

Three Bridges Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125901
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315347
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	227
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Cockerton
Headteacher	Matthew Westgarth
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gales Place Three Bridges Crawley RH10 1QG
Telephone number	01293 524076
Fax number	01293 538079

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school with an above average number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom speak English as an additional language. The school has a nursery within its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The high number of pupils who have statements for their learning difficulties and/or disabilities is largely accounted for by pupils in the Special Support Centre (SSC) in which around 12 pupils with speech and language difficulties are taught separately for much of the week. The school has several awards for arts, dance, physical education and provision for basic skills. The school is currently being managed on a day to day basis by the assistant headteachers as the headteacher is currently on secondment to another local school. He was present at the inspection

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 an effective school. The good leadership and management of the headteacher and his leadership team have been vital in the school's recent development. 'The school offers everything my child needs,' said one parent. The school takes a great deal of trouble to ensure that pupils from its SSC are supported well and integrated into mainstream classes at the earliest opportunity. Almost all pupils make the progress that is expected of them, with the vast majority reaching average standards by the end of Year 2. Their achievement is generally good, although boys in general do less well than girls, in spite of topics such as 'Wild and wonderful' designed to fire their imaginations. Equally, some of the most able pupils do not always reach the highest standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are not in the SSC make the same good progress as their classmates.

The school provides exceptional care and support for its pupils, not just in supporting their academic progress but also in encouraging their personal development. As a result, all pupils behave exceptionally well, show very good attitudes to their work and thoroughly enjoy school. This has a very positive effect on the pace of work in classes, supporting very good relationships, confidence and self-esteem. Pupils from a variety of minority ethnic groups make good progress as a result of the very good care and support they receive. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, eating sensibly at lunchtime and taking part regularly in sporting activities both in and out of school.

Good teaching is seen in every part of the school; however, the monitoring of teaching is not regular enough to provide each teacher with the advice necessary which might make teaching outstanding. This is especially the case in aspects of their marking and in providing extra support for the most able pupils. The good curriculum and excellent enrichment keep pupils engrossed in their work and happy at school.

Through its good self-evaluation, the school has been able to improve the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) and in the results pupils achieve. The school's development plan is well constructed and has the support of a governing body that knows the school well, gathers its own information on the school's progress and is increasingly more rigorous in its role. The school's capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness and provision in EYFS is good. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere in the attractive shared learning area. Children enjoy being in school and are well motivated to learn. They show good levels of confidence in their relationships with adults. Children are very involved in their learning and are encouraged to extend their speaking and listening skills at every opportunity. The activities, both inside and outdoors, are stimulating and work on display enhances learning, often linked to literacy and number activities. When starting the Nursery, many children show levels of development that are below those expected for their age, with a significant minority well below those levels. However, they make up ground quickly as a result of good teaching. When they start in Year 1, many children are now close to the standards expected of them due to the good progress they have made. The balance between adult-directed work and work chosen by children is good, although from time to time, due to the large number of adult helpers, support is too readily available and children lose some of their independence.

