

## Rodmell Church of England Primary School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114561
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311646
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gavin Jones

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	62
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Geoff Daw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Claxton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Rodmell Lewes BN7 3HF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 473916
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 473916

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Rodmell CE Primary School is situated in a small rural community. It is very small compared to other primary schools nationally. All pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high, but varies from year to year. Because of its Church of England status, it takes pupils from a wide area, many of whom travel some distance to attend.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Rodmell provides a good education for its pupils. It is an effective school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding, including the personal development of all pupils and aspects of leadership and management. Parents have an overwhelmingly positive view of the school. They especially appreciate that their children are very well cared for. One comment, that the school has 'a real family feel', is typical of many made by parents. Another wrote, 'My child is always excited going to school.' Although the school has a slightly over positive view of its effectiveness in some aspects, school leaders nonetheless have a good picture of its strengths and areas for development. They have improved the outside provision for the youngest pupils, the playground area and the process of setting targets for pupils.

The school maintains a very good balance between promoting pupils' academic progress and their personal development. Parents recognise this: one commented, 'My child flourishes both academically and personally' and this was echoed by a number of others. Through effective teaching, pupils make good progress across the school. As their skills and abilities vary when they join the school, so do their standards as they leave. The very small number leaving last year achieved broadly average standards while the current Year 6 are likely to reach above average standards, based on the school's own checks. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Much of this good progress is linked to the typically good teaching found through the school. Teachers plan their lessons well and show good questioning skills. They make good use of resources, but on occasions they do not plan activities for the most able that are challenging enough. Pupils mentioned this in discussion with the inspectors. Due to the very high levels of personal development, pupils are polite, behave impeccably and thoroughly enjoy attending school. They contribute well to the school, the church and the village and have strong links with other countries. Although the school keeps good checks on pupils' progress generally, in the Early Years Foundation Stage initial assessments on children are not completed quickly enough to give the school an early detailed analysis of children's academic needs. Some tracking of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 does not always show the standards expected of pupils by the time they leave, making it harder to judge their rates of progress.

Pupils' good achievement is well supported by an effectively planned curriculum which has some outstanding features. Several specialist teachers support areas such as dance, music and science, whilst information and communication technology (ICT) is used well across the curriculum. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well in many areas of the curriculum, often by teaching assistants, so that these pupils also make good progress.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's very clear direction and drive are well supported by all staff, although the monitoring of teaching is not focused clearly enough on what could be done to improve pupils' learning still further. The governors give good support to the school and are knowledgeable about its strengths and weaknesses. It has a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children arrive with a range of abilities and skills, often below the levels typical for their age. Language and communication, social and emotional development are often the least well

developed of their abilities. The excellent care provided by the staff makes sure that children feel happy and secure and get off to a good start. Good quality teaching enables children to make good progress. By the time they reach Year 1, standards are broadly as expected. The curriculum is stimulating and well planned so that despite the three age groups in the class, children make good progress. Skilled teaching, in teaching letter sounds for example, ensures that pupils of all abilities make progress. However, in some instances there is not enough adult intervention to ensure lower attaining children make sufficient progress, for example in structured play. Overall, the balance between activities chosen by children and those directed by adults is good. Children greatly enjoy such topics as 'Lively things', which provide a trigger for much exciting learning. They sharpen their observation skills when looking carefully at mini-beasts in the 'Pet Hotel'. Their creative development is looked after well, as they are allowed to explore media and learn new skills.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that assessment procedures are used more effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 to gauge pupils' progress more accurately.
- Improve the monitoring of teaching so that it focuses more closely on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

