

Wivelsfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114424
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311596
Inspection dates	6–7 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Juliet Ward HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marian Whear
Headteacher	Rita Tipple
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	South Rd. Wivelsfield Green RH17 7QN
Telephone number	01444 471393
Fax number	01444 471393

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Wivelsfield is a small community primary school. A small proportion of pupils have free school meals. Very few pupils have heritages other than white British and only one pupil has English as an additional language. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award. It has recently moved into a new building and some areas of work remain unfinished.

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 in which pupils achieve well. All the staff and pupils work well together, successfully creating a purposeful, happy and caring community. One parent said, 'I am delighted with the school's attitude, ethos and results. My child is thriving in this supportive and successful school community.' Another said, 'We couldn't be happier with the school. All the teachers are very approachable and have an excellent rapport with the children.'

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has established good teamwork, which is a strength of the school. Teachers, assistants and non-teaching staff share the aim of improving pupils' achievements and well-being. Effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning, behaviour and achievement have successfully contributed to improvements in each. Self-evaluation is accurate and has led to improvements in, for example, pupils' attainment in mathematics. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear plan for future development. They have already identified that all teachers need to set work which closely matches the needs of all pupils, with particular focus on ensuring that the higher-attaining pupils are always fully challenged.

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Owing to good teaching and an interesting and relevant curriculum, the children achieve well and leave the Foundation Stage with standards broadly in line with those expected for this age. The school is monitoring the progress all pupils make carefully and generally uses this information well, especially in mathematics, to provide additional support where necessary. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2007 were above the national average. Pupils are well behaved, polite and considerate, and they enjoy school. They all try hard and make good progress, although, occasionally, teachers set work that is too easy for some of them. The quality of care given to pupils is a significant strength of the school, but pupils are not sufficiently guided and supported in assessing how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's broad and effective curriculum and resources include a range of people and cultures. Pupils are well prepared for later life and learning. Well-planned assemblies add to social cohesion and community spirit. Pupils contribute well through helping with tasks and through the school council. They know how important exercise and a healthy diet are for health. Attendance is satisfactory rather than good because a small minority of parents take their annual leave in term time.

The school has continued to improve since its last inspection. Given its effective leadership, committed and hard-working staff and clear vision for the future, its capacity for further improvement is also good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Leadership and management, provision and teaching in the Foundation Stage are good. Children start with a range of knowledge, skills and abilities that are generally similar to the national profile. The present group have good mathematical skills. Social skills are given a high priority and many of the children are given help learning to share and work together. Because of good teaching and support, together with a broad, interesting curriculum, all the children make good progress in their learning and personal development. At the end of the year, standards are broadly in line with or above those expected for this age. Whilst children with additional needs

make good progress, some are still at low levels by the end of the year. Plans to rearrange and develop the outdoor space in this very new school building are due to be implemented shortly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that activities are suitable for all pupils, especially challenging those who find learning easy.
- Ensure that guidance for pupils and the targets for their future development consistently show pupils the next steps for learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Thorough and frequent assessments of pupils' work show that most are achieving well. Pupils with additional needs benefit from experienced and well-focused support. The staff are committed to ensuring that the pupils, including those who find learning difficult, achieve well. However, those pupils who learn quickly or easily are not always doing as well as they could. Standards vary between different year groups because of the wide range of attainment on entry from year to year and the additional needs of some. Standards, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1, have been consistently above average for the past two years. Standards in Year 6 were above average in 2007 and they are currently broadly average. Standards in writing have risen since the last inspection. Assessments of pupils in other years show that standards in all subjects are likely to continue to rise.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and are proud of it. Pupils and parents describe it as having 'a family feel'. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. The very good care and support that staff show towards the pupils are echoed in the way in which the pupils treat each other. For example, older pupils support the younger children by playing with them on the playground, reading with them and helping them during lunchtimes. The school has recently achieved the Healthy School Award. Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep healthy. They eat healthy lunches and fresh fruit at snack times. Many pupils walk or cycle to school and know why this contributes to keeping healthy. The school has all procedures in place to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils feel safe in the school and say that incidents of rough or inappropriate behaviour are very rare and, if they do occur, are dealt with firmly by teachers. Parents support this view. The school council takes responsibility for a good range of charity fund raising and is rightly proud that pupils show concern for people less well off than themselves. Pupils are developing good workplace skills, in particular, personal responsibility.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff are keen for all their pupils to achieve well. They are encouraging and supportive and, as several pupils said, 'kind'. They plan and prepare lessons well. In the best lessons, teachers use a wide and exciting range of approaches to engage and enthuse the pupils. For example, they encourage working in pairs and groups, and making individual presentations. Although staff

