheerful and unruffled leadership of the acting headteacher and her senior staff. The senior managers have a clear understanding of what is going well and what needs improving. They have demonstrated, in the way that they have tackled weaknesses from the last inspection, that there is a satisfactory capacity to improve. They have introduced potentially effective procedures to enable the staff to track each pupil's development and progress. This is not yet fully in place for all subjects or for individual targets and the information is not yet analysed and summarised in a way which is easy for staff, parents and governors to use. This makes it difficult to identify quickly the weaker areas and to rigorously monitor progress towards improvement.

There are good links with parents and all are very happy with the school. One parent summed up their views: 'Littlegreen school staff show an outstanding commitment to all their pupils to ensure that they have an opportunity to succeed.'

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

This inspection confirmed the positive findings of the very recent CSCI inspection that the boarding provision offers good care and support to students, with all National Minimum Standards met, and exceeded in most areas. There are some minor

improvements required in the record-keeping. The pupils like staying overnight because they enjoy very good relationships with the staff and receive individual attention. They really enjoy the activities planned for them, and they say how good the food is. At present, links with the local community are not fully developed which would enable the boarding provision to offer even more opportunities to the pupils for personal development. There are good links between the residential and teaching staff for exchanging information, which enables pupils to achieve their social and academic targets more quickly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching by ensuring that there is always enough challenge for pupils.
- Give pupils more opportunities to write purposefully so that writing skills improve more quickly.
- Provide more concise information about the progress which pupils are making so that any underachievement can be quickly identified and tackled.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

On entry, pupils' attainment is exceptionally low for their age because of their special educational needs and significant gaps in their schooling caused by exclusions or non-attendance. Although standards remain low throughout the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Parents report that their children have come on in 'leaps and bounds' since joining the school. Achievement in mathematics and science is good. Pupils with autism make good progress in learning to interact and communicate with others because of the specialist support they receive. In all other subjects, including English, achievement is satisfactory. In English, pupils do better at reading than writing, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Pupils read frequently at school, but they do not always get enough opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills, and this slows progress. In a few lessons pupils do not always achieve as well as they could because their work is not always sufficiently challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils support each other well, behave sensibly and work hard in lessons. Pupils talk very positively about most aspects of school life. They especially like doing practical work in subjects such as art, cookery and design and technology (DT). As a consequence, rates of attendance are now good and this is a significant improvement for many from their previous schools. One parent said, 'Before attending Littlegreen my son was excluded for bad behaviour several times and after that he only managed three hours a day. Now he wants to go to school every day.' Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although pupils' cultural development is a weaker element and could be given more consistent emphasis in teachers' planning. Pupils feel valued and they happily take on responsibilities. They know that their views

are taken into account through the effective school council. One pupil said, 'If you've got no-one to play with, you tell someone on the school council and they sort it out.' Pupils are developing a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. The pupils value the new approach to help stamp out bullying, and this has resulted in far fewer exclusions this year. The parents report that they are surprised at how keen the pupils are to take exercise and eat healthily after they join the school. Pupils make a sound contribution to the community, although the school has rightly identified this as an area where more could be done. Pupils are involved in sponsoring children in Africa, and activities such as this, as well as their generally secure basic skills, prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and eventually for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In lessons, relationships are good and adults work together effectively to manage pupils' behaviour, even when it is potentially challenging. Consequently, pupils are able to focus on their own learning without distractions. Experienced support assistants have a good effect on learning, especially when working with those with more complex difficulties such as autism. This helps these pupils to feel secure and to make good progress, especially in interacting and communicating with others. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics and science, which enables pupils to make good progress in those subjects. Some aspects of teaching need further improvement. For example, teachers' plans do not always contain sufficient information about how to promote pupils' individual targets within each lesson. There is not always a high enough level of challenge for pupils. Occasionally, for example, teachers rely too much on the use of worksheets. This hampers the progress pupils can make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum helps pupils to build steadily on what they have already learnt, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to write, both in English and in other subjects. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills in most subjects. Pupils value the after-school clubs provided, especially on Tuesdays, when pupils can stay for a whole evening of organised activities such as go-karting and chess. These are well attended and enhance both their social and academic development. More opportunities could be provided for individual pupils to learn in mainstream schools and to interact with the local community. This would further support their social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All the pupils know most of the staff very well, so they always have someone to turn to if they are in difficulty. The staff place great value upon each individual and make their welfare a high priority. Consequently, pupils feel at home and secure. They say that any worries are dealt with quickly. Parents speak highly of the home-school liaison worker, who visits pupils' families, attends meetings and prepares pupils effectively for their annual reviews. This enables the school to keep in close contact with parents and outside agencies to the benefit of the pupils. There are effective procedures to help pupils settle in quickly when they join the school. Almost all pupils go on to a further education college, and there are good procedures which enable the transition to be smooth and successful. Current targets in individual education plans are not always sufficiently precise. The school has recognised this and has just introduced a new system to enhance pupils' understanding of how they can improve. The pupils say that they find this helpful. Pupils with complex difficulties such as autism are identified early and provided with good support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is currently undergoing a reorganisation which means that there are to be further adjustments to the leadership team in the near future. This has limited the school's capability to establish a clear vision and direction. However, the acting headteacher and senior managers have been successful in keeping the school on an even keel during this unsettled period and moving it in the right direction. They work together well and have established a calm, warm, caring ethos that is reflected in the school's commitment to providing a safe, welcoming haven for pupils who have had negative experiences of school in the past. As a result, pupils continue to make good progress in their social development, especially in their behaviour and attendance.

There are satisfactory systems for evaluating how well the school is doing. As a result, senior managers and subject leaders understand what needs to be improved. The school is beginning to accumulate a great deal of information about pupils' progress. Senior managers are starting to use this to check whether all groups of pupils are making enough progress, although there is a need for more concise summary information to be provided to ensure that any dips in achievement are recognised and tackled quickly. Governors are supportive and play an active part in holding the school to account.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very friendly and polite. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that there are some good things in the school but also some things that need improving.

Some of the things we found out about your school:

- You make steady progress in your studies.
- You gain confidence and show good improvement in your attendance and behaviour.
- Teachers and support staff do a satisfactory job and get on well with you.
- You are given a suitable range of activities, and you specially like DT, art and cookery.
- All adults in school are very kind and caring and they look after you well.
- Your headteacher and governors know what needs to be done next to make the school even better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Help you to improve your writing by giving you more chances to write in literacy lessons and other subjects.
- Make sure that teachers always give you work that is hard enough for you.
- Make sure that the senior staff provide better information on your progress.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and we wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by working hard and trying your best.