

Gossops Green Primary

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 133970 |
| Local Authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 328787 |
| Inspection dates | 5–6 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Liz Duffy |

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 | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 502 |
| 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 local authority |
| Headteacher | Dawn Martin |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 December 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Kidborough Road Gossops Green Crawley RH11 8HW |
| Telephone number | 01293 525449 |
| Fax number | 01293 538343 |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Gossops Green is a large primary school where the majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average, and most of these pupils have specific learning difficulties or speech, language and communication difficulties. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below average. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are taught in three classes. From Year 1 onwards, pupils are taught in mixed-age classes (Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; Years 5 and 6). There is pre-school provision on site which is managed by an external provider. The school was formed in September 2004 after the re-organisation of schools in Crawley. The headteacher has been in post since January 2007.

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: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to: raising achievement and standards in reading, writing and science; ensuring sufficient rigour when monitoring and evaluating pupils' performance; and improving the quality and consistency of target setting so pupils know how to progress.

Although the school's current provision is not effective in meeting the needs of all pupils, its capacity to improve is satisfactory. Whilst leadership and management are mainly inadequate, there are positive aspects in that the headteacher is supported by the governing body and a unified staff who are committed to enabling pupils to perform their best. The positive impact of this commitment to improving the quality of education is most evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage where significant improvements, as a result of very effective provision, mean that children are now making good progress. There are significant strengths in the teaching of letters and sounds. Provision is also good for pupils who speak English as an additional language; those in Years 1 and 2 perform in line with expectations.

School development planning is not sufficiently focused on achieving clear and measurable targets to improve standards in the main school. The impact of a number of initiatives to raise the results reached by pupils in Years 2 and 6 has been limited partly because the outcomes of such support were not monitored effectively by senior managers. This and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning are the main factors behind the recent and significant drop in results in National Curriculum assessments or tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. The current picture of performance in Years 1 to 6 is of a continuing pattern of underachievement. Evidence from current work shows standards are well below average.

There is too much teaching and learning of only a satisfactory standard, which contributes to pupils not always making fast enough progress. In the most effective lessons, the range of pupils' needs is catered for. However, this is not consistent across the school which leads to some pupils not making the improvement expected of them. In some lessons, expectations are too low and tasks are not challenging enough. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and planning does not address adequately progression in writing skills. Insufficient evaluation of the progress of different groups of pupils and of how successfully the new creative curriculum has been implemented, coupled with inconsistency in target setting have masked the key improvement needs of the school.

A significant proportion of parents are supportive of the school as demonstrated by a high return of parental questionnaires. One parent commented: 'Gossops Green is a welcoming school'. Parents particularly value the quality of care staff display for the pupils in their charge. However, a significant minority of parents expressed reservations about aspects of the school's work, holding the view that their children do not make enough progress in mixed-age classes. The school cannot yet demonstrate whether this pattern of its organisation is working effectively in order to raise standards and achievement.

Pupils' personal development and well being are satisfactory and are underpinned by effective pastoral care and guidance. Good relationships are a feature of the school and pupils readily help one another in class and during play times. Pupils are well behaved and take pride in their

school. They are particularly appreciative of the new systems in place which develop pupils' leadership skills. Academic guidance and support are not as strong as the pastoral care because there is inconsistency in the use of marking and individual targets to guide pupils in their next steps in learning.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and most are on track to achieve the expected goals by the time they start Year 1. Strong partnerships exist with parents and Stepping Stones Playschool, the pre-school provider, thereby helping children to make a good start. Parents are welcome to work with their children on letters and sounds at the start of the day, which engages parents effectively in supporting their children's learning. In lessons, activities are well structured with children enjoying their tasks. For example, in one session all activities were linked to a garage where children acted as mechanics and drivers. In this case, outdoor activities for learning were linked well to activities for indoor learning. However, there is a recognised need to improve outdoor learning with all classes. In particular, there is insufficient large and fixed climbing apparatus for children's physical development. The interactive whiteboard is used frequently by the children to reinforce knowledge of letters and sounds. Many children have moved from 'mark making' to writing recognisable words and indeed sentences. Children are well supported and this helps increase their confidence. Teaching assistants provide effective support. For example, in a problem solving, reasoning and numeracy session, children moved from adding two single-digit numbers to adding two two-digit numbers together accurately. The assessment scheme which focuses strongly on children reaching their 'next steps' helps them to make good progress. Leadership and management are good and contribute successfully to children being cared for well, and in making good progress in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in reading, writing and science to meet nationally expected levels.
- Establish robust procedures by which the school can show measurable impact of its initiatives to improve pupils' standards and achievement.
- Ensure much greater consistency in the way teachers use pupils' individual targets to identify next steps in learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

