

West Hoathly CofE Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	126012
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315394
Inspection date	5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Darvill
Headteacher	Adam Earle
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2002
School address	North Lane West Hoathly East Grinstead RH19 4QG
Telephone number	01342 810302
Fax number	01342 811098

Age group	4–11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

West Hoathly is a smaller than average village school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly below the national average. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and there are very low numbers from minority ethnic groups. The new headteacher was appointed in September 2007 after the previous headteacher left nine months ago. In the interim, the school was led by an acting headteacher seconded from another school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The appointment of a new headteacher has brought a fresh impetus to school improvement and has already started to have an impact on pupils' academic and personal progress. Parents feel that communication has improved and they, along with the pupils, are supportive of the changes that are being made to 'make the school better'.

There is a strong Christian and village school ethos which the headteacher is very keen to enhance. Pupils behave well and greatly enjoy their education. They are articulate and can talk enthusiastically about what they want from their schooling. There is a calm atmosphere both in lessons and when pupils are at play. Pastoral care and support are strong, and staff and pupils value the relationships they have with each other. The pupil guardians are helping develop a sense of responsibility and independence. In the past, pupils say that there was a small group of pupils who were not kind to each other but say things are getting better now. They can see problems are being rigorously addressed and eliminated.

Children start school with standards that are at or above those expected for their age. Through the Reception Year and Years 1 to 6, progress is satisfactory. By the time they leave in Year 6, nearly all reach their age expected levels and over a third are doing better than this. Even though test results were some of the highest in 2007, the analysis of test data indicates that achievement through the school could be higher. As a result, the targets for the next two years have been revised upwards, demonstrating the school's commitment to ensure improved achievement continues.

Teaching is satisfactory but variable, ranging from sound to outstanding. Weekly planning ensures that all subjects are covered and the curriculum provides for some exciting extras such as visits and special themed weeks. A recent topic on Japan, for instance, included pupils making and tasting sushi. Teachers are making their classrooms attractive and using different organisational methods to excite pupils' learning. The general management of pupils is good and teaching assistants are used well, particularly for those with learning difficulties. The use of individual assessment data, including that for the Reception class, to help teachers plan more challenging tasks for each pupil is not as strong. As a result, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to think for themselves or know how to improve. This is restricting the highest levels of achievement. A very good recent audit of pupils' performance has highlighted the effect this is having on the relatively lower writing standards. Consequently, new methods are being introduced to develop writing across all subjects and the curriculum is being redesigned to make better links between subjects.

The headteacher has very high aspirations about what the school should be achieving and is providing a clear action plan to address it. He has been able to share this vision with all staff so that they are accountable for the outcomes of their class. In a short time, the senior management team has been given far more responsibility, something that was criticised in the last report. Whilst it is still early days and the actions have not yet fully impacted on pupils' progress, the good range of expertise evident throughout the whole staff and governing body demonstrates that there is a good capacity to make the right changes that will drive the school forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make the progress expected of them during their year in the Reception class. Data show that they reach higher than expected levels in number, communication, creative and physical development. Within the combined Reception and Year 1 class, there are some innovative teaching methods to help develop the learning of both age groups. For instance, in a number lesson about money, the younger children were told that the shop, manned by the Year 1 pupils, was now open. Activities provide a suitable combination of formal teaching and opportunities to play. In these play situations, the children interact well with each other, being able to share and communicate sensibly. There is regular analysis of how well pupils are doing but this is not always used as well to develop future planning and so provide the highest level of challenge. As a result, independent activities do not always provide an extension to what has already been learnt.

What the school should do to improve further

- develop cross-curricular links and so help raise standards, particularly in writing
- make use of the assessment information to set suitably challenging tasks so that pupils understand what they need to do next and help them take more responsibility for their own learning.

A small proportion of 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

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory progress through the school. Whilst most reach standards above those expected for their age in reading, mathematics and science, pupils achieve only average standards in writing. This is because there is a need for greater understanding of the basic skills of writing and how these relate to levels of attainment so children understand what they can do to improve their writing. Consequently pupils, particularly those with potentially higher ability, do not have enough in-depth experience of using these skills in different situations. Nevertheless, standards overall are improving and have been on a steady rise in national tests, particularly in Key Stage 1. This is helping pupils prepare satisfactorily for their economic life beyond school. This year, the much improved analysis of data is providing an early warning of potential underachievement in each year group and support is being targeted well to address it. The improved targets set for this year indicate that there is now a realistic potential for pupils to make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

