

Westdene Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114380
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	311576
Inspection date	3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	488
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Crossley
Headteacher	Debbie Crossingham
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Bankside Westdene Brighton BN1 5GN
Telephone number	01273 294900
Fax number	01273 551901

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the consistency of pupils' achievement throughout the school and across subjects; the quality of all aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being; and the effectiveness of actions taken at all levels of leadership to ensure the success of the school. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, interviews with the headteacher, senior leadership team and chair of governors, and discussions with pupils and staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school on the outskirts of the city. Attendance is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and only a low proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry varies but is usually at least as expected for the children's ages.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is a very highly effective school that, through incisive and searching self-evaluation, can show that it knows itself very well. Pupils achieve high standards. The school has sustained the good improvement that was evident at the last inspection. It has an undoubted capacity to continue to do so. Excellent leadership is highly focused on achieving a realistic balance between pupils' personal and academic success. The strong and very clear educational direction provided by the headteacher ensures effective teamwork of all staff. The breadth of staff expertise is used to the full. Planning of further developments reflects the headteacher's high expectations for the school. In addition, the excellent governing body is able to question and support the process of self-evaluation and development planning knowledgeably.

Pupils are extremely enthusiastic learners who are very keen to take on extra responsibility. The school is highly successful at developing all pupils' independence, enabling them to become very well prepared for their future lives. Many pupils are involved in a raft of initiatives such as presentations to local authority representatives, local dignitaries, the governors and parents. As one pupil said, when talking about his involvement in the school council and eco-committee, 'With the help of the teachers, it is the children who have the meetings and make decisions.'

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they are a delight to talk with. They are extremely enthusiastic about sharing their successes and are highly reflective about what they want to achieve. Some Years 5 and 6 pupils, for example, explained how the introduction of their roles of responsibility as peer mentors and buddies came about. The analysis of pupils' responses to surveys indicated that younger pupils are sometimes happier talking through their concerns with their friends than with adults. The pupils themselves identified that interviews with teachers would be necessary to highlight which pupils have the necessary skills to provide support as buddies and mentors and would be sensible enough to know when an adult should intervene. This example demonstrates pupils' strong contribution to the school community and their very well developed sense of how to look after each other and stay safe. Pupils fully understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They have been influential in developing new menus for lunches and are presently trying to establish a 'walking bus' as part of the school's travel plan to help more pupils keep fit by walking to school.

The high quality of pupils' personal development has not been achieved at the expense of academic excellence. Children make a good start in all areas of their learning in the Nursery and Reception classes. Results in national tests have been high for a number of years, particularly at the end of Year 6. In 2007, the results were even better. Almost all pupils in Year 6 achieved the age expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science and nearly three quarters reached the higher Level 5. These results were substantially above the challenging targets that had been set for them two years previously. More importantly, the progress that these pupils made between Year 2 and Year 6 was significant. The reason for this success is the consistently high quality teaching and the way that the school has instigated additional support where necessary to meet the needs of each individual. All lessons challenge pupils to think and to use the knowledge that they have. One Year 2 class, for example, undertook a shopping sweepstake. A group had to choose items against a target amount. This activity helped their mental skills as well as helping them learn how to add and subtract money quickly.

Although achievement is outstanding, the school has identified that a relatively lower proportion of boys than girls reach the higher levels in writing at the end of Year 2 and that fewer girls

than boys reach the higher levels in mathematics at the end of Year 6. The school is working hard to address this issue through projects drawing on the expertise from within the school and the local authority.

An extremely wide range of curricular opportunities ensures pupils gain high levels of expertise in many subjects. For example, pupils have good information and communication technology skills. Their recent business enterprise day, in conjunction with a national bank, involved them working as project managers, financiers and catering managers, using spreadsheets, financial programs and presentations to develop sales. Success in activities such as this shows how very well prepared pupils are for their economic futures. In several classes, displays show that there are a number of budding artists, historians and technologists. Pupils are also rightly proud of their excellent achievements in a wide variety of local sports competitions and their high level of involvement in local, national and international community projects. The overwhelming support of parents for the school is evident from the many positive comments such as 'The school goes above and beyond the call of duty in terms of trips, drama and extra teaching sessions.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start and achieve standards above those expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. A good balance is provided between activities that are initiated by adults and activities that allow children to explore and play by themselves. Both the inside and outside areas are stimulating. Adults plan activities that link work in different areas of learning and this is an aspect of provision that is steadily improving and doing much to accelerate children's progress. Some of this good early years practice is also being used well in Years 1 and 2 to ensure a smooth transition between years. Although the leadership of the Foundation Stage is relatively new, it is strong and the actions taken for improvement are already taking effect.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the proportion of boys achieving the higher levels in writing by the end of Year 2 and girls reaching the higher levels in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westdene Primary School, Brighton BN1 5GN

Thank you for looking after me so well during my recent visit. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to you telling me all about the wonderful things you get up to. As I promised some of you, the bullet points below will tell you the most important points of my report.

- Your school is outstanding. I am sure this is no surprise to you because that is what many of you told me. Your excellent headteacher, with the help of all the other staff, knows exactly what to do to make your school even better.
- I was very impressed by your superb behaviour and how excited you are about learning. You are a real credit to your parents and carers.
- You reach very high standards by the time you leave the school. The national tests results this year were some of the highest ever so you all have a lot to live up to.
- Most importantly, I have said that you make really good progress through each year in a wide range of subjects. Not only do you do well in reading, writing, and mathematics but, from the examples you gave me, I could see that this was also happening with your computer work and sports. I was very impressed with the lovely artwork that was on display, especially some of the drawings.
- Your teachers make sure that all your lessons are good and I know that some are excellent. In fact, you gave me some good examples of how your teachers make sure that you think hard and have a chance to be more independent. From the discussions I had, I can see that you are all being very well prepared for your next school.
- Your teachers are now going to work on making sure that all the younger boys do really well with their writing and the older girls do as well with their mathematics.

Finally, I would like to wish you all the very best for the future. I am sure you will all be very successful in whatever career you decide on. You can continue to help improve your school by working on all the ideas you have through your eco-committees, school council and playground friends. Keep up the good work!

Best wishes

David Collard (Lead inspector)



4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

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Best wishes

David Collard
(Lead inspector)