

West Park CofE First and Middle (Controlled)

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 126016 |
| Local Authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 328442 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 July 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Eileen Chadwick |

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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| Type of school | Middle deemed primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–12 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 767 |
| 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 | Kris Pillai |
| Headteacher | Peter Neale |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 January 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Marlborough Road Worthing BN12 4HD |
| Telephone number | 01903 243099 |
| Fax number | 01903 240928 |

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

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school, much larger than most, also has two specialist units. There are 13 pupils in the unit for pupils with physical disabilities and seven in that for pupils with learning difficulties and/or emotional needs. These pupils are fully integrated into the mainstream school. The overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the number with statements of special educational needs is very high. The numbers of these pupils vary across year groups with the highest proportion entering in Year 4. Most have speech and language, physical or emotional and behavioural learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In Year 4, the school increases in size and becomes a five-form entry, when the majority of pupils enter from local first schools. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are in either the single-age Reception class or the mixed-age Reception/Year 1 class. Approximately one fifth of pupils leave in Year 6 to join secondary schools. Since the previous inspection, there have been changes in senior leadership with the headteacher taking up post two years ago.

The school holds Active Mark, Healthy Schools and Arts 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: 2

This is a good school. Standards are improving and are above average by the time pupils leave. Improvements have been achieved through the very clear direction provided by the headteacher and the way senior leaders, staff and governors work closely together, intent on raising standards further. Pupils are nurtured, very well cared for and flourish in the school's happy and vibrant atmosphere. Consequently, their personal development and behaviour are good and they are ready to learn. Pupils do well academically and have strong opportunities for developing their creative, practical and sporting skills. Standards in art and design are outstanding by Year 7. Parents are often delighted with the school. One parent echoed the views of many when saying, 'The school has made amazing progress since the headteacher took over two years ago and my child has improved a lot since then as the headteacher has made many changes in the way teachers teach.'

Pupils achieve well. Children in Reception get off to a good start and reach or exceed the standards expected for this age. Standards in Year 2 have risen this year and are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has also concentrated, with success, on raising standards in the rest of the school. By Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and by Year 7, they are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. These standards represent good progress compared with pupils' starting points. New arrangements for checking pupils' progress and improving teaching have played a significant part in raising achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the specialist support units, are well provided for, supported and achieve well. The school is very effective in ensuring that, as far as possible, those with physical disabilities have equal access to the whole curriculum. Evidence from school data indicates that some pupils did not always perform as well as they should have in the past. The school has robust procedures to help them catch up.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Improvements have been achieved because previous performance has been rigorously reviewed and the strong emphasis on developing staff's expertise has led to pupils making better progress. However, in a minority of lessons throughout the school the challenge for more capable pupils slows and these pupils should do better. Additionally, when the whole class is gathered together, teachers' questions do not always target enough pupils to ensure they all play an active part in their learning. The good curriculum, particularly strong in art, music, design and technology and sport, really stimulates pupils' enjoyment of learning. Good links with other schools enrich their experiences. Pupils feel very safe and develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. The care, support and guidance of pupils are good. Assessment systems are robust; the school knows itself well and has identified its strengths and weaker areas.

The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. He is capably supported by a strong senior team and a good governing body. The new leadership structure is empowering leaders at all levels so they can play a full part in raising achievement. The school acknowledges the need to enable middle managers, including subject leaders, to play a fuller part in raising achievement. They do not yet have enough opportunities for observing lessons and checking pupils' assessments in order to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Nonetheless, the rate of recent improvement shows the school has a good capacity to continue to progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good links with parents and clear routines ensure children readily settle and make a good start to their learning. Standards on entry vary but most children arrive with skills that are expected of their age. Children progress and achieve well in a stimulating and happy learning environment. By the time they leave Reception they reach above average standards, including in literacy and numeracy. They do well in their personal and social development. They grow in confidence and learn to play and work together in small groups. The quality of teaching is good. Well-trained and qualified staff ensure that children are kept safe, well cared for and enjoy their learning. There is a good range of stimulating activities in the classrooms and for outdoor play. The covered outdoor area protects the children well from sun and wet weather and they are encouraged to wear sun hats on sunny days. There are some high quality mathematical learning opportunities stemming from water and sand play. Children enjoy estimating and filling containers with sand and water. They have a real reason to find out about quantities when using coloured water to invent their 'potions'. Careful planning ensures the needs of all children are met, including the more capable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children enjoy role play in the 'space ships', which provides good scope for developing communication skills, knowledge and creativity, although role play areas are not of a uniform high quality across both classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Assessment is generally good, although the school is aware that closer checks are needed by middle leaders to judge the impact of teaching on children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of good teaching and pupils' progress by making sure there is consistent challenge for more capable pupils and teachers use more effective questioning techniques to enhance pupils' involvement in lessons.
- Increase opportunities for middle managers to evaluate teaching and learning and pupils' assessments so they have a greater impact on raising achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Assessments show that children enter Reception with the expected level of skills and knowledge. Pupils in Year 4 start with broadly average levels of attainment. Standards are above average in English and science and average in mathematics by the time they leave in Year 7.

Standards at the end of Reception have risen in recent years, especially in communication, language and literacy. This is built upon well in Key Stage 1 and pupils are well prepared for their junior education. Strong teaching in Year 3 accelerates the progress of those pupils who did not achieve so well in the past. The school sets challenging targets for all pupils. In Key Stage 2, these rightly take full account of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 which is sometimes higher than their assessments on entry to Year 4. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is good and Year 6 pupils are on course to meet their stretching targets.

