

Ringmer Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114415
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311590
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Orpin

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	207
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Jerret
Headteacher	Jackie Warren
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Harrisons Lane Ringmer Lewes BN8 5LL
Telephone number	01273 812463
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ringmer is a rural primary school of average size. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, the most common difficulty being dyslexia. Many pupils leave or join the school after the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school has gained the Active Mark Gold and Healthy Living awards. The privately run Nursery on the school site was inspected at the same time, and the findings are covered in a separate report.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that is going from strength to strength. Pupils now progress well through most classes, so by the time they leave, they achieve standards that are mostly above average, although their performance in writing is not quite as good as in other subject areas because they do not have enough opportunities to write in different subjects. Their progress slows a little in the middle of the school, because sometimes lessons are not quite as good as in other years. Standards have improved in recent years because of the actions the school has taken to improve teaching, pupils' behaviour and the way in which their progress is assessed.

Pupils are proud of their school and the improvements that have happened. Their personal development and well-being are good, and they usually behave well in lessons and around the school. They care for each other, work together well and enjoy school because most of their work is interesting. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils readily undertake responsibilities and contribute well to school life.

Teachers plan interesting lessons and choose topics that they know pupils will find fascinating. For example, from the topic on The Swinging Sixties, pupils learned about the music, food and fashions of the times by trying them out for themselves. They thoroughly enjoyed the lesson about lunar landings and talked enthusiastically about their memorable experiences a year later. Teaching has improved well since the last inspection, although at times, lessons in the middle of the school are slightly less engaging for pupils. The curriculum has also improved well so there is variety, and links are made between subjects so learning is more relevant and real. All pupils feel valued and safe because the pastoral care provided for pupils is outstanding.

The headteacher provides very clear direction and leaders at all levels have clear responsibilities for raising standards, which have resulted in key improvements to the school's performance, although the full effects have yet to be seen as improvement continues. The school has a very accurate picture of what needs to be done and an outstanding capacity to do it. There have been good improvements to almost all aspects of school life and the school continues to set itself high targets. Governors are well informed and very supportive, but they also have high expectations for the school's performance and ask challenging questions. The school is well on the way to being highly successful.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children enter the school, they are broadly performing at the levels expected for their age, although a wide range of abilities is represented. Girls have less well developed number skills, while some boys are less well developed socially and emotionally. Children make good progress in the Reception class, particularly in linking sounds and letters, so that by the end of the year, many children are exceeding some of the goals expected of them. Induction arrangements are good and ensure that children settle quickly and easily through close and productive liaison with the on-site Nursery and effective communication with parents. Those children with specific difficulties are identified very early and well planned systems are put in place to help them, including the support of outside agencies where relevant. Children's welfare is a high priority and its promotion is outstanding. The planning of the school day is extremely well organised and teaching is carefully focused on pupils' needs. Staff work as a team and use a good range of methods and activities, so children are happy and interested in their work.

There is a good mix of child-initiated and teacher-led activities, so pupils learn through work and play. Provision in the Reception class is good and improving, and only a lack of opportunities to become more independent is holding children back from exceptionally high levels of progress. The leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding because of high standards of welfare and the strong and successful focus on improving provision, the full effects of which have not yet been seen on rising standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching by making sure all lessons include interesting and engaging activities.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing by including more opportunities to write for a range of purposes within topics that interest pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 are above average, reflecting an improvement on recent years and good progress given the starting points for these pupils. The results in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 have improved over the last few years and standards are now above average. Although the results in 2008 were lower, the pupils in this year group still made good progress from lower starting points. The improvement in both Years 2 and 6 is the result of the school's strong focus on raising standards.

