

The Haven Voluntary Aided CofE/Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131381
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	315797
Inspection dates	1–2 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Coomber
Headteacher	Wendy Bray
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Atlantic Drive Sovereign Harbour South Eastbourne BN23 5SW
Telephone number	01323 471781
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school draws most of its pupils from its immediate neighbourhood. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Over the past year, the school has experienced significant problems. There was a succession of supply teachers throughout the school but especially in Year 5. Building developments adjacent to Key Stage 2 classrooms caused disruption for pupils in these classes. The present headteacher and deputy have been in post since April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. There are many positive signs to show that it is steadily improving because of the good leadership and management of the new headteacher and deputy headteacher. Last year, the significant staffing changes and building developments caused disruptions. Standards were exceptionally low and achievement was unsatisfactory for pupils in Year 6. Pupils were not doing as well as they should and progress in a number of classes was inadequate. The headteacher instigated many effective initiatives to improve the quality of education, and disruptions to the education of the older pupils have been resolved.

Underachievement has been eliminated and standards are improving. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are doing better than they did last year and they are enjoying their work. Standards are below average in Year 6 but achievement is satisfactory. Many pupils are now achieving well but it is early days and improvements have not been in place long enough to raise standards significantly for the older pupils after a legacy of underachievement. More able pupils, throughout the school, are not always challenged sufficiently to ensure they reach the levels of which they are capable.

The headteacher and deputy take a strong role in leading school developments. The current approach successfully focuses everyone's efforts towards improving the school. There is a determined drive to build a coherent team and this is proving to be productive, as all staff and pupils work as one towards a common goal. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching have resulted in the establishment of clear guidelines that have raised standards and achievement.

Some of the planned initiatives have not yet had enough time to show their full influence on the school's overall effectiveness. Teaching and learning have improved and are satisfactory and often good, especially in Years 1 to 4. Occasionally, there are weaknesses in teaching because the pace of work is too slow and tasks do not challenge the more able pupils enough. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils understand and respond to comments written in their work. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum has good features, especially in the practical aspects of science and mathematics and also out-of-lesson activities, but links across subjects are not established well enough. Because many teachers are new to the school, many subject management roles are at the early stages of development. The pastoral care, centred within the Christian environment, is very good and forms a keystone in pupils' good personal development and self-esteem. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good and reflected in their good spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle because of the school's good levels of care, guidance and support. Accurate tracking records plot each pupil's progress, enabling staff to evaluate each pupil's achievements. Parents are frequently consulted and are supportive of the efforts made by the school to include all children in all that the school does.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The staff give good care, support and guidance to all children who settle into the routines quickly. Children achieve well because the provision is well managed. Attainment on entry is lower than normally expected for children of this age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The teaching and curriculum planning are good, resulting in most children progressing well towards the expected standards by the time they

enter Year 1. Comprehensive records are kept on each child, which enable staff to track individual progress very carefully. A number of children attend part time until Christmas and maintaining a good balance of activities for the full-time and part-time children is not always planned effectively. Good use is made of the outdoor facilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching further to raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science in all classes, but particularly in Years 5 and 6, by setting tasks that are matched more precisely to the needs of all pupils, especially those who are more able.
- Develop the role of subject leaders to ensure that they monitor and evaluate the development of their subjects, and check that opportunities to develop meaningful links across different subjects are fully exploited.
- Improve marking to ensure pupils understand and respond to written comments so that they know what they need to do to improve.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underachievement will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Despite below average standards in Year 6, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are currently making at least expected progress and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 are now working better because of the intense developments instigated by the leadership and management. They are making accelerated progress to compensate for their unsatisfactory achievements last year. As a result of good teaching in Key Stage 1, most pupils make good progress so that standards are above average, particularly in reading and writing, by the end of Year 2.

The more able pupils in the older year groups could still do better on occasions because they are not always challenged rigorously enough. Those pupils who are at the early stages of learning English make good progress in developing their communication and language skills because of the good support they receive.

