

Shoreham First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125914
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315353
Inspection dates	12–13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Jackie Rawlings
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Swiss Gardens Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5WH
Telephone number	01273 453176
Fax number	01273 440265

Age group	4-8
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Shoreham First is about the same size as an average primary school. Children start school with capabilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their ages. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is average. As a result of an impending local reorganisation, from September 2008 the school will be expanding so that pupils remain until the end of Year 6.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Shoreham First provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, with some good features. Children settle well when they start school in Reception and their social and personal development is good. This reflects the school's aims, summed up in their motto that 'everyone in our school has a smile'. Smiling faces indeed abound at Shoreham, where behaviour is excellent and pupils are very happy and enjoy their lessons. But the word 'smile' is also used by school leaders as an acronym for 'self-esteem, motivation, inspiration, lifelong learning and equality'. These have become important characteristics of the school.

Parents particularly appreciate the way their children's 'confidence is nurtured' so that they grow in self-esteem. This is because the pupils are well cared for and helped to feel safe and secure. They enjoy taking responsibilities, for example as councillors, although some parents, looking to the future, are keen to see their children afforded more opportunities to develop greater independence and responsibility as they stay on at Shoreham into Years 4 to 6.

The broadly average standards represent pupils' satisfactory progress. School leaders have identified that boys have generally done much less well than girls, especially in writing. Curriculum changes have been introduced this year to provide more stimulating opportunities for boys to improve their motivation. For example, in a school that is rife with teddy bears, Year 2 have undertaken research and writing projects on different species of real-life bears. Boys and girls alike are enthusiastic about this topic but the substitution of grizzly for cuddly bears, and similar initiatives, are too recent to have shown through in measurably better standards in boys' writing. The academic guidance given to pupils is much weaker than the welfare support provided for them. Even when well motivated, pupils are not helped enough to capitalise on their enthusiasm because not all know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

School leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and has led to improvements. Relationships are very good and questioning is used well to involve pupils and get them to explain and develop their ideas. Though teaching has many good features, teachers do not always expect enough of their most able pupils. This means that, although the overwhelming majority of Year 3 pupils are targeted to attain the nationally expected level when they take their Year 6 tests, few are targeted to exceed this level. There has been dramatic improvement this year in science. Pupils whose Year 2 assessments in science were lacklustre are now making very good progress in the subject because the teaching in Year 3 is providing the inspiration for them to do well.

The school works hard to involve families in their children's learning. This contributes to the school's aim of turning its pupils into lifelong learners, particularly when they see their parents also come into school to learn. Parents are apprehensive, however, about the impending reorganisation. Many voice concerns that communication about change has not been as clear or as detailed as they would like. Although some of the uncertainties, for example over improving sports facilities, are outside the school's direct control, school leaders accept that more could be done to keep parents fully informed and to assuage their natural anxieties. Improved tracking of pupils' progress means that school leaders have a clear picture of how well each pupil is doing. This enables them to put in place carefully tailored support for pupils who are at risk of falling behind. As a result, equality is a strong feature of this inclusive school. Parents of pupils

with learning difficulties are especially pleased with the good support their children receive which helps them to make at least similar progress to their peers.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in their Reception Year. By the end of the year most are working securely within the early learning goals expected of children this age, though few are stretched to exceed the goals. Children achieve especially well in their social development and language skills. This stands them in good stead when they start in Year 1. Parents are very pleased with the way that their children are helped to quickly settle into school because children 'feel supported and secure'. One, typically, praised 'the range of activities offered to my son and the creativity that goes into teaching'. Parents appreciate that their children's growing confidence is helping them to learn. One described how their 'shy, quiet little girl is blossoming in her new environment'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more thorough guidance to pupils through marking and targets so that all know how well they are doing and what they need to do to do better.
- Ensure that, throughout the school, the most able pupils are consistently set work that challenges and extends them to achieve their very best.
- Involve parents more in the planning for the school's conversion to an all-through primary and make sure they are kept fully informed.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the Year 2 national assessments, standards have been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have been similarly average at the end of Year 3. Boys have done notably less well than girls, especially in writing. The school's assessments show that pupils have not done as well as they should in science, but standards in science have improved and are much better this year.

