

# Carlton Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114381
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	326000
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gavin Jones

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	207
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Hadley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Willard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Sussex Street Brighton BN2 9HS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 604966
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 676789

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is of an average size in the centre of the city of Brighton and Hove. It has an above average proportion of children from minority ethnic heritages and a larger than average proportion of children whose home language is other than English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disability varies from 25% to 50% in different year groups. This is always above the national average and in some years twice as much as average. Language difficulties and poor social development are very high in this group of pupils. A Nursery with 20 children attending part-time forms part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Plans are in place to close the Nursery at the end of August 2009. A significant minority of pupils do not start at the school in Reception or Year 2.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Carlton Hill is an outstanding school. The achievement of pupils and the care, guidance and support given to them by the school as well as the exciting and vibrant curriculum, the strong senior leadership team and the way that the school promotes equal opportunities in a very diverse school community are all excellent. The inspection team agrees with much of the school's self-evaluation but believes it underestimates its overall effectiveness, which is outstanding.

Achievement is outstanding. Results of the 2008 National Curriculum tests showed not only standards significantly higher than national averages but also excellent achievement, for all pupils including those who are vulnerable. The leadership of the school has clearly analysed the context and background of the school and has developed strategies which ensure that all pupils are given opportunities to achieve very well. 'Fair means that everyone gets what they need; not that everyone gets the same', is the school's motto and encapsulates its ethos. Several parents noted in the Ofsted questionnaire: 'Diversity is well catered for and every child's needs and ways of learning are taken into account.'

The exceptional care, guidance and support shown to pupils are not only at the heart of their progress and achievement but also in their good personal development. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, feel safe and gain a good understanding of what a healthy lifestyle means. Their behaviour is good throughout the school. Older pupils take part in a Young Enterprise scheme, which alongside their ever improving basic skills, prepares them well for the next stage of their education. However, a small group of parents do not appreciate how important school is or insist that their children attend more regularly, despite pupils' great enjoyment in the excellent, exciting, creative and all-encompassing curriculum.

Teachers put this curriculum into practice with great enthusiasm and their teaching is good. It is outstanding in some classes, accounting for pupils' exceptional progress. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, helping children make good progress, although the lack of continuity of leadership and management allows gaps in good practice, especially in the use of assessment.

Leadership and management are good overall with some exceptional drive provided by the headteacher and senior team. The school has to reach out to a great many community groups in a cohesive attempt to find the best possible support for its children and their families. This it has done most successfully, working in close partnership for the benefit of both families and pupils alike. Since the last inspection, the school has clearly improved further. With the support of the effective governing body and further plans for improvement, the current leadership of the school has an outstanding capacity to improve even further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children start school with abilities that are often well below those levels expected. A significant proportion of children arrive with poorly developed personal, communication and language skills which hold back their learning. There is a good focus on all areas of learning, with exciting opportunities, particularly in aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. The use of 'key persons' and good quality planning adds to the personalised learning provided. Good use is made of strategies for supporting progress in letters and sounds, although opportunities for writing for a specific purpose, for example through role play, are not provided regularly

enough. Good attention is given to pastoral care and links with parents are strong. However, in the outside area there are some occasions when equipment is not fully checked before use. Academic assessment procedures are satisfactory, but not organised systematically to give a clear picture of how children are progressing in each area of learning. Due to several changes in leadership and management over the recent past, and beyond the control of the school, it is only satisfactory and lacks continuity. In spite of this, practitioners work well within the unit. Children are happy and settled in both Nursery and Reception and enjoy their activities. They make good progress, reaching broadly average standards and are well prepared for the transition to Year 1.

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

- Provide more continuity of leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure that procedures for checking the progress and welfare of children are organised in a more systematic and rigorous way.
- Improve the effectiveness of governors and middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

The progress pupils make from their low starting points to the end of Year 6 is outstanding, with last year's results being significantly above national averages. Where standards have not been as high in some parts of the school, support has been given to teachers, with positive effects. For example, standards in Year 2 are now average. As year groups change markedly from year to year, with pupil mobility, special needs and a wide range of home languages spoken, outcomes therefore vary from year to year. It takes the school some time to overcome these barriers to learning, but it does successfully by Year 6. In 2008 Year 6 national tests, standards were high and achievement was outstanding. In the current Year 6, the school's data suggest that standards may be lower than the previous year's, but high achievement is being sustained and will remain outstanding based on pupils' lower starting point. Because of the school's wide-reaching support systems, the range of vulnerable pupils noted in the school all make excellent progress due to the high levels of support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils show good enjoyment because the curriculum and learning opportunities are exciting and interesting. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good, although parents, in the questionnaire, point to a small group of pupils who exhibit poor behaviour. Instances of poor behaviour are managed well by the school, and pupils acknowledge this. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as the school celebrates the diversity of pupils' backgrounds, faiths and cultures. The emphasis on learning about different cultures recognises the wider world helps pupils share and appreciate those differences. Equally, the school helps pupils to appreciate the natural world and value each others' uniqueness. Relationships are good and pupils have a strong sense of justice. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, including diet and exercise. They are equally aware of how to keep safe. They make a good contribution to the school and its wider community and enjoy opportunities to take on extra responsibilities, such as through the school council. They gain a good understanding of global issues through their Eco School work and links to an African school. They are prepared