Good teaching and progress is raising achievement for pupils in Year 7, including the proportion reaching average levels in mathematics. The school's initiatives to raise standards in writing are having a good impact. By Years 6 and 7, pupils write well for different purposes and their imaginative writing is particularly good. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those in the

special support units, make good progress and achieve well. However, occasionally, throughout the school, the progress of more capable pupils slows when there is too much teaching to average levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils value the high quality care and support they are given and settle well to their lessons. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils help pupils to become warm and communicative and develop confidence. They are proud of their school and achievements and are mutually supportive. Pupils feel very safe and are confident about who to ask for help if someone is unkind to them. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Their strong sense of right and wrong is very well supported through close links with the local church. They have good awareness of life in multicultural Britain, of people's different racial backgrounds and religious beliefs. Pupils make a good contribution to their community, for example through their school council work, in giving up their lunchtimes to support younger pupils and by recycling. The school takes a strong stance on punctuality and attendance, and attendance is average. The school works very closely with the education welfare officer to tackle any issues. Pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy. This, together with teamwork, decision making, problem solving and enterprise activities, means they are well prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers provide a good blend of direct teaching and allowing children to explore and work creatively and independently. Throughout the school, classrooms are attractive and positive learning environments. The majority of lessons are interesting and teachers explain lesson purposes clearly and pupils learn how to review their own learning. Teachers have established clear expectations of behaviour and pupils are usually keen and attentive. However, there are a few shortcomings when work does not challenge the more capable pupils and the pace of their learning slows. Teachers' planning is good overall but at times they do not take pupils' prior attainment into account enough when planning lessons. In the best lessons teachers engage pupils well with their question and answer techniques. However, occasionally, their questions do not enable enough pupils to take active part in sharing ideas and showing how well they are learning. Across the school, teaching assistants are well briefed, provide skilful support and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced with a good focus on literacy and numeracy. It provides a firm foundation for pupils to learn basic skills and to experiment and create. Strong cross-curricular links, using real experiences from practical subjects, drama, visitors and trips, bring the academic curriculum alive. Design and technology, art and design and humanities links are often of a high quality, including in Year 7. They are used well to underpin pupils' learning in literacy and are having a good impact on raising achievement. A thorough programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes well to pupils' personal

development and well-being. The rich selection of lunchtime and after school clubs, including in sport, music, art and karate, are well attended and greatly contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Pupils from the support units are well integrated into mainstream lessons and the accommodation has been adapted carefully to meet the needs of those with physical disabilities. The staff in the support units, including those for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, provide extremely good support for their pupils so they can adjust to school and achieve well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's calm, warm environment nurtures pupils and enables them to thrive. Staff provide excellent pastoral support and there are strong links with outside agencies to ensure vulnerable pupils are given every opportunity to succeed. Good induction programmes ease the transition for those joining or leaving the school. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are robust and very well organised. The arrangements to safeguard pupils meet current statutory requirements. Systems for tracking pupils' progress, recently improved, are very thorough. Robust systems for checking and quickly responding to the needs of the many newly arrived pupils in Year 4 are major reasons why these pupils settle quickly and achieve well. School leaders use assessments meticulously for evaluating pupils' progress and the impact of provision on progress. Teachers are becoming more skilled at analysing achievement. Pupils usually know their targets and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The very good leadership of the headteacher and the strong support provided by the deputy headteachers and senior staff have provided clear direction since the last inspection and enabled a common sense of purpose. Strengths have been sustained while more account has been taken of the academic progress made by pupils. School leaders quickly developed a more robust tracking system so that the progress of classes and groups against their challenging targets can be assessed and pockets of underachievement pinpointed. Agreed structures have been set in place to widen leadership responsibilities for subjects, phases and key aspects across the staff. Team leaders and subject leaders coach and support staff in their teaching and this keeps them up to date on subject matters and techniques. The school has recognised there is now a need to step up middle managers' roles in observing lessons and evaluating assessments so they can identify how well pupils of different abilities are learning and help to redress any weaknesses quickly.

Governors are well informed, very thoughtful and ask questions about the school's performance, ensuring that school leaders are suitably challenged. They have ensured sensible financial controls and earmarked a budget that effectively supports the implementation of the well-conceived school improvement plan. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. There are strong links with the local community and pupils develop a good understanding of national and world communities. The school works well with parents, who are very supportive of its work.

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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| 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? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| 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

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

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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 | 2 |
| 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**

3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Park CofE First and Middle (Controlled), Worthing BN12 4HD

You will remember that a team of inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well the school is doing. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with a number of you in lessons, looking at examples of your work and meeting some of you. Thank you for making us welcome.

First, you need to know your school gives you a good education. Here are some of the good things.

- You make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Those of you in the Reception class make a good start and have plenty of interesting things to do both indoors and outside.
- Your behaviour is good and this helps to make your school a happy one.
- By the time you leave in Year 7 you reach above average standards and your art and design work is excellent.
- Your curriculum gives you some exciting learning opportunities for art, design and technology, music, sport and for after-school clubs.
- Staff take very good care of you. You get extra help if you need it so you can learn new things as quickly as possible.
- Your headteacher leads you all very well and teachers and school governors are working hard to make the school even better.

This is what we are asking the school to improve:

- make sure your work is never too easy and teachers' questions help more of you to answer in class and show what you can do
- help middle managers to be more involved in checking up on how well you are learning.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and work hard in all you do.

Yours faithfully

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector