



South Bersted CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125973
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 295440
Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007
Reporting inspector Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bognor Regis
Age range of pupils	4–11		PO22 9PZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01243 821678
Number on roll (school)	220	Fax number	01243 841023
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Jez Prior
		Headteacher	Chris Silk
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007	Inspection number 295440
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average school. Numbers of pupils on roll have fallen over the past three years. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There has been a sudden influx of pupils who are in the very early stages of learning English as an additional language and have very limited English speaking skills. A new senior leadership team has recently been established following a period of instability in staffing and leadership.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. It is improving rapidly because of the very effective leadership of the headteacher and deputy. Senior leaders in the school are successfully driving through change which is having a beneficial impact on achievement and standards. Leadership and management of the school, and the capacity for further improvement, are good. The school provides good care, support and guidance. Staff know the pupils well and have a good understanding of pupils' diverse needs, such as those arising from pupils' limited use of vocabulary. The school's procedures to help pupils understand how well they are doing are having a major impact on improving pupils' work. Together with good marking, which frequently evaluates strengths and weaknesses very effectively; these are ensuring that pupils are very clear about how to improve their work.

Parents support the school's work and recognise strengths such as the care it provides and the good start it gives their children in Reception. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory and pupils move around the school sensibly. High levels of supervision, particularly at break and lunchtimes, ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils have confidence that adults will listen to them and help to sort out any problems.

Overall standards are below average and pupils' achievement satisfactory; both are improving. Children come into school with low standards. Their communication, language and literacy skills are exceptionally low. They settle quickly and grow in confidence because of the good provision and achieve well in Reception. They make good gains in developing their personal, social and basic literacy skills but still only reach well below average standards by the end of Reception. In the 2006 tests, standards in Year 2 were well below average. Current standards Year 2 are higher. In Year 6, pupils are making good progress and their standards are broadly average. Increasing numbers of pupils are reaching the higher level 5, particularly in writing. Pupils set their own targets for improvement and refer to these frequently.

Teachers across the school realise that more consistent and challenging provision for more able pupils is needed as too few reach the higher levels. This is because lesson planning does not consistently meet the pupils' diverse needs, particularly those of the more able.

The school's procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and analyse strengths and weaknesses are good. Teaching and the curriculum are both satisfactory. There is a good range of clubs, activities and visits, all of which enrich pupils' learning and experiences well. However skills of enquiry are not systematically built through the curriculum, particularly in science. Weaknesses in speaking and listening are a key barrier to pupils' learning. Pupils often do not have the breadth of vocabulary to explain what they think and understand.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop key vocabulary and pupils' speaking and listening skills more consistently.

- Sharpen provision and lesson planning so that the diverse needs of pupils are met and, particularly, the more able are consistently well challenged.
- Develop pupils' scientific and other enquiry skills more systematically.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the extra support they receive. Pupils coming to the school who have very limited skills in speaking English achieve well because they receive regular specialist help.

The good gains being made by the children through Reception come about through teaching and a curriculum that are adapted well to meet their needs. Teaching assistants work patiently with pupils to help them identify letters and match them to sounds. In Year 2, results from tests in 2006 were well below average, mainly because few pupils reached the higher Level 3. Current standards in Year 2 are showing an improved position in reading, writing and mathematics.

In Year 6, results from national tests in 2006 were markedly better than those in 2005. The results in 2006 for English and mathematics were average. In science, results were well above average because of the high proportion of pupils reaching higher levels. Even though the pupils did well in the tests, their scientific and other enquiry skills are not sufficiently well developed. This group of pupils made satisfactory progress from their average starting points in Year 2 in English and mathematics but good progress in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils say they enjoy coming to school although a small number find their lessons a bit dull and uninteresting. A few pupils occasionally find it difficult to concentrate in lessons and this affects the way they behave, especially when class management is not effective enough. A few pupils are reluctant to answer questions in lessons. Outside in the playground, supervision ensures that any overly-boisterous behaviour does not get out of hand. Pupils do not have concerns about bullying and are confident that any incidents will be dealt with swiftly. Attendance is satisfactory.

Children in Reception benefit from working alongside older pupils and from being encouraged to be independent, and so make good progress in their personal and emotional development. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and they keenly take up opportunities to be more active through sports clubs and coaching. They know that eating fruit and vegetables and drinking water is good for you, and do so themselves.

