

Lindfield Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 133299 |
| Local Authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 316068 |
| Inspection dates | 6–7 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Sheila Browning |

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 | 426 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mike Allen |
| Headteacher | R White |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 January 2003 |
| School address | Beckworth Lindfield Haywards Heath RH16 2DX |
| Telephone number | 01444 482524 |
| Fax number | 01444 484039 |

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

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average. Attainment at the time of the last inspection was above the expected level on entry into Reception but is now broadly at the level expected for children of this age. Most children are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with a statement of educational need has increased significantly and is above average. The school has been affected by some significant staffing difficulties. In recognition of its work, the school has a British Council International School award, and Eco-School and travel mark awards.

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: 3

Lindfield provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils say, 'I love school' and their enjoyment is reflected in their above average attendance. Staff work hard to ensure pupils' good personal development, care and support and pupils say they feel safe and well supported. Their excellent attitudes to learning and outstanding behaviour by most pupils endorse this. Parents are strongly supportive; as one commented, 'It is a really friendly and supportive environment for learning.' However, a significant minority have concerns about the progress of more able pupils and inspection evidence confirms this to be valid.

A revised curriculum has led to some improvements in developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have attained above-average standards. Achievement is satisfactory from an above-average start. However, although standards in science are average, they have declined. This is because scientific knowledge and skills are not taught consistently as pupils move up through the school. A good range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment activities promote the pupils learning well, such as Year 1's trip to a wildfowl museum. Strong links with multi-agencies help the school to support the needs of the pupils who have a statement of special educational need. Good links with local schools have provided several opportunities for staff training and sharing of good practice. Pupils are very interested in their learning and this means that teachers do not have to waste time dealing with behaviour issues. Teaching is improving but it is not of a consistently good quality across the school. Pupils' progress is not checked systematically and, consequently, work is not always adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. This is especially so for the more able who could be given greater challenge. Pupils have individual targets to help them understand what they must do to move to higher levels in literacy and numeracy. However, not all pupils are clear about these and the marking of their work does not always support improvement. In the past, priorities for improvement have taken too long to be implemented. However, important developments are beginning to sharpen the impact of the school's leadership and management. Governors are increasingly challenging the school to move forward. Recent procedures for checking school performance have been introduced and are now giving the school a clearer focus about its effectiveness.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in their education. Inspection evidence and school data confirm children are on track to reach the goals expected nationally by the start of Year 1. Progress in their personal, social and emotional development is particularly good. Good teaching, transition arrangements and good care, support and guidance enable the children to adapt well to school life. Teaching is well focused on developing children's relatively weaker skills in linking sounds and letters and writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- develop pupils' scientific skills and ensure that the work in science is matched to meet their abilities
- implement a whole-school assessment system so that teachers can use the information they gather to provide work that is sufficiently challenging

- develop consistent ways to mark books so that all pupils understand how well they are getting on and what they need to do to improve.

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

The school has responded satisfactorily to its recent underperformance and standards are improving. A whole-school focus on writing has improved pupils' skills and their understanding of different styles. Standards attained in English at the end of Year 6 are well above average and represent good achievement from the pupils' above-average prior attainment. Standards in mathematics are above average and have recently improved because gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge have been filled and extra support has boosted skills and confidence in solving problems. Although standards in science are broadly average, in relation to the pupils' prior attainment, progress is unsatisfactory. This is because the school has had staffing difficulties and has focused on improving writing and mathematical skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make satisfactory progress. However, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to reach their full potential because they are not given appropriate levels of work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' relationships and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Strengths in moral and social development support their good spiritual and cultural development. Pupils show an increasing awareness and understanding of different cultures and traditions: 'We learn so much from our many visitors abroad, it's really interesting.' Most pupils' behaviour is exemplary and those who are most at risk of exclusion are well supported. Pupils feel safe from bullying and say, 'This is a friendly school and the peer mediators do such a good job.' Pupils are increasingly involved in the wider community and contribute well to school life. For example, pupils were consulted about the design of the 'trim trail' and the school council has successfully budgeted and selected playground equipment. There is real enjoyment when the older pupils are 'buddies' for younger children. Their ability to work collaboratively is a good preparation for their future lives. Pupils know about keeping safe and understand features of healthy living. Many participate in a wide range of sporting activities. Younger children make good progress in their personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The monitoring of teaching is starting to have a positive effect and the sharing of good practice is beginning to bring about improvement. Teachers' questioning is good and promotes pupils' learning well. For example, Year 6 pupils studying *Macbeth* were able to confidently respond to probing questions about the play and suggest how the Elizabethan audience would react to it. Even when lessons lack pace, the pupils show a good commitment to their learning. Teaching assistants work well with pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the individual support they receive enables them to make satisfactory progress. Teachers are not