well for transition to secondary school and are confident, showing good progress in their personal development from their entry to school. In spite of the school's best efforts, attendance is only broadly average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Overall, teaching is good, and there is outstanding teaching and learning in Years 2, 5 and 6. Lessons are characterised by detailed planning, with strong emphasis placed on basic skills. Learning objectives are carefully explained so that pupils know what they will learn. Pupils are guided to understand how they might recognise that they have achieved the objectives. Tasks are set to challenge the full range of abilities. Relationships are always good and often excellent, having a positive effect on progress and behaviour. The creative and imaginative curriculum is put into effect wholeheartedly by teachers, through a range of enjoyable experiences. Where teaching is not as strong, though, too wide a variety of activities on offer makes it difficult for the teacher to focus support on improving pupils' work. Teachers have changed their teaching styles to make the new curriculum more effective. Pupils are more active in their learning. Rooms are carefully prepared to support themes, such as 'Our City by the Sea' and 'Shiver me Timbers-Pirates' getting everybody on board! Teaching assistants work closely with teachers, as do a wide range of other support adults. Information and communication technology (ICT) is often used well to link subjects together, allowing pupils to select and choose information from the internet to support learning. This was seen well in a lesson on life cycles. Teachers assess prior knowledge well, although there are some inconsistencies in marking across the school and with the setting of individual targets for pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is very carefully planned in order to enrich pupils' experiences. It meets statutory requirements and has a strong focus on the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The school's creative approach to the curriculum ensures that subject matter and teaching styles are well targeted to interest and excite pupils. It does this very successfully and pupils say that lessons are really good fun. This is especially noted of boys, previously less involved in their work. One parent quoted her son on the way to school shouting, 'Literacy is amazing; I can't wait to do more literacy.' Pupils are very active in their learning and take advantage of the many opportunities for role play, discussion and links between subjects. The school's very good curriculum for personal and social development, has an equally positive effect on pupils. Local visits and visitors add a great deal of interest to pupils' work. During the week of the inspection, many pupils spent half a day at a heritage and environment festival locally. A good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs helps pupils extend literacy, physical and social skills and personal development. The breakfast club helps a range of pupils by providing a good nourishing start to each day.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and supported. The school's extremely caring ethos means that pupils from a very wide range of backgrounds and cultures are helped to thrive and

make such excellent progress academically. Their personal is good rising from low starting points. Support is designed to meet individual needs. These include counselling, nurture support, support for pupils for whom English is not a home language, together with a wide range of help for other vulnerable pupils. One parent notes, 'The school treats children as individuals and respects their views.' The school makes outstanding use of a range of outside agencies, extended to both parents and their children, examples of which were seen during the inspection. The school has a wide range of very good quality strategies to create positive behaviour. 'Golden Time' and a very effective reward system are in place and are highly effective for the vast majority of pupils. The school has been working consistently with pupils to effect improvements in attendance, although it has not worked directly enough with parents. Safeguarding meets requirements. Academic guidance is good and based on thorough assessment systems. Whilst there are some inconsistencies in marking, the school already involves pupils in assessing their own work and the work of friends.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and her two deputies show outstanding leadership qualities and have driven the school forward to its current outstanding effectiveness. They have played a significant part in the school's recent successes. Through careful analysis, they have put in place strategies leading to pupils making excellent progress. They set clear and challenging targets which are often met and sometimes surpassed. It is, however, in the area of promoting the diverse nature of the school's population that the school has been most successful, offering equal opportunities to all groups of pupils. The school has reached out to the local community in an outstanding and cohesive way. It has broken down barriers and forged links with a wide range of community groups and hard-to-reach families. Parents are very appreciative of this work. Leadership at other levels has not been given as much support, due to previous financial restrictions, and as a result is not as effective but still good overall. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a lack of continuity of leadership has meant that some procedures for assessing children's progress and for checking equipment are underdeveloped. Pupils have a strong sense of common values and are very respectful of each other. A relative weakness is the opportunity for pupils to understand what life is like in a different part of the United Kingdom, for example in a rural school. Staff and resources are used well. The school already has plans to make use of the space available following the closure of the Nursery. The school is rigorous in its assessment and tracking of progress. This has been especially successful in English, mathematics, science and ICT where subject leaders have been given time to implement their roles. Governors are supportive and involved in the school's development and monitor the work of the school.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Carlton Hill Primary School, Brighton and Hove BN2 9HS

Thank you for your help when we visited your school for its recent inspection. You are justly proud of your school and sharing your views with us was very helpful. Yours is an outstanding school, helping you make excellent progress so that you reach standards which are higher than in many other schools.

Here are some of the highlights we saw on our visit.

- The progress you make in your work from Reception through to Year 6 is outstanding.
- Your curriculum is both very exciting and interesting.
- Your headteacher and senior managers lead the school very effectively to achieve such successes.
- The care, guidance and support given to you by teachers and support staff are outstanding.
- The school encourages every single one of you to do their best.
- The school has excellent links with the local community.

The school now needs to:

- Help the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage by establishing a longer-term leader than has been possible in the past in order to make improvements there.
- Help governors and some of the middle leaders in the school to play a stronger role in checking on the school's progress.

I am sure that you will do your best to keep up the very high levels of progress you make in your work and continue to work and play together well.

Thank you again for a very interesting visit to your school.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Gavin Jones Lead inspector