Good assessment procedures are in place to provide for individual learning needs; this is also the case for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Leadership and management of EYFS is good, ensuring adults are well trained and that the whole unit provides excellent quality care and support for children. Induction procedures are good and parents speak highly of the level of communication with the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure, through more regular and sharper monitoring of teaching, that all teaching reaches the highest standard, especially in providing challenge for the most able and in better marking to aid improvement.
- Ensure that boys reach higher standards, especially in the quality of their writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The majority of children enter school with abilities and skills below or well below those expected for their age. By the time they reach the end of Reception, although few reach average levels, good progress is being made. They make less progress in their readiness to write, but their physical and personal development is good. Pupils continue making good progress so that by the time they leave the school, they reach broadly average standards and achieve well, given their entry points. Most recent national results confirm this. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress. Pupils in the SSC are almost all boys, and as their attainment is included with that of the main school, this makes the school's overall results lower. However, the standards reached by boys, especially in writing, are still too low. Standards in ICT are well above average with pupils at ease using presentation software in Year 2, adding images and sound to their slide shows and being able to explain how they achieved it. Other work seen of pupils in Year 2 suggests outstanding progress in ICT since the last inspection, when it was a key issue for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Although pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall, there are some excellent elements. Pupils show great enjoyment at being in school and are very enthusiastic about lessons. As a result, behaviour in classes and around the school is outstanding. Children work collaboratively and share their resources. Pupils say they feel safe and know that they can approach a wide range of support staff if they need help. Relationships are very good between pupils and between adults and pupils. There have been no reported incidents of bullying or racism, with pupils from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds working well together. Children have a good understanding of both social and moral issues, developing clear views of what is right and wrong. Pupils who are 'Mini governors' represent the views of the pupils and parents appreciate that the pupils 'had a hand in deciding on playground equipment'. They understand about healthy lifestyles and take part in many sporting activities in and out of school. Good progress is made in literacy and numeracy skills, while progress in ICT skills is excellent, preparing children well for their future. Attendance is average, and despite the school working hard to improve attendance, many parents still take holidays in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils make generally good progress. There are elements of teaching showing outstanding qualities. Learning aims are made clear for pupils so that they know what they will learn. Pupils are active participants in their learning and good emphasis is placed on them learning new vocabulary in a range of subjects. Teachers' marking, while regular, does not always pinpoint where pupils need to raise their game to improve their progress. Lessons are very well managed and relationships are good. As a result, pupils respond well to questioning, behave brilliantly well and sensibly check their own work and occasionally that of their classmates. 'Teachers are brilliant' is a phrase used by pupils and parents alike. Sometimes, the high levels of very good support result in some pupils not truly working independently, which hinders their personal development. Resources such as the interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to motivate and interest pupils. The specialist teacher for ICT has been instrumental in raising standards in the subject.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and well planned to meet the needs of the pupils. It is imaginative, exciting and relevant. The school has tried to make it more accessible to boys. Planning shows that the curriculum is being adapted for less able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is especially so for pupils in the SSC, whose curriculum is adapted to secure a very personalised programme of learning. For all pupils, a wide variety of themes is explored through 'learning journeys'. This supports good links between subjects, although the skills that pupils acquire during their topics are not noted in order to gauge their progress. The provision for ICT, a weakness at the last inspection, is now very good. A high number of visits and visitors and an excellent range of club activities help broaden pupils' experience and help pupils to be very active.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Children are exceptionally well cared for. 'My child is sad when the holidays come along!' says one parent. Staff show excellent commitment to the pupils through the activities planned and enrichment activities provided. Several support adults have received training to become higher level teaching assistants. As a result, children thrive and they make very good progress in their personal development. Pupils from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds receive the same good support and make the same good progress. Robust procedures are in place for health, safety and safeguarding; therefore, pupils have a great deal of confidence that they will be looked after and cared for by the school. There are very good links with outside agencies, supporting the high level of care for vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is exemplified by the excellent care shown to children in the SSC. In classes, targets are set for groups to achieve in relation to their learning journeys. The tracking of pupils' progress enables teachers to see how well pupils are performing and quickly identify anyone who may be falling behind.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher shows excellent vision, leadership and management skills in understanding the way forward for the school. His vision is put into practice by a very effective leadership team who manage confidently in his absence. There is a strong sense of purpose and high morale in the school. This is exemplified by the many positive comments made by parents. Self-evaluation is good. The school gathers a great deal of evidence, analyses it well and uses it to set its programme for development. This has worked well for the development of the curriculum, assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. The inclusion of all learners is central to its vision. This is seen in the way pupils from the well managed SSC are integrated into mainstream lessons. The school engages well with the local community and pupils mix well with others from different religions, cultures and social backgrounds, both locally and further away, to support its drive for good community cohesion. The school fundraises for a number of international charities. Governors are very actively involved in the life of the school and find out information through a range of visits and reports from the school. They have a clear picture of their school and are already able to hold it to account for its actions.

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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	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?	1
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 ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1

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	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**

6 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Three Bridges Infant School, Crawley RH10 1QG

Thank you all very much for helping us when we visited your school. You were very helpful showing us around and talking to us. You even helped us when we got lost! We found that all your teachers and their helpers work very hard to help you become successful in your work and help you make good progress. They look after you extremely well and your parents are very happy sending you to this school. Teachers also help you to understand how to be healthy and safe and to know about things that are good to eat.

We know you thoroughly enjoy being at school, work very hard in your lessons and behave extremely well. This is part of the reason you make good progress. You understand that there are other people in the world less fortunate than yourselves and you are happy to raise money to help them.

Your teachers prepare lessons that interest you and help you learn. Their helpers work hard, too, and provide good support for all of you, including those who find learning difficult and those in the SSC. Your headteacher leads the school very well and keeps everyone focused on helping you to learn.

We have asked him if he will help makes things even better by looking very closely at your teachers when they teach, just in case there are little improvements they could make, for example in marking or setting work for the most able children. We have also asked if teachers could try even harder to get boys to improve their writing, as girls are much better than they are at present.

You, too, can help. You can continue to work as hard as you can. You could ask your parents to try not to take you on holiday in term time as it interrupts your learning sometimes, making it difficult for you to catch up.

Yours faithfully

Gavin Jones

Lead Inspector