always clear about the capabilities of individual pupils because systems used to assess them are inconsistent. Consequently, planning does not consider the needs of all the pupils sufficiently well. This is especially evident in science, where skills are not systematically developed as pupils move through the school. As a result, pupils of differing ability are given the same level of work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A revised curriculum has been broadened and includes good subject links where pupils can transfer their skills learnt in one area to another. Enrichment activities in all year groups are good. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed their World War 2 day earlier this term and they talk eagerly of trying on a gas mask and sampling a rationed meal. Extra-curricular clubs are varied and pupils keenly participate in these and sporting activities. The excellent outdoor facilities are used well for drama and ecological activities. The personal, social and health curriculum is good with a strong focus on healthy lifestyles and citizenship. However, the curriculum does not ensure that all pupils make sufficiently good progress in all subjects, for example science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe and know that anyone will help them if they have a problem. The arrangements for ensuring their health, safety and welfare are good and are replicated in the high level of care and pastoral support for pupils. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are secure. The school's initiatives have resulted in improvement in attendance. Involvement in a family support project is proving beneficial for pupils. Strong links with local schools and multi-agencies support the school's work well, particularly for those with statements of special educational need. The use of assessment information is starting to provide teachers with a satisfactory understanding of pupils' progress. It enables them to provide pupils with targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in these and in the marking of pupils' work for improvement result in some pupils not always knowing what to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and the management team, with support from the local authority, are developing an accurate understanding of the school's performance and what needs to be improved. The school's evaluation of its work includes the views of pupils and parents, and the vast majority of parents are positive. Partnerships with external groups and parents are a major strength. The school sets challenging targets but is not following these through with sufficient rigour or pace to achieve consistency in all aspects of the school's work. Consequently, last year the school did not fully meet its projected targets in national tests. Despite a lowering of standards, in part as a result of the changing nature of the school's intake, improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

The supportive governors are fully involved in school evaluation and use their good knowledge of the school to hold it to account. They fully understand that the pace of change needs to be accelerated. The school's improvement plan covers most of the school's work. Nevertheless,

the focus is not always specifically related to improving standards and achievement. However, given recent and ongoing improvements, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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? | 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 | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |

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? | 3 |
| 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

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| 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 | 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 | 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lindfield Primary School, Haywards Heath RH16 2DX

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed talking with you and watching you learn. We are writing to tell you that Lindfield is a satisfactory school where the teaching is sound.

Here are some good and other important things about your school:

- Reception children get off to a good start in their education
- you reach standards that are above average and you do particularly well in English
- you told us how much you enjoyed school and all that it offers
- your attitudes to learning are outstanding and most of you behave outstandingly well
- we were impressed by how well you get on with each other
- you told us you know how to lead safe, healthy lives
- your headteacher, together with the staff and all the adults in your school, are working hard to make it even better.

Here are things that we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do:

- improve what you learn in science so that you can always achieve your best
- use the information they gather about your progress so that they can help you in the next step of your learning
- make sure the work you do is at the right level for you, especially for those of you who find learning easy.

You can help, too, and you could tell teachers if the work you are doing is too easy or too hard.

With best wishes

Sheila Browning Lead Inspector