

Slindon CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125994
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315388
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Janet Sinclair

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Tilbury
Headteacher	Jane Walters
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Meadsway Slindon Arundel BN18 0QU
Telephone number	01243 814330
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Children join this very small primary school with a wide range of skills and abilities that, overall, are below those expected for their age. There is an above-average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupil mobility is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Slindon Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher provides effective leadership and has created a strong, caring ethos enabling pupils to become confident, happy learners. Parents are pleased with what the school provides. As one parent said, 'We like the way the school makes the children feel good about themselves and instils confidence.'

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with good attention to children's personal and social skills. Children make satisfactory progress across the areas of learning so that they are working within the Early Learning Goals on entry to Year 1.

Because of the small number of pupils in each year group, standards fluctuate year on year but they are average overall. Achievement is satisfactory overall, with some year groups now achieving well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The school has worked hard to improve weaknesses in writing at Key Stage 2, and this has been successful. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning and relationships are good. As a result, pupils behave well and are keen to learn. However, some lessons lack challenge and the pace is slow so that pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Additionally, marking is not always used effectively enough to help pupils improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school, have good attitudes to work and are keen to take on responsibilities such as fundraising and supporting younger pupils in school. Attendance is good. The curriculum is planned well to ensure continuity in pupils' learning and is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs. Good procedures for pupils' health, safety and welfare ensure pupils feel well cared for and they are confident to seek adult support if they have any worries. Pupils are clear about their learning targets and work hard to achieve them. Staff use a good range of assessments to monitor progress and to identify those needing help, and ensure they get it. This is particularly effective for pupils with learning difficulties. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has brought about many improvements in the school, including improved achievement for pupils. Now, with an enthusiastic staff, clear action plans for subject leaders and improving teaching, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children get off to a secure, confident start because they are well cared for and relationships are good. Although the children are taught in a mixed-age class, the teacher works hard and effectively to ensure an appropriate Foundation Stage curriculum is in place for them. Children have satisfactory opportunities to learn through play, enabling them to become independent learners. However, sometimes activities lack challenge and this limits potential gains in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress by ensuring teachers consistently challenge the pupils to do better and by raising the pace of lessons.
- Ensure marking helps pupils improve their work by identifying the next steps in learning.

- Further develop the roles of subject leaders so that they have a greater understanding of the school's performance.

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

Over time, standards in Year 2 have been just below average in reading and mathematics, while writing has been broadly average. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall given their starting points and capabilities.

Pupil achievement in Year 3 to 6 has gradually improved, particularly in English and science. Writing in particular is improving because of the school's efforts to address weaknesses in spelling and punctuation. However, at Key Stage 2, pupils' writing skills still reflect some weaknesses in spelling and punctuation. The school has recently identified the need to improve pupils' mental mathematics skills, and the work started on this is beginning to show improvement.

The school analyses data thoroughly and addresses weaknesses as they arise. It sets realistic targets for pupils and monitors their progress towards them on a regular basis. Where pupils are not making the expected progress, the school moves swiftly to support them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and well cared for. Their self-confidence and regular attendance reflect this. They have good attitudes to work and collaborate well with each other on shared tasks. Pupils say that bullying is infrequent and, when it does occur, it is dealt with promptly. They say they receive good advice about healthy living and eat more fruit because of their involvement in the 'Fruit for Schools' scheme. They also enjoy the produce that the Gardening Club grows. There is a wide range of opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are involved in making class rules, know about other cultures through visits such as that of a Kenyan priest, and have a strong sense of Christian values through their links with the church. They make a positive contribution to the community, for example, by taking part in events such as Sussex Day and by taking on responsibilities such as looking after younger pupils. Pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being is satisfactory, with strengths in learning enterprise skills such as fundraising for charity, while their acquisition of basic skills is at a satisfactory level.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan and manage lessons well and expect good behaviour from pupils. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and concentrate well. Pupils say that 'there is a good learning atmosphere' in the school. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, working well with small groups and individuals. Effective use of assessment and a good, brisk

pace enable pupils in the Year 5/6 class to make good progress. For example, in a good lesson in this class, good reference was made to pupils' targets, ensuring they were clear about what was expected. Teaching was well matched to their differing needs and the lesson conducted at a brisk pace. However, this is not consistent practice across the school. Occasionally, slow pace and a lack of challenge prevent teaching from being good.

Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and tell them what they have done well. However, they rarely tell them what they need to do to improve or ensure that improvement takes place.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and leads to enjoyable learning for pupils. It is carefully planned over a two-year cycle to ensure pupils do not miss out as they move through the mixed-age classes. Good enrichment through effective use of the school grounds as a learning resource, music tuition and learning a foreign language all extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Citizenship education is dealt with well in whole-day projects such as 'What's great about Britain?' There is good attention to pupils' health and safety through involvement in the National Sports strategy, regular swimming lessons, swimming galas and visits from the community police officer to talk about personal safety. A wide range of additional activities such as lunchtime and after-school clubs, which are well attended, as well as visits and visitors, enhances the curricular provision and make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The school has found innovative ways to ensure the full curriculum is provided despite the lack of a school hall, for example, by using the local community hall and extensive use of the school grounds in the summer for all aspects of physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school knows its pupils and cares for them well. Staff show a clear commitment to pupils' well-being, and most parents agree that the school supports their children well. Arrangements for safeguarding children are secure, as are health and safety procedures. There are particularly good arrangements in place for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils with learning difficulties and this, together with specialist help from outside agencies, ensures that these pupils get all the help they need. The school plans well to ensure that any pupils new to the school feel welcome and have their learning needs assessed quickly so that they settle well into their new environment. Parents really appreciate this and feel it is a strength of the school.

There are good systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress over their time in school; this leads to good target setting to improve achievement. Pupils have individual targets for literacy and numeracy, which are shared with them and their parents and reviewed termly. However, they are not always clearly in evidence as part of day-to-day learning, which limits their usefulness.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by senior staff. Together they are developing the whole school in a sensitive and thoughtful manner. Subject leaders are enthusiastic but are still developing their roles so their impact has yet to be fully felt. All staff

work together well as a team and are fully aware of the need to improve pupils' achievement further.

The school's self evaluation is satisfactory. Whilst the headteacher has a good understanding of where the school is and what needs to be done to bring about further improvement, subject leaders are still developing their roles within this process. The detailed school improvement plan is a useful tool in this context and is being used well to guide whole-school improvement. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and local advisor is helping to improve teaching so that, although not consistently good, there is a greater proportion of good teaching overall. However, although all staff have been involved in discussing what makes a lesson good or better, this needs a continuing focus to ensure greater consistency in teaching. Teaching assistants have also had effective support, enabling them to make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Governors are enthusiastic and fully committed to the school's vision for its pupils. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through, for example, working with staff on curriculum committees. This is enabling them to check the school's performance in a critical but supportive way.

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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	3
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	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

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

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	3
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	2
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

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

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed chatting to you and were pleased to learn how much you enjoy school and the opportunities it offers.

We think that Slindon is a satisfactory and improving school.

Here are the things we like about your school:

- The headteacher and staff work hard to help you do better in your work.
- You enjoy school, especially all the extra activities you have, and are keen to learn.
- You are well cared for and in turn are thoughtful and kind to each other.
- Those of you who need extra help with your learning are given very good support. These are the things we think your school could do better:
- Improve the way you work so that you are clear about what you need to do to improve and ensure you carry out the work to do so.
- Improve teaching further by ensuring you are given harder work that makes you think more and that the pace of lessons is increased so you can learn more. I am sure you are up to the challenge!
- Make sure that the teachers who have special responsibilities keep a close eye on how well you are doing to see if they can spot things that could be even better.

You can do your bit by improving your spelling even further.

With best wishes for your future success,