

# March CofE Primary School, The

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126031
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	315404
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Chadwick

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dominic Ryan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Cumming
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Claypit Lane Westhampnett Chichester PO18 0NU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01243 783987
<b>Fax number</b>	01243 530680

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 March 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

attainment on entry to Reception and the progress being made in Reception, especially by more capable children

standards and progress in Years 1 and 2, especially in mathematics

the impact of leadership and management, particularly through school

initiatives for improving standards in writing and mathematics.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, review of the assessment data the school uses to track pupils' progress, and analysis of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

## Description of the school

The school serves the local parish as well as the surrounding area. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The overall proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but this varies in different years. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual time is above average. Substantial building improvements have taken place in the last few years. The school holds the Healthy Schools, Activemark and Eco awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school, which has some outstanding features. Pupils receive excellent levels of care and this is a major reason why their personal development, including behaviour, is exceptional. Pupils do well academically and excel in English, art and the humanities. The impressive curriculum gives them rich opportunities to develop their creative, practical and sporting skills from the earliest age. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by a dedicated and effective teaching team, is pivotal to the improvements being made. The great majority of parents justifiably hold the school in high regard. As one parent says, 'The influence that March's education has had on my children is immense.'

The school is still improving and standards are rising. Children make good progress in Reception and this continues in Key Stage 1. By Year 2, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in reading and writing and above average standards in mathematics. Standards in mathematics are higher in Year 2 this year and reflect the school's initiatives to improve the teaching of this subject throughout the school. Pupils now begin Year 3 more securely prepared for their junior education.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 and, by Year 6, standards are exceptionally high in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. Pupils make excellent progress in reading and writing throughout the school because of the whole-school focus on improving assessment and literacy teaching. Pupils' progress in mathematics is mostly good but initiatives have not yet had a full effect on standards in Year 6, where considerably fewer pupils reach the higher levels than in English, despite the good progress now being made.

Very strong direction by the headteacher has ensured that the priority is to speed up pupils' progress. Restructuring has produced a strong senior team and robust systems for checking how well the school is doing. Realistic and accurate evaluation of the school's performance has resulted in the school knowing what is working and what is in need of improvement. These arrangements involve subject leaders and the headteacher is successfully giving them the opportunity to monitor and manage their areas of responsibility. However, the school is aware that they do not all yet play a full part in observing their colleagues teach and there is work to do to make sure teachers consistently use the demanding targets to move pupils on in their learning in mathematics. Governors are a real asset and provide both strong support and challenge. Strong teamwork by all concerned with the school is a major reason why it is improving so well and for its good capacity to continue to do so.

The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Improvements have been brought about because previous performance has been rigorously reviewed and the best teaching practice has been shared. Teachers' general skills in planning and delivering lessons are rigorously checked and areas for improvement are linked to training opportunities. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and manage them extremely well. Their strong English subject knowledge is leading to pupils' rapid progress in reading and writing. Assessment systems are strong and help the school to know how well pupils are learning. Work is usually very well matched to pupils' needs but, occasionally, in mathematics lessons, the work is too hard for lower-attaining pupils or rather easy for the more capable ones. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Strong support from the local church and excellent partnerships with the community help to promote pupils' exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are doing

well because their enthusiasm for learning is nurtured and they are given many opportunities to use their initiative, make decisions and make a positive contribution to their school and the world around them. They develop a very good sense of responsibility for caring for others, their school and local environment through charity work and ecological activities, such as the organic gardening club and recycling activities. The thriving school council enables pupils to have a say in improving the school. Pupils have a strong sense of security and feel very safe. The school works very effectively with outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those later entrants who are new to the school. Pupils' great enjoyment of school is shown by their good attendance.

The outstanding curriculum makes learning interesting and fun. It provides a very good balance for pupils to create, solve problems and directly learn skills. Subjects are linked together very imaginatively and pupils' learning often has a practical starting point. Subjects such as art and design and technology, as well as visits and visitors, bring learning alive and are often used to underpin academic learning. Throughout the school, there are stunning examples of pupils' writing, where they have written for different purposes across the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning throughout the school. The pupils have a wealth of opportunities for extra-curricular activities, sport and trips. They develop a very good understanding of how regular exercise and a healthy diet help their bodies grow strong.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children arrive with very varied skills but, overall, these are broadly as expected. Children get off to a good start and do extremely well in developing their speaking, reading and writing skills. By the time they leave Reception, nearly all reach the expected levels and a substantial proportion exceed them, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Children are nurtured caringly and their personal development, safety and well-being are given high priority. Children love coming to school because there are plenty of interesting and worthwhile things to do. There are some high quality opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, for children to learn through purposeful play. Role-play activities are of a high quality and a good balance is usually struck between children learning for themselves through purposeful play and the direct teaching of basic skills by adults. Occasionally, however, during mathematical play, adults do not give children enough support to further stimulate their learning. Assessment information is used well to ensure that work builds on previous learning. Parents are very pleased with their children's good progress in Reception.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make sure teachers consistently use assessment to match work to the learning needs of lower-attaining and more capable pupils in mathematics.
- Increase the opportunities for subject leaders to visit classes to check teaching and learning so they have a greater impact on raising achievement and standards.

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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?	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of March CofE Primary School, Chichester PO180NU

I am writing to say thank you for making me so welcome and for talking to me when I came to visit your school recently. I also want to tell you what I found out about your school.

First, you need to know you go to a good school where you make good progress. Here are some of the other good things about your school.

- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and your teachers and the school governors are working hard to make the school even better.
- You reach exceptionally high standards in English and above average standards in science.
- You clearly enjoy school and take great pride in your work.
- Teaching is good, and getting better, because of the way the school is improving your learning opportunities.
- You are a credit to your school and behave extremely well.
- You have some really good chances for ICT, art, design and technology, and sport and for joining after-school clubs.
- Teachers take superb care of you, make sure you are kept safe and check up on how well you are doing really well.

These are the things I have asked the school to change to help it improve further.

- Make sure your work in mathematics is not too easy or too hard.
- Help teachers in charge of subjects to be more involved in checking up on how well you are learning.

I hope you will continue to work hard and enjoy school. Thank you once again for letting me see your lovely school.

Best wishes

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector

26 March 2008



Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of March CofE Primary School, Chichester P018 ONU**

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Eileen Chadwick  
Lead inspector