

St Mary and St Paul CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126017
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	328443
Inspection date	14 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	90
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	Marie Smith
Headteacher	Johnny Culley
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Tipper Lane South Harting Petersfield GU31 5QT

Age group	4–10
Inspection date	14 October 2008
Inspection number	328443

Telephone number
Fax number

01730 825388
01730 825895

Age group	4-10
Inspection date	14 October 2008
Inspection number	328443

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

Pupils' progress in reading and writing, with a particular focus on Year 3 and more able pupils in Years 1 and 2.

The quality of teaching, learning and the impact of academic guidance on pupils' achievement.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, members of staff, governors and parents, observations of teaching and learning, views of parents, scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This small first school serves children from the local village and wider areas. Children's attainment on entry varies between the small year groups, but is mostly broadly average. Currently, 20 children receive Early Years Foundation Stage Provision (EYFS) within a Reception and Year 1 class. The school has been joined by an unusually high number of pupils during the past two years. In September 2009, the school will have its first intake of Year 6 pupils. The school holds several awards: International Schools Award, Basic Skills Award, Artsmark Gold, and Investors in Health status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has several outstanding elements and is a very welcoming and caring community with strong positive Christian values that underpin all areas of learning. It has some significant strengths, such as pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being and their excellent, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents are very proud of the school, and comments such as 'The nurturing culture of the school is very strong' and 'the school is a vibrant part of the village' are typical of many parents' views. These comments also reflect the excellent links and partnerships with parents, the church and external agencies. Pupils' learning is enriched as a result. They are very well prepared for the next stage of education. Pupils have an excellent understanding of life in different cultures. They exchange letters and work with a school in Sierra Leone and recently also sent two laptops. Pupils make and sell friendship bracelets, greetings cards and sell fair trade goods such as woodcarvings from their sister school in Moyamba at the local village monthly market to raise funds. The school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding, as seen in its outreach work and excellent partnership in the local and wider communities. Pupils know about different traditions and beliefs through visits to places of worship. The curriculum has good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT. It is creative, motivating and well planned, with swimming, French and numerous visits. Children say, 'It's a great choice from sports, dance, art, orchestra, cooking, games, and music.' Year 5 pupils are already looking forward to camping.

Due to good leadership and management that ensures good teaching, pupils make good progress. They attain above average standards in English, mathematics, and science and in information and communication technology (ICT). Governors take an active role in the life of the school and have worked hard with the senior leadership team to rearrange the staffing structure. They share the school's determination to move forward and the school is well placed to do this. Self-evaluation is good and staff work hard together and, as parents comment, 'children are paramount here'. The headteacher is open to new ideas, keen to secure the best for the children and sees change as a positive challenge. All are looking forward to having a Year 6 group next September. The school motto, 'Loving to Learn and Learning to Love', is seen in the pupils' exemplary behaviour and relationships and the enthusiastic way they undertake their responsibilities. As 'Yellow Hats' and 'buddies', they organise new playground equipment and check that no one is left out at playtimes. Additionally, peer mediators are trained to help settle disputes and, as one pupil said, 'bullying just doesn't happen here'. As a result, children feel very safe. They show an outstanding understanding of how to keep healthy. They plant, harvest and cook fruit and vegetables and Year 5 enjoy taking part in the county 'Safety and Me' programme. As a result, they are safety alert. The school is also heavily involved in the village's current environmental initiative, 'Greening Harting'. They have built mini-beast hives and are about to have some solar panels fitted on the roof with a meter in the entrance area so that they can keep a check on their use of renewable energy.

Provision in the EYFS is good. The staff work hard to identify and meet the children's needs; consequently, children progress well. Standards at the end of Year 2 have consistently been above those found nationally for the last five years. However, this year's results were lower than previously. Results reflected year-group related difficulties and shortfalls in resources because of reduced pupil numbers. Standards are relatively higher in mathematics than in reading and writing and are usually well above average by the end of Year 5. The school is successfully closing this gap between subjects. The refurbished library, improved book stocks

and improved ICT equipment are helping to provide computing lessons before school. Volunteer-led reading sessions for specific pupils and intense teaching of 'Letters and Sounds' are all making positive inroads. Equally determined to raise attainment in writing, the school has introduced drama and role-play to stimulate spoken language and as preparation for writing. There is a wide range of additional support for pupils needing extra help in their learning. These, and sharper systems to check pupils' progress, are being used well to help pinpoint any likely underperformance early on and are leading to pupils' higher attainment. Presentation of work is not always as good as it could be, nevertheless the content of pupils' work is creative and largely accurate.

Teachers' good subject knowledge engages learners and motivates them well. Teachers mark work with helpful comments and use prompts such as 'achievement ladders' to help pupils understand what to do next. However, in talking with pupils, the inspection found that few knew or understood their own targets or what they needed to do to improve further. Whilst care, guidance and support are good overall, the real strengths are seen in the care and support pupils receive and are a strong contributory factor to pupils' learning.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good for EYFS children in the Reception/ Year 1 class and this contributes to their good progress. Good teamwork and leadership have secured a good variety of exciting and well-resourced learning activities. Children learn through play and first-hand experiences. They played happily in the outside den and the boys were particularly well engaged. At the writing table, children were keen to write on pieces of paper, though opportunities to capture or extend their early writing skills are not yet maximised. By the end of Reception class, the majority are working comfortably at average levels. Progress is beginning to be recorded and data shows a significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment in the communication aspects, especially in speaking and listening. To tackle this, the school is focusing on improving boys' speaking and listening skills particularly. The school has been working to involve parents in their children's reading and aims to build on this work to involve parents further. A newly-built outdoor classroom has hugely improved the opportunities for outside play in wet weather, role-play, physical activity and exploration of nature. Relationships with the local pre-school are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the presentation of pupils' writing throughout the school.
- Give more guidance to pupils so they understand their own targets and are clear about how they can improve their work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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

Achievement and standards

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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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

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?	1
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary and St Paul CofE First School, Petersfield GU31 5QT

We would like to thank you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing your work in your classrooms and talking with you. We think that your school is a good school and a happy place. One of you told us that 'teachers in this school make learning fun' and we agree with you. There are lots of other things that are good about your school. These are the most important ones.

- The standards you reach are better than those in most schools.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors know what is good about your school and they know how to make it even better.
- You willingly help in the village and we were impressed by the support you give to others, such as the school in Sierra Leone.
- You thoroughly enjoy school, and you behave brilliantly. Well done!
- You told us that yours is a really friendly school and that you enjoy your responsibilities.
- We were very impressed with your understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, and well done for being so environmentally aware.

We have asked the school to consider the following to make your school even better than it is.

- Help you all improve the presentation of your written work.
- Check that you understand your own targets so that you are clear about what it is you need to do to improve.

You can help too by always taking care in your work and letting teachers know if you are not sure about how to improve.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning Lead inspector