support all pupils effectively, work is not always sufficiently well matched to individual needs. Occasionally it lacks sufficient challenge for some, particularly those who find learning easy. The school has identified this as an area for further training. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' requests, enabling them to use time well for learning. The oldest pupils are able to explain which areas they are working at in their 'targets for improvement.' There is room to develop target setting further in other year groups. The teaching assistants are experienced and skilful. They make a significant contribution to lessons and to pupils' learning. Visits, visitors and special days contribute well to pupils' enjoyment and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of outside visits which help to make learning exciting. For example, the Year 5 residential visit allows pupils to develop their self-confidence away from home as well as to take part in adventure activities such as rock climbing. On the day of the inspection, the youngest children went on an Autumn nature walk, which they discussed excitedly on their return to school. The physical education and games curriculum has been developed through links with other schools and many children attend after-school sports clubs. The choir and whole-school drama productions also contribute well to pupils' personal development. As part of saying goodbye to the school's old Victorian site, pupils took part in a successful production of *Oliver*. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community. For example, they raise money for the local hospice, sing in the village carol service and visit the local club for senior citizens.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The very good quality of care given to pupils is a significant strength of the school and one which many parents commented on. One parent wrote, 'I have three children at Wivelsfield School and feel very happy that they are safe and well cared for in every way.' Staff are committed to ensuring pupils are well cared for at school. There are effective procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring health and safety requirements are met so that pupils feel safe in school. The school works well with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable children and those with additional learning needs make good progress. The school has good systems for monitoring how well pupils are doing but these are not yet shared with pupils so that they know what they need to do in order to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is caring, committed and able. One parent echoed the opinion of many: 'The headteacher is given great respect by the children and parents because she shows them respect.' She has successfully established a team of staff who work well together with a shared understanding of pupils' achievement, personal development and well-being. Good teamwork is a significant strength of the school. Every member of this team is important and all are contributing their strengths and supporting those areas that need developing. The way teachers, assistants and non-teaching staff welcome pupils and families into school is an example of this unity, cohesion and effective team spirit. Thorough monitoring and evaluation have contributed to improvements in teaching and standards. However, the school's targets to raise standards

for the more able pupils need to be higher. Governors are supportive and challenge leadership where necessary. The school is highly inclusive and successfully ensures equal opportunities for the pupils. Leaders manage finances wisely, successfully ensuring that expenditure contributes to the good achievement and personal development of all.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 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?	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.

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

7 November 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Wivelsfield Primary School, East Sussex RH17 7RD

Thank you for making Mrs Toulson and me so welcome when we visited your school. We think Wivelsfield is a good school and that you work and play well together. Your teachers all try very hard to make sure school is a happy, safe place to come to, and that you all learn lots of interesting things. We really enjoyed talking to some of you about your favourite pieces of work. Your parents are pleased with how your teachers care for you and many of them wrote to us to tell us about the good things you do at school. The work and photographs you collected about the old school building were very interesting. We know that some of you were sad to leave it but lots of you told us how great it is to have a brand new school with corridors to walk along rather than getting wet going from building to building!

I have asked staff to do two things to make your school even better. The first is to make sure that activities and tasks in lessons are harder for those of you who sometimes find learning easy. The second is to make sure that, when they write in your books, they make sure they tell you how you can improve your work.

Perhaps you could help by telling your teachers about activities that particularly help your learning and about marking or targets or 'ways forward' that are really useful.

With best wishes for the future,

Juliet Ward Her Majesty's Inspector