

Brede Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114389
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	326002
Inspection date	16 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Ann Sydney

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	83
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Pattinsson
Headteacher	Nicole Cummins
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Udimore Road Broad Oak Brede Rye TN31 6DG
Telephone number	01424 882393
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Brede is a small village school with four mixed-age classes, organised in response to a falling roll. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, Reception children are taught in a class with pupils from Years 1 and 2. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There is a lower than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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 strengths in pupils' personal development and well-being and in the care, guidance and support that underpin this. The school has come through a turbulent time, with a new headteacher dealing with a cycle of staff changes and a falling roll that necessitated class re-organisation, which has not been popular with parents. The headteacher has clearly evaluated the needs of the school and has had good support from the local authority. Her focus has rightly been on raising pupils' achievement and standards, and there is evidence that this is succeeding. As one parent said, 'Although there have been many changes in the management of the school and the school environment, I feel these have been of benefit to the school and my child.' However, many parents feel they are 'kept in the dark' about new developments and the reasons for change, linked to the reorganisation of the school caused by the falling number on roll. Parents feel great loyalty to their village school and traditions, and the recent pace of change, largely in response to external factors, has been rapid.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Achievement across the school is satisfactory, although pupils have underachieved in the past. Assessment data is now being used to identify where underachievement happens and effective action is taken. For example, after focusing on changing the curriculum and resources and putting in extra help, the number of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing and science in Year 6 now exceeds the national average. The leadership acknowledges that there are still areas in need of improvement, for example in raising writing standards in Years 1 and 2.

Staff use a clear and positive behaviour policy. This has led to very good behaviour in and around the school. Pupils are well mannered and articulate, and different ages get on well together. They are keen to learn and know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Small classes allow teachers to get to know pupils' academic and pastoral needs quickly and teachers care for the whole child, seeing achievement as more than academic prowess.

There are examples of good teaching where pupils make fast progress but there are inconsistencies between classes, for example in marking, despite the school having a marking policy. Pupils achieve best where data are used to plan lessons that challenge different ages and abilities. This is a complex task where there are up to three years' age difference in a class, and not all teachers succeed. Consequently, without this improved planning, recent improvements in assessment are not having enough impact on pupils' progress.

Brede is a small community with strong local traditions and the school is closely identified with these. However, there have been few opportunities for pupils to understand the lives of people in contrasting environments, either through visits, communications or through the curriculum. Pupils have few responsibilities within the school community. The leadership has not given these aspects of community cohesion the priority they deserve to prepare pupils for the wider world. Although community cohesion is inadequate, the school has plans to address this. Recent and sometimes dramatic improvements in standards show that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve still further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When they enter the Reception class, children's attainment is generally in line with national expectations. Although typically one third of children come in above these expectations, another third have no pre-school experience. Children make satisfactory progress so that most achieve all the Early Learning Goals. In 2008, standards in communication, language and literacy were a concern. Lessons in letters and sounds were introduced and now progress is particularly good, with a noticeable improvement in boys' literacy skills in particular. However, personal, social and emotional development and creative development lag behind other areas because there is insufficient assessment and planning of the creative curriculum. Progress is closely monitored by the teaching assistant so that children with additional needs are identified quickly and extra help put in place. Welfare is satisfactory and there are good links with parents. Children are confident in making choices but opportunities for outside activities are limited, despite recent improvements, and this restricts their learning. Inside the classroom, the complexity of teaching such a spread of ages sometimes means that the younger children do not have the freedom of choice expected in a Reception class. However, children benefit socially from being in a mixed-age class, and this can be seen in their growing interaction with older pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all teaching meets the needs of all groups of pupils, including children in the Reception year.
- Plan for and evaluate pupils' understanding of their place in the national and global community.
- Explain changes in the school's organisation and the reasons for them to parents and carers.

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

In the 2008 national tests, standards in Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. This was lower than expected in reading and writing, bearing in mind the ability of that group. Few pupils reached the higher levels in reading. Current standards are rising because the rate of progress has improved. In reading and mathematics, about 40% of pupils now reach the higher levels but writing still lags behind, particularly girls' writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress at the same rate as other pupils. Results in Year 6 in 2008 raised concerns about the numbers of pupils reaching Level 5 in English and particularly science, while mathematics results were average. Records and predictions show that they were making very slow progress and were dramatically falling behind similar pupils nationally. This sharp decline was arrested by improved use of data to track progress, frequent monitoring and progress reviews, more individual and small group work and more science lessons on the timetable. Recent tracking data now show that while progress varies between classes, all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 6 have made good progress this year, reaching above average standards in English and science and average standards in mathematics. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing is a particular success story.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most parents support pupils' comment that they enjoy coming to school for the variety of lessons and the clubs. Attendance is at the national average, with no persistent absentees. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is very good so that no time is wasted, and records show there are a negligible number of incidents and no racism. Different age groups mix well at lunchtime and playtime and older pupils act as 'buddies' to younger children. Pupils recognise how to stay safe and the Healthy School award recognises their healthy lifestyle. Social and moral understanding is good and spiritual development is progressing well, through the arts as well as through religious and personal aspects of the curriculum. Cultural development is good, and the school is strongly linked into the local community through traditional festivals, performances and the local church. Some aspects of multiculturalism have been touched upon, for example a day studying Hinduism, but pupils do not have enough chances to gain experience of communities different from their own. Pupils have limited opportunities to take responsibility in school, or engage in enterprise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In lessons where progress is good, teachers' planning addresses the needs of different abilities and ages so that all groups learn equally well. Pace is good and lessons are fun. Lots of opportunities are taken to assess progress and involve pupils in assessing their own learning. The interactive whiteboards are used well, for example, a scary sound clip to give the class goose bumps at the start of a lesson on writing mystery stories. Behaviour management needs only to be low-key as it is now based on a system of 'treats' that the pupils enjoy. Pupils with additional needs are generally well supported. Where pupils make slower progress, this is because planning does not identify enough opportunities to assess what different pupils have understood. In some lessons, the pupils do not have work that is challenging enough. This is often but not always the most able pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and sometimes this carries rather dull teaching. Marking is inconsistent despite the marking policy and one book can show different methods because of staff changes. The best marking indicates how the work can be improved and refers to the pupil's individual target.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The timetable places a strong emphasis on the core subjects of literacy and numeracy. As a result, the curriculum is too narrow. The school recognises this and has plans for a more creative curriculum. In particular, there are long gaps between lessons in history and geography, subjects which make a major contribution to learning about the wider world. Displays around the school show how the curriculum can become more creative, for example a stunning one based on the book *Charlotte's Web* linking literacy, science, art and local knowledge, and appealing to all ages. The curriculum, although narrow, is organised carefully on two cycles so that pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat work. All classes have personal, social and health education appropriate for their age and this contributes to their good personal development. Information and communication technology is taught across the curriculum so that it enhances other subjects and it holds most pupils' interest. Most pupils enjoy the school day. One said, 'It's really fun.'

You get really good things to learn.' There is a good range of clubs and activities after school that are well supported, for example tag rugby for boys and girls, and a limited number of visits to make learning more fun.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Safeguarding is secure and risk assessments are thorough so that most parents rightly feel the school is a safe environment. The governors take a strong line on health and safety. There are no recent records of bullying or violent behaviour and one isolated temporary exclusion. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and they are identified early in their school life. The quantity of information to parents has improved, with an open-door policy and a weekly bulletin, but some parents miss the easy accessibility of the headteacher in the playground. Some recent leadership decisions have been unpopular and as a result many parents feel that their own children's views have not been taken into account. Academic guidance is generally good. Pupils value and understand the information about their level of attainment. They have group or individual targets for literacy and numeracy and the best teachers use these effectively in their planning to match work to different abilities and ages.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and chair of governors have a shared vision of how they want the school to move forward. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, supported well by the local authority and school improvement partner. Their first priority has been to improve standards and they have, in difficult circumstances, succeeded in doing that. The headteacher has high expectations of pupils' progress, sets teachers challenging targets and monitors performance accurately. Data are now used well to spot underachievement, and all teachers are involved. Boys' writing has improved and higher achievers are reaching the higher levels in tests in Year 6. The school environment is stimulating and colourful. High staffing costs and some inherited overspend have led to a licensed budget deficit that is under control. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are beginning to challenge and to understand their role more fully and statutory requirements are now in place. However, the school does not fulfil the requirements for community cohesion. Although some elements of this are present in school, there is no audit or evaluation of this provision and community cohesion is therefore inadequate.

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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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
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?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
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	3
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 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

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	4
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brede Primary School, Rye TN31 6DG

Dear Pupils,

You may remember two of us visited your school recently. Thank you for showing us your work and giving us your opinions. We think you go to a satisfactory school.

This year, your progress has accelerated and this is really good news. Well done! We were very impressed with your behaviour and how well pupils of all ages get on with each other. It has been a difficult year for you all with teachers changing and classes being re-organised. Many of your parents are unhappy with this but it has happened because of a number of reasons, sometimes nothing to do with your school. You told us that you enjoy coming to school, but some of you think the work is sometimes too easy. We know you like all the clubs that the school runs for you. Some of you told us it was a long wait between geography and history lessons and we agree with you. It is important that you know more about people in other parts of Britain and in other parts of the world.

We read all the letters from your parents and carers and took careful note of what you told us, so in our report we have asked the headteacher and governors to do three things.

- Make sure the work you do in lessons is not too easy for you, and is fun.
- Give you more chances to learn about and explore other communities.
- Explain changes and the reasons for them more fully to your parents and carers.

You can help Mrs Cummins by telling your teachers if work is too easy or too difficult. Please carry on working hard to make as much progress as you possibly can.

Very best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

Ann Sydney

(Lead inspector)