Pupils' contributions to the school and wider community are good. The school council is highly regarded by pupils for its role in improving facilities such as planning the new playground apparatus. Pupils take responsibility for keeping notes of meetings. The

needs of others in the community are recognised through for example, fund-raising for a local hospice. Pupils develop satisfactory skills to prepare them for the next stage in their education through improving their basic literacy and numeracy skills and learning how to work together productively. There is still scope to improve pupils' language skills further.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Their social development is the strongest aspect and is evident in the way they mix together well, regardless of background, and welcome newcomers. They develop social and moral responsibility through aspects of school life such as the 'Eco Schools' award.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good planning in Reception ensures that the specific needs of children are met well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution working with individual groups. Teaching ensures pupils have good opportunities to develop speaking skills.

In nearly all lessons pupils are well managed and they respond positively. However in a small minority of lessons pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration, particularly when asked to work independently. A few pupils are easily distracted particularly when teaching does not spark their interest or is not pitched at the right level.

Questioning frequently achieves good levels of response from pupils, although many pupils find it difficult to fully explain what they understand because of limitations in vocabulary. A few pupils are reluctant to respond and prefer to sit quietly.

In some classes there is a very broad range of abilities and needs, and planning, particularly for the most able, occasionally lacks sharpness, and pupils find the work given insufficiently challenging. Although teachers have very good information about how well the pupils are doing, this is not always used consistently well to set tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A historic emphasis on literacy and numeracy is gradually being replaced with a more flexible, creative curriculum aimed at linking subjects and developing broader skills such as art and music. For example, all Year 4 pupils are learning to play the clarinet and French now features on the timetable. Leaders rightly identify the need to develop pupils' enquiry skills, particularly in science, through better planning. They are also clearly aware that the curriculum requires further adaptation to improve pupils' speaking and reasoning skills. In Year 6, the curriculum has been adapted well to ensure that any gaps in knowledge and understanding are being rectified.

The curriculum for children in Reception is carefully planned to meet their needs within the mixed age class so that they have an appropriate time for learning through play and choosing their own activities.

Younger children have an especially wide range of visits such as to a local airport, woodland and hospital, linked with the topics they are learning about at school. Older pupils benefit from a residential stay which enhances their personal and social development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal care is well catered for by staff. Child protection procedures are secure and vulnerable pupils are monitored well. The school takes all the necessary steps to safeguard children. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well. Outside support is used effectively, such as for those pupils who speak English an additional language. Good management and targeted support by well trained teaching assistants and specialists has had a positive impact on the progress made by these two groups of pupils.

Good tracking and assessment is in place for all pupils. One example is the use of 'Shiny Blue Books' to assess progress in writing over time. Pupils are involved in assessing their own work against clear objectives. Pupils write some of their own targets and this shows that they have a very clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy have established an increasingly effective team of staff who work well together and are growing in confidence. This follows a period of turbulence where instability in staffing was adversely affecting achievement. Leaders have used external support well to drive through improvement.

A key to the success of leadership in the school is the strength of evaluation. Leaders at all levels show an acute awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They evaluate initiatives well and accurately judge how they affect standards and progress. The school's strategic plan for improvement identifies accurately the most urgent issues that need to be addressed.

Changes being made by leaders have brought about improvements in standards and achievement. In Reception for example, there is now a strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills which are underdeveloped throughout the school. Initiatives to develop writing are having a good impact and leaders carefully track pupils' progress. In Year 6, leaders have assessed pupils' needs and made effective changes to the curriculum.

Governors, well led by the chair, have a good understanding of what needs to be improved and how well the school is doing. They are clearly prepared to challenge the leadership team in the school to improve further.

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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 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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	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?	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	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	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

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. You gave us valuable information and this was a great help to us. We think your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education. It has good features and is improving.

What we most liked about your school:

- The improvements that leaders are making to help you learn better.
- How well adults look after you in school.
- Your good understanding of what you need to do to improve your work.
- The good start you make in Reception.
- The interesting range of visits and after school activities.
- Your understanding about being healthy and how well you contribute to helping the school improve.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on:

- Helping you develop your use of words so that you can clearly explain what you think and understand.
- Improving the teaching by making sure that the work you are given in lessons is not too difficult or too easy.
- Helping you develop your scientific and other enquiry skills.

We greatly enjoyed our visit and hope your school continues to improve.