

Shoreham Beach Community First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125885
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315342
Inspection date	24 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacque Buttriss

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Snow
Headteacher	Sarah Searle-Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Shingle Road Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5RH
Telephone number	01273 462688
Fax number	01273 440258

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

The progress of children in the Reception year

Whether there is any underachievement in the development of writing skills

The consistency of challenge for more able learners. The inspector gathered evidence from discussions with staff and pupils, lesson observations, analysis of learners' written work, parents' questionnaires and study of school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest 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 smaller than average first school situated in a seaside town near Brighton. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The school is currently undergoing extensive building works and curriculum development in preparation for its reorganisation to become a primary school from September 2008.

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 an outstanding school that gives pupils an excellent start to their education. The whole school is alive with the purposeful buzz of learning. As one parent put it, 'A wonderful school, amazing teachers and a good blend of fun and learning.' Children come into the Reception classes with standards in line with national expectations. They make excellent progress through the school so that, by the time they leave at the end of Year 3, pupils attain standards that are much higher than those seen nationally. This represents outstanding achievement. Standards in writing in the younger classes are lower than in reading and mathematics. However, the school is working hard and is successfully closing this gap. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers. Those with high ability are fully challenged and demonstrate outstanding achievement. Many parents agreed that they were very happy with their children's progress. The excellent personal development and well-being of all pupils is demonstrated in their evident enjoyment and their very positive attitudes to learning. As one parent put it, 'My child loves school and is thriving there.' Behaviour is generally excellent and pupils say 'there is hardly any bullying'. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of how to be healthy and stay safe. As one said, 'I like our school because it's healthy and we do Early Birds gym in the morning' and another added 'I like our lunchtime fitness activities.' School and class councils enable pupils to take an active part in school improvement, as a parent says, 'The class council gives the children amazing self-confidence and a sense of participation in the decision making process.' Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility, for example, by being 'playground helpers' for younger ones. The school is, as one parent put it, 'an integral part of our community where pupils play a very active role by participating in a variety of local events.' Learners' acquisition of excellent basic skills prepares them very well for their future lives. Outstanding teaching throughout the school ensures that pupils are, as one parent said, 'excited by learning' and inspired to do their best. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and lessons are typically well paced, highly motivating and fun. The classrooms and outdoor areas provide stimulating learning environments which engage learners of all ages. One Year 3 boy earnestly explained that 'When we learn, we can do really well because we have good teachers in this school.' Many parents praise the 'strong staff team'. The excellent curriculum provides an exciting array of creative learning experiences, whilst ensuring outstanding attention to the basic skills. The curriculum is highly enriched by an impressive variety of additional activities, such as early morning 'Early Bird' sessions, well-attended after-school clubs, visits and visitors. Excellent pastoral care and support is a distinctive strength of this school. Parents are impressed by how well 'individual needs are met in a very positive way'. The school has very good links with outside organisations to ensure strong support for all pupils and their families. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported to achieve in line with their classmates. However, academic guidance for the majority of pupils is less strong. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in that it often does not provide suggestions for improvement. Although some pupils know they have learning targets, very few can explain what they are, with the result that an opportunity is missed to help them raise their own performance. Teachers undertake diligent assessment, but outcomes are not communicated to learners so that most pupils do not know how well they are doing in their work. The school recognises that this is an area for improvement. Outstanding leadership and management is characterised by a very clear shared vision and strong direction for improvement. Governors provide excellent support and challenge to the school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and enthusiastic senior management, together with a very strong and supportive staff team, is helping to drive the

school forward as it completes its preparations to reorganise into a primary school from September. Parents are full of praise for the way that leaders have managed the extensive building works throughout the year, resulting in the least possible disruption for pupils. Alongside this, the leadership team has continued to work hard at a range of school improvement issues, identified by thorough self-evaluation processes. As a result, leaders have successfully raised attendance rates to above the national average, improved girls' attainment in mathematics to close the gender gap and raised standards in writing throughout the school. These successes demonstrate the school's excellent capacity to make further improvements. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and many echo the comment of one parent who said, 'I have nothing but the highest praise for the school ... my children have had the best start possible.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Excellent teaching and support ensures children make rapid progress through their Reception Year so that on entry to Year 1, standards are above average. All pupils' individual needs are quickly identified and very well met in a stimulating and vibrant learning environment that nurtures them outstandingly well and inspires an active love of learning. As one parent comments, 'There are some very bright children in the Reception class and I feel they are being challenged.' As they extend their skills, children of all abilities are happy and secure, so that they develop increasing confidence and self-esteem. The Reception curriculum is exciting and motivating. Many parents of Reception children echo the comment that 'I am amazed at the progress my son has made – he thoroughly enjoys his time there.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve their work by ensuring greater consistency in the marking of pupils' work and the use of individual learning targets.

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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	1
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	2
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?	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?	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

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

- 25 June 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of Shoreham Beach Community First School, Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5RH Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when I came to inspect your school. You made me feel very welcome indeed. I enjoyed talking with you. Yours is an outstanding school. It helps you to do excellent work and cares for you extremely well. These are the things I especially like about your school:
 - You all make excellent progress and achieve very high standards in your work. Well done!
 - You have great respect for one another and your behaviour is excellent.
 - You have excellent relationships with each other and you work and play very well together.
 - You have outstanding teachers who work very hard to make your lessons exciting and fun for you all.
 - All of you are given work which you find interesting and enjoyable.
 - All the adults in your school take very great care of you all.
 - You enjoy school very much and are keen to do your best. Keep it up!
 - Your headteacher, teachers and governors are leading the school outstandingly well and are working hard to make it even better.
 - Your parents and carers are very keen to help you with your learning and are delighted that you come to this school. This is what I think your school could do even better:
 - The teachers could help you to know how well you are doing and how to improve your work by making sure they all mark your work with suggestions for improvement and help you to use learning targets. You could help by continuing to work hard and enjoy your lessons so that you keep up your excellent achievement. I would like to wish you lots of success in your future learning. Keep up the great work! Jacquie Buttriss Lead Inspector

25 June 2008

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- The teachers could help you to know how well you are doing and how to improve your work by making sure they all mark your work with suggestions for improvement and help you to use learning targets.

You could help by continuing to work hard and enjoy your lessons so that you keep up your excellent achievement. I would like to wish you lots of success in your future learning. Keep up the great work!

Jacquie Buttriss
Lead Inspector