From starting points which are below those expected for their age on entry, children progress well throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, entering Year 1 with achievements that are in line with expectations. Progress in reading and writing slows down from this point and standards are well below average for the majority of pupils in Years 1 to 6. Of particular concern is the performance of current Year 3 girls who perform less well than girls nationally. Across the school, the quality of writing in books is lower than is expected nationally and in some cases presentation is poor. Standards are equally low in science. A high proportion of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are not making fast enough progress to reach their end-of-year targets in reading, writing and science. Pupils attain more highly in mathematics and this is in part due to pupils enjoying a problem solving approach in lessons. Those pupils with individual education

plans (IEPs) generally make satisfactory progress but, overall, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and demonstrate a caring attitude to their peers and to others. Social and moral development is good. Pupils are keen to participate in the 'Play Leader' and 'Peer Mentor' initiatives. They maintain that there is very little bullying and that the school responds well to any incidents. A small proportion of parents expressed the opinion that bullying is not always dealt with appropriately, although there was no evidence of this during the inspection. The cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils celebrate the differences and similarities in the school's increasingly diverse community. Although spiritual development is less well promoted, pupils understand that faith is an important aspect of peoples' lives and that there are various belief systems that govern behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and pupils form positive relationships with adults and with each other. Attendance, although experiencing a decline most recently, had previously risen to the national average and is satisfactory overall. Awareness of safety and health is well developed. Pupils enjoy their lessons and have a strong commitment to their community. Low standards and weak progress in literacy adversely affect pupils' development for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the best lessons observed, relationships were strong and there was a brisk pace of learning with an appropriate level of challenge. Pupils were encouraged to assess how well they were performing. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent across the school. Where lessons were not as good, the work did not fully match the needs of the pupils, expectations were too low and there was too much of a relaxed pace.

Pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They apply themselves to a task with determination and demonstrate pleasure in their achievements. Pupils commented that they enjoy problem solving and would like to see more of this approach in their lessons. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively. Pupils benefit from ICT lessons as well as using a range of programs early on in their schooling. For example, a Year 1 girl was delighted when she learnt how to move her drawing on the screen during an art lesson. There was little evidence of tasks that require extended writing. Most teachers' marking is positive in that it tells pupils how well they are doing, but it does not consistently tell all pupils how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils were pleased that the combined groupings gave them the opportunity to work with other pupils from other years. The new curriculum has raised the profile of art. In addition, pupils now benefit from subject specialists who teach Spanish, music, physical education and religious education on a regular basis. Vibrant enrichment opportunities are provided for pupils. For example, during the inspection all members of the school community celebrated 'Book Week' by dressing up as various characters. In this activity, staff provided good role models,

giving the message to pupils that reading is enjoyable. Provision for progression in writing and improving attainment in science is weak. In Years 1 and 2, there is a tendency to rely too heavily upon photocopied worksheets that provide insufficient challenge. Planning for more able pupils lacks challenge. The school's personal, social and health education programme supports the stronger aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Effective procedures are in place to develop pupils' well-being, such as the 'Behaviour Task Force' which encourages good behaviour. However, academic guidance is not as strong. Where targets are set they are insufficiently focused upon improving skills or are too easy for the ability of the pupil. For example, a Year 4 high attaining pupil had been set the same target as a lower attaining pupil which was to improve the use of capital letters in writing. Teaching assistants provide sound support with intervention programmes, especially for pupils with learning difficulties. However, liaison with the class teacher regarding how well such pupils perform in lessons and/or group work is inconsistent. The needs of pupils at an early stage of learning English are met very well. Displays in corridors support learning through asking questions of the viewer and create interest where there are puzzles to solve. The school complies with all statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The headteacher and senior leadership team have been successful in improving behaviour, addressing attendance issues, improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and gaining the support of staff and governors for the implementation of the new creative curriculum. However, they do not have sufficient evidence to show that the initiatives to raise standards have been satisfactorily evaluated to see if they are having the intended impact. Priorities in the school development plan are mainly linked to improving procedures and provision rather than being focused upon improving pupils' academic outcomes. Whilst there is monitoring of teaching and learning, and a view gained of standards through scrutiny of pupils' work, there is too little analysis of the rates of progress for different groups of pupils. Consequently, subject leaders do not have an adequate overview of how well year groups are performing. Strategies for improving performance in literacy are not robust. The governing body is prepared to challenge the school and is very committed to training. However, governors are not sufficiently aware of the issues regarding standards and the performance of groups of pupils. For example, the school has not evaluated the current performance of girls in Year 3 to see whether the gap in their achievement against boys has narrowed, widened or stayed the same.

The school utilises a range of partnerships to provide support for the development of staff and pupils. For example, staff are encouraged to visit other schools to see good practice and pupils benefit from voluntary organisations, such as the 'Lighthouse Group' which gives assemblies and provides a counselling service. The school offers a variety of family learning programmes that are of benefit to the local community. However, its links within the wider UK community are underdeveloped.

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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? | 4 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 4 |

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? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |

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? | 3 |

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 4 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 4 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 4 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 4 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 |
| 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? | Yes |

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

9 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gossops Green Primary School, Gossops Green, RH11 8HW.

- Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. In particular, I would like to thank the School Council and the pupils from Years 5 and 6 who gave up part of their lunchtime to speak with us. It is clear that you are happy in school. We enjoyed celebrating 'Book Week' with you. We were most impressed by the range of costumes. You and your parents particularly appreciate the way that staff work so hard to offer you such a range of activities outside lessons. However, the school is not doing as well as it should so we are giving it a notice to improve. You will receive a visit from an inspector in about six months to check up on how well the school is doing. In about a year, the school will have another inspection. There are some things that your school does well:
 - children in Reception make good progress when they start school
 - many of you enjoy participating in activities that are offered outside lessons
 - you particularly enjoy lessons when you can use ICT or when you have problems to solve
 - all adults care for you and look after you well
 - all those who lead and manage your school want you to improve your work. However, there are a number of things which need to be improved, so we have asked the staff:
 - to help all of you make good progress in reading, writing and science
 - to make sure teachers check up on the progress made by each year group during the school year
 - to give you help more regularly by telling you how to improve your work. You can all help by working hard to improve your writing, especially with presentation and spelling. I wish you all well. Yours faithfully

Liz Duffy

Lead inspector