

Sheddingdean Community Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 125958 |
| Local Authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 315370 |
| Inspection dates | 12–13 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Wendy Forbes |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 189 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Spencer |
| Headteacher | Richard Benton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 February 2004 |
| School address | Petworth Drive Burgess Hill RH15 8JT |
| Telephone number | 01444 246532 |
| Fax number | 01444 230045 |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sheddingdean is a smaller-than-average primary school set at the heart of its local community. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds. Attainment on entry is wide-ranging but broadly average overall. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils are White British. A higher proportion of pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has gained a number of awards, including Dyslexia-friendly status, TravelMark, ECO Award, Healthy School and ActiveMark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sheddingdean Community Primary is a good school. The headteacher has created a very caring ethos, enabling pupils to become confident, happy learners. The majority of parents express very positive views of the school and have great confidence in the strong home-school partnership. As one parent commented, 'My children are privileged to attend such a warm, caring and friendly environment'.

Since the last inspection, standards in science, the tracking of pupils' achievement, and teaching in Key Stage 1 have all improved. Better use of assessment information enables work to be matched more accurately to the needs of pupils. The monitoring of pupils' progress to raise achievement is developing but is not yet sufficiently focused on the more able pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils generally understand what they need to do to improve their work, but marking and the setting of clear targets are not always consistent.

Children in the Foundation Stage are well cared for, enabling them to settle smoothly into school routines. Most children make good progress across the areas of learning so that the majority are working within the goals expected of them on entry to Year 1. Recent test results in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have fluctuated. Overall standards in both key stages are above national averages with particular improvements in English and science, which was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Analysis of results shows that pupils build effectively on their learning in each year group so that they make good overall progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets set in their individual plans. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, enjoying good relationships with them.

Although there is good teaching, particularly in Reception, teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are organised and managed well. However, a small number of lessons observed in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 lack challenge so that pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Curricular planning is good. Enrichment is a strength of the school, providing pupils with a wealth of curricular opportunities and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils and parents speak enthusiastically of their children's involvement in these activities.

Pupils really enjoy school, are keen to learn and behave well. Good procedures for their welfare, health and safety help make pupils feel safe and confident of adult support should they have any worries.

Leadership and management are good overall, with strong pastoral leadership ensuring pupils' good personal development. Senior staff are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the need to further raise achievement particularly for high attainers and have already put strategies in place to tackle this. These strategies are already having an impact on the progress pupils are making from Key Stage 1 to 2. Senior staff have a strong commitment to improvement, with clear action plans in place for further improving provision and standards in key subjects. The strong team ethos among staff is supported well by governors. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children entering the Foundation Stage have the expected skills and understanding for their age. Good teaching and an effective curriculum in the Reception Year mean that children

make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide children with well-structured sessions, building on opportunities to choose activities for themselves. There is a good balance between adult- and child-initiated activities. Children work and play well together, enjoying their learning. Consequently, their behaviour is good. The outside areas, good teaching and support, as well as appropriate resources and good use of assessment information, help to make learning fun.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement and standards of higher-attaining pupils in English and mathematics.
- Improve the consistency of marking and the setting and monitoring of individual targets for children to help them improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection, there has been considerable variation in attainment. In common with other smaller than average schools, standards have been dependant on the balance of abilities in year groups. Test results have fluctuated from well above to below average. Evidence from work by the current Year 6 during the inspection indicates attainment to be above average. Furthermore, the school's records and inspection evidence confirms an improving trend with pupils attaining well above expectations making it clear that overall standards both in Key Stages 1 and 2 are above average. There are clear improvements in English and science, which was an issue at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils make good progress. Analysis of results shows that pupils build effectively on their learning in each year group so that they make good overall progress by the end of Key Stage 2. The larger than average group of pupils with learning difficulties and and/or disabilities make good progress. This is the result of well-planned support and a curriculum suitable for their needs. The special educational needs coordinator works well with staff as well as with outside agencies to ensure good provision for these pupils.

Good records, confirmed by observations during the inspection, show that children make good progress in Reception. Children achieve well and attain standards in line with national expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy school, confirming the view held by the majority of parents. This is reflected in their enthusiasm for learning and in their good attendance and punctuality. Good relationships at all levels are a strong feature of the school, with pupils willing to help each other. The playground 'buddies' look out for and offer help and support to those not having a completely happy time in the playground. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that staff will deal well with any difficulties they experience.

Pupils are aware of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and of the need to take regular exercise. Younger pupils enjoy the fruit and vegetable snacks available during morning playtime. Pupils drink water at regular intervals throughout the school day. Many pupils take advantage of the good range of extra-curricular sports clubs offered by the school.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in every corner of the school. Exciting 'focus weeks' develop pupils' understanding of what it is like to live in a different country. Children speak enthusiastically about these special weeks. Pupils in Year 5 learning about life in Japan, for example, observed Japanese customs by removing their shoes before entering their classroom and answered their register in Japanese. Many opportunities exist for pupils to contribute to the community beyond the school gates. The school's choir regularly entertains elderly residents in a local home and sings carols for charity events. By Year 6, most pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Good social skills, reflected in their mature attitudes and behaviour, ensure a smooth transfer to local secondary schools. The development of good information and communication technology (ICT) skills further enhances their ability to cope in the outside world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils' enjoyment of learning stems from the good relationships they have with staff. Throughout the school, teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Where teaching is good, the content of lessons is matched well to pupils' interests, abilities and needs. Lessons are generally well structured and interesting, and teachers show good subject knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn. Consequently, learning is fun, varied and exciting. However, a small number of lessons lack sufficient challenge, particularly for the high attainers, and activities do not always match pupils' needs and abilities. The lack of consistency in marking in a few classes means that pupils are sometimes not given enough information on how to improve their learning. Teaching assistants provide pupils with good levels of support, helping to ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum is crafted carefully to meet pupils' needs, and includes a wide range of enrichment activities. These activities include the school's focus weeks, foreign language teaching, cross-curricular links, peripatetic music lessons, specialist sports coaching, opportunities to use ICT, school visits and visitors. They have a positive impact on pupils' personal development and contribute to their enjoyment of learning. Programmes of work are planned well. They provide clear information about what children are expected to learn and when. However, they do not always indicate clearly how work can be modified to ensure that pupils' different needs can be met. The use of ICT and interactive whiteboards is good and has enhanced the curriculum. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles and staying safe through their involvement in the Healthy School award and visits to school by the local fire service. The good range of extra-curricular activities are well attended by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents and children view Sheddingdean as a caring school. Pastoral care is good and staff pay close attention to pupils' health and safety. Robust procedures help to ensure that they are well protected. Pupils with learning disabilities and/or difficulties are supported well, benefiting from work programmes that are well matched to their individual needs. In the best practice,

teachers keep pupils well informed as to how well they are doing and what they might do to develop their learning further. As practice is applied more consistently, this has led to improvements in pupils' achievement. The school uses a good range of assessment information to make sure pupils at risk of underachieving are clearly identified, monitored and supported. However, there is a lack of consistency in the way this information is used.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership, setting a clear direction for development with an appropriate emphasis on raising standards. He communicates this well to all staff. Senior staff work enthusiastically together with the headteacher and the newly formed curricular teams to ensure that areas for improvement are given priority and regularly reviewed. The production of action plans for all curricular areas ensures staff training and development opportunities are regularly timetabled. Governors support the school well and are beginning to challenge senior leaders in order to hold the school to account. They have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in the life of the school through their regular visits to monitor its development.

The school's self-evaluation and checking procedures are effective. There has been clear improvement since its last inspection, particularly in improving standards and in the use of information to track pupils' progress. These improvements and its current priorities demonstrate good ability to improve still further.

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

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| 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

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| 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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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 disabilities make progress | 2 |

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 | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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? | 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

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| 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 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Sheddingdean Primary School, Petworth Drive, Burgess Hill RH15 8JT

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

You go to a good school. Standards are above average and most of you make good progress. Your headteacher and staff really care about you and provide many interesting extra activities for you, such as school visits, performances, focus weeks, music and ICT, to help make learning fun. Many of you are working hard at school and the youngest children are making good progress.

You told us you enjoy school and work hard to do your best. You get on well with each other and have good attitudes to both work and play. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and help others to have a happy time at school.

We feel that there are some things that your school could do better. This is because not all lessons are hard enough for you. Although the teaching is satisfactory overall and often good, some of you do not always know how well you are doing or what you need to do to improve your work. We have asked your school to make the following improvements to help you make faster progress.

- Improve teaching so that the work you do in class is more difficult, especially for those of you who are more able.
- Help you understand what you need to do to improve your work.

I know all of you will do your hardest to ensure that your school continues to improve and that you achieve the best possible results. I hope that you will continue to work as hard as you can. Your good behaviour and attitudes will help your teachers work on the things they need to do.

Best wishes for the future.

Wendy Forbes Lead Inspector