All pupils, even the very youngest, show high levels of respect for each other and to adults. They are polite, lively and friendly. They listen carefully and respond positively when asked to do something. For instance, in the dining hall, everybody knows that 'quiet time' means just that. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is satisfactory, although there are some strong aspects within this. The Christian ethos of the school is clearly developed, for example by the reverence with which pupils treat collective worship. Pupils have a good understanding

about how to stay healthy. There is an extremely high take-up of the excellent hot lunches provided by the school, with pupils often opting for fresh vegetables or salads. Pupils also show a good understanding about how to stay safe, making sure that they report any instances of conflict. There are still just a few minor instances of name-calling and unpleasantness, mostly at playtimes. Pupils make a good contribution to the community by singing at local rest homes and being involved in village life. More widely, they have hosted pupils from a school in France and have helped with national charity fundraising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

All teachers plan conscientiously to ensure that there is suitable coverage of each subject. They manage their class well, use teaching assistants effectively and plan some interesting methods to stimulate discussions and further investigation. Pupils know what they are to be learning in each lesson. The tasks set are often for different levels of ability and so provide challenge within the mixed age classes. This was particularly noticeable in the Reception class. However, this is not always sufficiently based on secure knowledge about what pupils have learnt in previous lessons and is the reason why pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Marking often provides pupils with an understanding about how well they have done. The best marking praises good work and makes suggestions for improvement. However, pupils do not always know whether what they have achieved is good enough and how they can move on.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils both within general lessons and from the extra-curricular activities that the school has developed. It takes account of National Curriculum requirements as well as those for personal, social and health education. For instance, pupils have planned and taken part in a debate in the local council chambers and have been instrumental in organising an ecocouncil as part of the work leading to Ecoschool status. The school has correctly identified the need to widen the creative curriculum as part of a drive to improve standards in basic skills such as writing and to help bring more cohesion to the work in different classes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral support of pupils is strong. There are very secure safeguarding procedures, including regular risk assessments. Bullying is not tolerated, and where there is potential for pupils to disrupt the learning of others, intervention by adults rapidly resolves the situation. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified and provided with suitable programmes to help them. Academic guidance is developing. A comprehensive analysis has given all staff an understanding about where initiatives need to be aimed to address any whole-school weaknesses. However, this more rigorous approach has not yet been fully developed at an individual pupil level and so has not had as much impact as it could. For example, pupils can identify what work they have done well but generally do not know how it could be improved. In addition, whilst they are given targets to achieve, these are not specific or individual enough to help them aim higher and raise their own expectations about what they are capable of.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new, determined and enthusiastic headteacher has brought a fresh momentum. He is a good organiser and is working hard to make sure that he communicates his ideas to staff, pupils and governors. Parents appreciate the good channels of communication he has opened, such as through the parent forum. He has delegated further responsibility to the senior managers. Although their role is not fully developed, they are beginning to play a more active role in the leadership structure. For instance, the appointment of an assessment co-ordinator led to some very thorough analysis and evaluation of the true position regarding the differences between actual standards and the real potential of the pupils. Whilst much of this is new, it has enabled all staff to understand what changes need to be made and how these can be achieved. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the expertise to monitor changes as they happen. This was particularly effective in a period of instability prior to the appointment of the headteacher. The governing body monitor finances well, a good example being their commitment to continuing to provide pupils with excellent hot meals, managed from within the school.

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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	3
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	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	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	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	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**

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit. We very much enjoyed joining you in your lessons and at lunchtime. We were very impressed with the wonderful hot meals you can have. As I promised some of you, I have included below the main points from our report.

- You told us how you think things are improving and we could see that this was happening. We have said that we think you are well behaved and enjoy being at school. The pupil guardians are doing a good job and the newly-formed pupil council should help you make your school even better.
- We have said that your teachers plan interesting lessons and that there are some good added extras such as the themed weeks you have. We enjoyed hearing about you trying out some different foods in your 'bushtucker trial'.
- You are looked after well so that you are kept safe. Although we have said behaviour is good, you told us that on just a few occasions, some people are unpleasant to one another. You need to make sure that you tell the adults so that it can be dealt with quickly.
- Your new headteacher has a lot of fresh ideas which will make the school better. He is keen to make sure that you all do your best because he, along with the rest of the staff, knows that there are some of you who could reach even higher standards.
- The last SATs results were some of the best – so you all have a lot to do to keep this up. One area that needs some improvement is in writing. We have said that it would be a good idea to try and give you more opportunities to use your writing skills across a wider range of subjects.
- We have also asked that you are given more information about what you have achieved so that you can see how to improve.

Finally, we would like to wish you all the best for the future. You can play your part in improving the school by working hard and getting on well with each other.

6 December 2007



Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Hoathly C of E Primary School, East Grinstead RH19 4QG

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Best wishes

David Collard
(Lead inspector)