

Hawthorns First School, Durrington

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125950
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315368
Inspection dates	11–12 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes HMI

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	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Grantham
Headteacher	Kathy Offer
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2002
School address	Poplar Road Durrington Worthing BN13 3EZ
Telephone number	01903 268174
Fax number	01903 693074

Age group	4–8
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Hawthorns is a smaller than average first school. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is above national averages. Most pupils enter Hawthorns having had some pre-school experience from the recently established on-site Nursery. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is below average. Hawthorns has a number of awards including Artsmark Gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievements and standards, teaching and learning, and leadership and management.

Although pupils' personal development and well-being are good and the school cares for and supports those pupils that have difficulties it does not do enough to ensure that all pupils make adequate progress and reach standards in line with expectations. As a result, Hawthorns First School does not provide an acceptable standard of education for all its pupils. Until recently school leaders have not been sufficiently focused on how the school can improve. There is now a better emphasis on the evaluation of pupils' performance and this is helping some lessons to become more challenging. As a result the quality of teaching shows some signs of improvement, although there is still a lot to do to ensure this is at least satisfactory in all classes. There are now good systems to assess the pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, although standards in these subjects, particularly in mathematics are still too low. Improvement since the previous inspection has not been fast enough.

The school benefits from having a dedicated team of staff and governors and very supportive parents, the majority of whom are very happy with the school. Parents say that they feel fortunate that their 'children have had such a positive and supportive start to their education'. The headteacher has established a community in which pupils are nurtured and supported. Pupils are well behaved and demonstrate good attitudes towards their work and play. The school works well with parents and values their contribution to their children's learning. Teaching and support staff ensure that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported effectively and this enables these pupils to make at least satisfactory progress.

Although teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall, there are pockets of satisfactory or better practice particularly in the Foundation Stage. The inconsistency in practice is leading to variable rates of progress across the school. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, planning for lessons lacks detail and does not give sufficient information about what pupils are expected to learn, marking is inconsistent, and practical equipment is not always used effectively to help pupils solve problems. Many 'one size fits all' lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for all learners.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and the headteacher has identified the need to raise standards. As part of this drive, the leadership team has been strengthened by drawing on the expertise of the Foundation Stage and the special educational needs coordinators. This has helped to build and develop capacity in the school which is now satisfactory. Nevertheless, the roles and responsibilities of some other leaders and managers remains underdeveloped; this is limiting the school's efforts to set challenging targets. School governors, whilst sharing the school's vision, do not hold the school sufficiently to account about its below average standards and unsatisfactory academic progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The majority of the children who begin school in the Foundation Stage bring with them skills and a level of understanding expected for their age. As a result of good teaching and a good curriculum in the Reception Year, children make good progress and reach at least national expectations. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide children with well structured sessions which arise from well planned opportunities to choose activities for themselves. Children work and play well together enjoying their learning. Consequently, their behaviour is good for their age. The good teaching and support, as well as appropriate resources, all help to make learning fun. The school recognises that the outside areas require further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching so that it consistently provides better challenges to pupils, and ensure that assessment information informs teachers' planning.
- Ensure pupils' work is marked more consistently and that teachers set individual learning targets so pupils know how to improve their work.
- Develop the monitoring roles of managers and governors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement and standards are inadequate overall and since the last inspection any improvement in standards has not been consistently maintained. Despite a brief rise in results in 2005, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are now below national averages at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards are also below average at the end of Year 3. Following a good start in Reception, pupils are not making satisfactory or consistent progress, particularly in mathematics. The school has a wealth of assessment data, but the inconsistency with which it is used has contributed to a slower than expected rate of progress for many pupils including the more able. The special educational needs coordinator works well with staff to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities progress satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good overall. Pupils behave well in class and the school is a very orderly place in which to learn. Attendance is average and any lateness or persistent absence is monitored carefully. Pupils enjoy school and the majority of parents are positive about their children's schooling.

Pupils know what food items they are not allowed to bring to school, such as sweets or chocolate, but are unsure about what constitutes a healthy diet. Similarly, they participate in sport at the school but have not yet made the connection with how this helps to keep them fit and well. The school does not have an organised social gathering where pupils can enjoy lunch with pupils other than those in their class. This is a missed opportunity for further social interaction between older and younger pupils.