In the other year groups in Key Stage 2, standards are broadly average and achievement for most pupils is good, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their mid-morning snacks of fruit and vegetables and know how to stay safe. For example, they are very aware of the dangers of drugs. Pupils enjoy their lessons especially when links are made across subjects. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their visit to Newhaven Fort. This positive attitude reflects well a comment of one pupil who said, 'We learn and have fun at the same time.' Pupils develop a good sense of community. Older pupils act effectively as monitors and 'study buddies'. Many support younger pupils well by organising playtime games. Pupils take part enthusiastically in local community projects, such as when the choir sang on the local hospital radio station. Pupils behave well and show respect for each other and for adults. However, many pupils are uncertain about the customs and traditions of different

people living in our modern society. They show positive attitudes towards their work, sustain concentration and co-operate well together. Despite below average literacy and numeracy skills, the pupils' positive attitudes, high concentration levels and ability to work well with each other, mean that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. Most pupils attend school regularly but attendance is still only average despite reminders to parents to avoid taking holidays during term-time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Due to determined efforts by the headteacher and staff, teaching is satisfactory and often good. This improvement has resulted in the eradication of the underachievement reported last year. Pupils understand their targets and most can discuss what they need to learn next. The planning of lessons is thorough and tasks match the needs of most pupils within a class. Teachers encourage pupils to assess how well they are doing. The teaching of investigative work in science and mathematics is good in several classes. However, there are occasions when the more able are not challenged enough. Weaker teaching occurs when long explanations and introductions dominate some lessons and this slows down pupils' progress. Some weaknesses exist in marking because teachers do not always ensure that pupils understand and respond to written comments.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has a good influence on raising standards and achievement when pupils are engaged in practical and investigation activities in mathematics and science or 'Big writing' tasks in English. However, opportunities to link work across different subjects are sometimes lost. For example, English is not developed sufficiently well through other subjects such as history, and opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) are often missed. The school is aware of the need to develop the curriculum in this way and intends to extend weekly themes, such as the recent 'Food in School' workshops, which pupils say they enjoyed. The weekly French lesson in Years 5 and 6 enhances the curriculum well. Good provision for out of lesson activities such as sports clubs, instrumental tuition and visits, enhances pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is very good and all staff show care and concern to ensure that each pupil's personal development and well-being are well developed. Support for different groups of pupils, such as the pupils with learning difficulties, is good and for those with disabilities, it is excellent. The Christian Foundation offers further support through the good focus upon developing values for life.

All reasonable measures are taken to ensure that pupils stay safe. There are secure procedures to encourage good attendance with reminders sent out to some parents to avoid taking pupils away from school during term-time. Support of other services is developing well for those who need it. Although there are shortcomings in teachers' marking, the tracking of pupils' progress

is rigorous. Every teacher is fully aware of what each pupil should do to achieve well and provides good verbal guidance to help them understand what they need to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher with her dynamic approach to change, and ably supported by the deputy, has made it quite clear what the school needs to do next to become more effective. Following a painstaking and meticulous self-evaluation of the school's work by these senior leaders, very challenging targets have been set which are bringing about vital improvements. Staff are now fully aware how they can make substantial improvements to raise standards and achievement. This is working well. Many subject management roles are at the early stages of development and because many teachers are new to the school, the senior management hold responsibility for several subjects.

The governing body carries out its responsibilities satisfactorily. Governors are gaining knowledge and establishing reliable procedures to find out what is happening in school. The employment of an additional teacher to support literacy and mathematics learning in Years 5 and 6 is a prudent use of the budget. With the robust monitoring techniques and the determined drive by the newly appointed headteacher and deputy to raise standards and achievement, the capacity for further improvement is good.

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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	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	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	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	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?	3
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	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	3
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

2 November 2007

Dear Children

- Inspection of The Haven Primary School Eastbourne BN23 5SW Thank you for helping us when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education and that you do some very exciting things. These are the things that are particularly strong in your school:
- There is a good team spirit in your school and it is a happy place.
- Those who lead and manage your school have very clear ideas of how to bring about improvements and, as a result, it is improving well.
- By the end of Year 6, you make satisfactory progress but your work is not as good as it should be. In the other year groups, your work is average and you make good progress.
- You are all developing good attitudes towards your work and each other. You know a lot about keeping safe and you understand how to remain healthy.
- You are very polite and your behaviour is good.
- Staff look after you and care for you well.
- The teaching is satisfactory overall and the teachers are improving how they plan tasks that help you understand what you need to do to improve.
- You are given exciting things in mathematics and science investigations and the clubs you attend and visits you make are interesting.
- There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:
 - improve the quality of your work in English, mathematics and science, particularly if you are in the older classes, by setting tasks that match your abilities more precisely, especially if you find work too easy
 - help the teachers to take on the development of subjects so that your lessons have links across different subjects, particularly for the development of your English and ICT skills
 - improve marking to ensure that you respond to your teachers' written comments and understand what you need to do to improve.

Once again, thank you for your cooperation. You can help by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Graeme Bassett Lead inspector