As the number of pupils in each year group is so small, it is difficult to make comparisons with national averages. Although the picture last year showed that standards were average, pupils in Year 6 are currently on track to reach standards that are above average in all three core subjects. The large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the uncertainties caused by the high mobility of pupils are not having a detrimental effect on the school reaching its targets. Good teaching and support for these pupils ensure they keep up with classmates. Pupils' skills in ICT are also good and they are used well to support their learning across a range of subjects.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils greatly enjoy school and participate in lessons enthusiastically. Their behaviour is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral and social development is excellent and their cultural development good. This ensures that relationships within the school are excellent and all pupils show great respect for one another. There are many opportunities for older pupils to take on responsibilities, such as the school council, where pupils successfully campaigned for better playground equipment. They act as buddies for younger children at playtimes, providing them with excellent role models. Not surprisingly they enjoy attending. Pupils have a very good understanding of healthy living and enjoy participating in sporting events. Pupils contribute extremely well to their school, church and local community and have good links with a school in Germany and further afield. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know there is always someone they can go to for help. They are safety conscious and the oldest pupils have had first aid training. They are gradually developing enterprise skills and an awareness of the world of work, preparing them well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Typically, pupils enjoy their lessons as teachers try to make them fun, for example in a literacy lesson about 'Superheroes' in the Years 5/6 class. There is a strong emphasis on teaching basic skills, through interesting topics. Teaching assistants generally work effectively to support small groups of pupils. Teachers assess gains in knowledge and understanding through skilful questioning and their relationships with pupils are very good. Outstanding behaviour allows work to be carried out effectively in groups doing different activities. Occasionally the activities for some groups are not as challenging as they might be, particularly for the most able pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and is adapted well over time to cope with the mixed age classes. The school has, over the years, gained a number of curriculum awards, for example in ICT. It makes use of a number of specialist teachers in order to provide non-contact time for teachers and to provide high quality activities in a range of subjects including dance, drama, music and science. Time spent on literacy is high and whilst it helps raise standards, it does mean that pupils are often working at aspects of English for at least two hours a day. In discussion with pupils, mention was made of this in relation to some lack of enjoyment in this aspect of their work. Information and communication technology is used well to support topic work in classes. The school enriches the curriculum exceptionally well through visits, visitors, residential visits and a range of after school club activities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

There is high quality pastoral support in a family atmosphere. 'There is a real caring family feel about the school' noted one parent. The school provides an attractive environment for pupils to work in and an excellent level of care and safety for all. All policies and systems are in place to secure the health and safeguarding of pupils. Any vulnerable pupils are very well supported and there are excellent links to outside agencies. Home and pre-school visits ensure a smooth transition to the school, which several parents commented upon favourably. Because of this, children settle in quickly to school routines. Systems for keeping a check on pupils' progress are regular, but some are not used or recorded in a way that helps senior managers gauge the progress pupils make in Years 3 to 6. There are some good examples of target setting and careful marking helping pupils take the next steps in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good overall leadership, prompted by the vision and determination of the excellent headteacher, has ensured that over time standards and achievement have remained constant and improved in some subjects. She is ably supported by other staff, particularly the deputy headteacher. They both have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and

the vision for the school is well articulated to all stakeholders. The staff work very well as a team, enabling the school to have a precise improvement plan in which the roles of all are recognised. The school's caring and supportive ethos promotes equal opportunities well and by the end of Year 6, all pupils achieve well, regardless of gender or learning difficulties. The school's contribution to promoting community cohesion is good, with an effective strategy to develop pupils' knowledge at local and global levels. However it is not yet developing pupils' knowledge of the United Kingdom's range of cultural and ethnic diversity to the same level. Governors give good support and monitor current developments in school well. They take part in regular school development days and contribute to the priorities in the school improvement plan which they monitor regularly.





## 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	2

### 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?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rodmell C of E Primary School, Lewes, BN7 3HF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to your school. You are proud of your school and it is providing you with a good education, enabling you to reach good standards by the end of Year 6. There are several features of the school that are excellent.

Rodmell is very well run by your headteacher and the deputy head. Teachers are good at their jobs and help you to achieve well. They question you well and often make lessons interesting and fun. Their marking helps you to make even more progress. We are pleased to see that your behaviour is excellent and that you thoroughly enjoy being in school. This is partly because the school takes very good care of you right from the Reception class. You understand about healthy living and attend well. You make a very positive contribution to the school and the local community, including the church. There are also good links established with other schools and people abroad. However, regular links with schools in very different parts of this country are less well established.

We have asked the school to check your learning in lessons to make sure that teachers can improve upon their already good teaching. At the same time we have asked the school to make sure it checks the abilities and skills of children as they enter school, so that teachers can get to work more quickly at teaching them at the right levels.

Staff take very good care of you and you respond by behaving exceptionally well. This really helps you make progress in class. Keep this up and try to attend school as regularly as you can.

Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Gavin Jones

Lead inspector