Pupils in the older years are now progressing more rapidly because they are benefitting from better teaching. There are still some slight inconsistencies in pupils' achievement in the middle of the school, which are steadily being eliminated. Pupils achieve better standards in mathematics because lessons are often more interesting than English. They make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils clearly enjoy school and are proud of the changes that have happened in recent years. Children in the Reception class are learning to understand their feelings well. Older pupils are confident, readily expressing their opinions and listening carefully to others. Most of the time their behaviour is exemplary, although there are a small minority of pupils who do not do as they are told. Pupils' moral and social development is good and not surprisingly, pupils are very caring and work well together. Bullying is rare. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe and healthy, demonstrated in the healthy lunchtime choices and their enthusiastic participation in physical education and after-school sports clubs. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. For example, they eagerly raise funds for charities, such as Genes for Jeans. Pupils' good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT and their ability to work together in teams mean that preparation for their future lives is good. Despite pupils' willingness to undertake responsibilities, in some lessons they are not involved well enough in taking responsibility for their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers manage their pupils well most of the time and relationships are good. They usually plan interesting and stimulating lessons, in which pupils participate keenly. Teaching assistants are used well and they help pupils concentrate and understand new ideas through good questioning and explanation. Teachers make good links with other subjects and they use interactive whiteboards to help illustrate ideas and make lessons more interesting. Teachers of Year 1 pupils make sure that the level and type of work help pupils easily make the transition from the Reception class.

Generally, teachers make good use of their assessments to plan activities that are suitably challenging for their pupils' differing abilities. Occasionally, teaching is less effective, especially in the middle of the school, because some lessons are less interesting and activities are more tedious, so pupils are less motivated to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Children in the EYFS learn the full range of areas for learning, both in the classroom and outside. Teachers plan different topics to make sure they match pupils' particular needs and interests through discussion with pupils. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of visitors and trips. Good use is made of the local environment (for example the visit to Lewes Castle) and other local schools. Pupils with learning difficulties, especially those who are dyslexic, and potentially disaffected pupils are fully included and remain motivated to learn. The programme of personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. The strong thematic approach is well established, but occasionally teachers do not make full use of the opportunities to develop pupils' writing. ICT is developing well, but is not yet fully used to support pupils' learning in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care and support for pupils are outstanding. Pupils know they are valued and feel safe at school. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety are robust and checks are regular. Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries and are confident to do so. The support for vulnerable pupils is excellent. Their particular needs are identified and met exceptionally well. Children are helped to settle into the Reception class extremely well and the very close links with the local secondary school mean pupils transfer very smoothly. Academic guidance for pupils has developed well since the last inspection, but although there are regular assessments, in some classes pupils are not sure what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides very clear direction and a strong focus on raising standards. The highly effective senior team has a developing range of expertise, so together with the

headteacher, they have improved standards and achievement significantly, improved pupils' behaviour well and successfully enabled Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers to work together effectively. Leaders at all levels have effectively ensured that teachers mostly take responsibility for their pupils' progress using assessments to plan work that is usually challenging and interesting. The school has set itself highly aspirational targets, demonstrating significant and ongoing improvement. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion through assemblies, good relationships and opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities. Links with the community are positive and there are close partnerships with parents, most of whom are very supportive of the school. Governors make a strong contribution to the direction of the school through high levels of support and challenging expectations for continually rising standards.

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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
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Children

Inspection of Ringmer Primary School, Lewes, BN8 5LL

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We enjoyed talking with you and were impressed by how friendly, polite and confident you are. Your school is giving you a good education. These are some of the good things we found out.

- You make good progress, although your writing is sometimes not as good as your work in other subjects.
- You enjoy school and care for each other well.
- Most of you behave well, and you work and play together well.
- You know how to keep healthy and safe.
- You are mostly taught well, although some lessons in the middle of the school are not quite as interesting as lessons in other years.
- Your work is planned in an interesting way and so topics are relevant and fascinating.
- Adults take very good care of you so that you feel safe at school.
- Staff and governors are really good at knowing what needs to be done and making sure that it happens, so your school has improved and continues to do so.

To help your school get better, we have asked the adults to:

- make sure all your work in lessons is interesting and helps you to learn more
- help you do better in writing by choosing interesting opportunities for you to write in lots of different subjects.

You can help by making sure you all behave well all of the time.

Yours sincerely

Sue Orpin

Lead inspector