Pupils feel safe and say there are no bullies in the school. They are confident about who they can ask for help if someone is unkind to them. They develop satisfactory skills in the use of

information and communication technology and build good relationships with each other. However, their below average standards of literacy and numeracy, does not prepare them sufficiently well for the future. The school has worked hard to develop good community links and uses the local church facilities for seasonal activities. Together with the local community pupils help to raise funds for a broad range of charitable organisations.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Although there are pockets of satisfactory or better teaching, the quality overall is inadequate, particularly in the teaching of mathematics. Pupils have good relationships with staff and consequently many enjoy their learning.

Where teaching is satisfactory or better the content of lessons is well matched to pupils' interests, abilities and needs. These lessons are well structured and teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and a good understanding of how pupils learn. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, these arise from insufficient use of assessment information, weak marking and planning, and a lack of challenge for the average and more able pupils. These less successful lessons do not focus sharply enough on what pupils should gain from the lessons or the needs of pupils with different abilities. Missed opportunities for some pupils to use practical equipment to support and enhance their learning limits their progress during the course of a lesson. School leaders now recognise these weaknesses and some are beginning to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching assistants provide pupils with good levels of support. This helps to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make at least satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a curriculum that is broad and balanced. A varied and interesting range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities such as the school's arts weeks, creative learning projects, school choir visits and events make a positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being and contribute to their enjoyment of learning. Curriculum planning and programmes of work provide clear information about the expected progression of skills and understanding, but do not indicate clearly enough how work can be modified to ensure that the differing needs of all pupils can be met.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care is given to pupils at the school and can be seen in the high level of commitment of staff to the safety, care and welfare procedures. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. The needs of these pupils are identified early and this contributes to the effective support they receive. Child protection procedures are fully in place.

The school has rigorous and detailed assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress. This information is used well for the pupils on the special educational needs list. However, the performance of the majority of other pupils is not monitored well enough by class teachers. In

lessons and in planning there is insufficient emphasis on the setting of challenging targets for all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Although showing signs of improvement, leadership and management are inadequate overall. Until recently there has been insufficient focus on the key priorities. Nevertheless, the monitoring of personal and social development and attendance is good, as is the management of support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. This has brought about good progress in these areas.

The school recognises the need to raise standards and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress. This has led to the introduction of a thorough assessment and pupil tracking system to monitor pupils' academic performance more closely. Improved use and analysis of this sort of information is reflected in the satisfactory quality of whole school self-evaluation.

The headteacher has become more proactive in developing and empowering her leadership team. The Foundation Stage as well as the special educational needs coordinators provide significant support to the development of school improvement strategies. Key personnel are now working more closely together. They have a shared vision, and are helping to secure the school's capacity to improve.

Governors are supportive of the school and take responsibility for different subject areas. They visit the school regularly, but their roles in monitoring and as a critical friend are underdeveloped.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
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	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hawthorns First School, Worthing BN13 3EZ

Thank you so much for making us feel welcome in your school when we visited recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you, and looking at your work. We were impressed with how hard you work to make your school a happy place.

Your headteacher and staff really care about you and provide lots of interesting extra activities such as school visits, performances, art weeks, music and dance for you to help make learning fun. Many pupils are working really hard at school and the youngest pupils are making good progress.

Unfortunately, we don't think that your school is doing as well as it should. This is because not all lessons are hard enough for you. Many pupils do not know how well they are doing or what to do to improve their work.

We have asked your school to make some important changes. These are to:

- improve teaching so that the work you do in class is more difficult and is marked more regularly
- make sure that you are all helped to learn as best as you can and that teachers help you to know how can do even better
- make sure that all those who help manage and run the school, are able to do their jobs well and that they make sure you get a good education.

We are going to ask some other inspectors to come back to the school and see how well you are getting on. I know all of you will work hard to ensure your school improves quickly. Your good behaviour and attitudes will help your teachers work on the things they need to do.

Best wishes for the future. Yours sincerely

Wendy Forbes Lead Inspector



13 December 2007

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Lead Inspector