Pupils with learning difficulties make similar and sometimes even better progress than others because they benefit from good support, both in lessons and in well-targeted support groups. It is more able pupils who do not all do as well as they could. This is because teachers do not all expect enough of them and so do not always set them work that challenges and extends them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are reflected in the very good relationships seen throughout the school. Pupils are mostly attentive in lessons, although sometimes their attention lapses and they begin to fidget when they are expected to sit listening on the carpet for too long. Pupils eagerly talk about how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They explain that they should 'eat loads of fruit and run around a lot'! Pupils show strong awareness

of how to keep safe. They advised inspectors, 'Don't go near the gates at playtime'. Pupils say there is very little bullying and any incidents are quickly dealt with. Even the youngest children know who to go to with any worries they might have. Attendance is good. The school council actively helps to improve the school environment, for example by introducing animal shaped bins to encourage disposal of litter. Pupils take a good part in community activities, such as carol singing and older pupils' recent project on a local shelter for the homeless. Pupils' key literacy and numeracy skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Most teaching is lively and well paced. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. One inspiring literacy lesson on alliteration pressed pupils to pen poetry pleasingly. However, in some lessons, where children are expected to sit too long listening to the teacher, the pace slows and pupils lose concentration, so that they make less progress than they could. Teachers plan interesting tasks but these are not always sufficiently challenging for more able learners. 'I know I could work harder', said a Year 3 boy. In most classes, pupils are encouraged to assess their own work. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties but they are not always used to best effect when the teacher is addressing the whole class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been creatively adapted to give it greater appeal to boys as well as girls. For example, the topic of 'fairy tales' has been replaced by one on 'castles and palaces'. This has successfully increased boys' enthusiasm for learning, whilst continuing to motivate girls well. The curriculum is undergoing further change to cover the whole primary age range from next year. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to use and develop their writing and information and communication technology skills in other subjects. Greater confidence amongst teachers has led to more energetic delivery of the science curriculum and pupils say 'science lessons are really good'. A wide variety of well-attended clubs, visits and visitors enriches the curriculum well and is much enjoyed by pupils. There is good provision for personal, social and health education, but the lack of a field limits opportunities for sports lessons in physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care is a strength of the school, characterised by the commitment of all staff to promoting pupils' well-being and enjoyment. All requirements are met to keep pupils safe. There is good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, academic guidance is less strong. Teachers do not ensure that all pupils know how well they are doing and marking does not give pupils enough guidance on how they can improve their work. Pupils in at least one class have individual targets, which they know well, but most pupils do not have or do not know their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and of those aspects that could be improved. This is based on regular monitoring of lessons which has helped to raise the amount of good teaching in the school. Staff have a shared commitment to the welfare and success of their pupils. Effective leadership has been exemplified in the recent improvements to science, the strategies adopted to improve boys' writing and in the successful realisation of the school motto. However, there have been recent staff changes that have brought both constraints and opportunities. They have resulted in the loss this term of much of the planned support for the headteacher in managing the school's transition to an all-through primary. On the other hand, staff taking on new management roles are enthusiastic and they have contributed to recent improvements, such as the changes to the curriculum to better engage the boys. On balance, the school has a sound capacity for further improvement. Governors provide good support and challenge and are developing their monitoring roles well.

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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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shoreham First School, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 5WH

Thank you for making us so welcome when Mrs Buttriss and I came to visit your school. A particular thank you for taking time from all the busy Christmas preparations, on top of your lessons, to tell us all about your school.

We agree with your headteacher and governors that the school provides you with a satisfactory education, but there are good features too. You are looked after well. We were impressed by how well behaved you all are and how well you get on with each other. Many of you and your parents told us how much you like school and we could see that you enjoy your lessons.

Boys have not always done as well as girls, especially in writing, so the school has been trying to find ways of making activities more interesting for them. Boys have certainly found more of the research and writing exciting this year. We hope you will continue to work hard so that your writing improves.

There is much good teaching in the school, but we think teaching could be even more effective if it made sure that work was always challenging you to do better. We have asked the school to provide harder work for some of you, including those who told us that their work was sometimes too easy. We have also asked the school to make sure that you all have a clearer idea of how well you are doing and what you need to do to do even better. You can help too with this by asking your teachers how you can improve your work.

Mrs Rawlings and the other school leaders have been working hard to prepare the school for the changes next year, for when Year 3 stay on rather than moving elsewhere. A number of your parents told us they had worries about all the changes. Although some of these are outside the school's control, we have asked the school to do more to involve your mums and dads and keep them informed in the weeks and months ahead.

With all the changes it is an exciting time for you and your school. Good luck for the future.

Best wishes Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector

17 December 2007



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Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Selwyn Ward', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Selwyn Ward
Lead Inspector