

Sompting Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134896
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	333748
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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)	340
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	Rob Leng
Headteacher	Richard Cave
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	White Styles Road Stompting Lancing BN15 0BU
Telephone number	01903 204 627
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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

Sompting Village Primary School, an amalgamation of Templars First School and White Styles Middle School, opened in September 2008, following a change in the age of transfer to secondary schools in the local area. It currently has Early Years Foundation Stage provision for reception children. The pupils are predominantly White British. A small number of pupils come from the Romany Traveller community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. An increasing number of children enter school with weaknesses in speech and language. The school has introduced an after-school club which is managed by an outside provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sompting Village Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It has significant strengths. The leadership team has successfully managed the amalgamation of two schools and a strong shared ethos is emerging. There is considerable support for the new school by staff, governors and virtually all parents. Parents value the positive ethos, the commitment to individuals and the exceptional pastoral care system. One comment, typical of many, said: 'This is a fantastic school with great teachers who do everything possible to make the school what it is.' Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and behave outstandingly well because of their good personal development. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They enjoy school and make a good contribution to its smooth running through undertaking many jobs. Pupils have a good awareness of international issues but their understanding of diversity within Britain is less secure. Attendance is average. Most pupils attend well. The school has robust systems for supporting the few pupils who do not.

Overall provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Much has been done to enhance the learning environment. Both indoor and outdoor areas offer stimulating environments which extend children's learning well. While many children's standards remain slightly below expected levels by the time they enter Year 1, they have achieved satisfactorily, building steadily upon skills which are below those levels expected for their age when they first enter the school. Able children are not always challenged as effectively as they could be and this limits their progress. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2, other than in mathematics, where they are below average. Too few pupils are working at the higher levels when they leave Year 2 and this is an acknowledged area for improvement. Pupils make better, though still satisfactory, progress in Years 3 to 6. They reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, other than in English, where standards are below average and progress has been slow. While older able pupils do better than those in Year 2, they are not challenged enough in some lessons, particularly where the pace of teaching is slower. Pupils with additional learning needs and those from the Traveller community are supported well. Teaching is satisfactory, with an effective tracking system to show where pupils need to improve. Individual pupil targets ensure that pupils know what they need to do next, although these are not yet implemented consistently. Marking does not always provide a clear direction for improvement. The curriculum meets pupils' needs well.

The headteacher provides effective leadership. Thorough school self-evaluation demonstrates a clear sense of direction. Middle managers have embraced their school-wide roles successfully. Governors are gaining confidence in their monitoring role. Whilst governance is satisfactory overall, governors support the school effectively. The drive of the current leadership team and its clear vision for the future ensure that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge below those levels expected for their age, particularly in speaking, listening and calculation. They settle quickly as a result of the well-structured induction arrangements. Effective teaching and targeted support help most children, including those with additional learning needs, to make steady progress overall, with good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in their physical skills. Children are well cared for and benefit from close relationships with staff. This contributes effectively

to their good personal and social development. Children feel safe, have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They enjoy the wide variety of activities and apply themselves well. The school has improved the range of learning opportunities and resources to enable children to develop independence. Children select activities confidently, persist at tasks and respond well to requests. The well-resourced outdoor area effectively supports children's physical development and their learning across the curriculum. Effective teaching of the linking of letters and sounds, for example, has underpinned improvements in reading and writing. Staff plan activities using observations satisfactorily as a basis for future planning. However, though progress has improved, potentially higher-attaining children are not always sufficiently challenged so that the pace of their learning increases. By the end of Reception, the majority of children have skill levels just below those expected nationally, although they have made satisfactory progress. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils make more rapid progress leading to higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and for more able pupils across the school.
- Ensure that the policy for marking of pupils' work, and the individual target system, are more consistently implemented across the school, so that pupils receive better guidance as to how they can improve their work.
- Ensure that opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their understanding of diversity in British society today.

A small proportion of 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

Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in mathematics and science, but below average in English. The school feels that grouping pupils by prior attainment for mathematics is having a positive impact. In the absence of pupil data prior to the current year, Year 6 pupils appear to have achieved satisfactorily. The school is likely to meet its targets in 2009. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics. Very few pupils are attaining at the higher level. The proportion attaining at the higher level in Year 6 is greater, suggesting that achievement is more rapid for the older pupils – a view shared by the school. Pupils with additional learning needs benefit from effective interventions to resolve, for example, weaknesses in speaking and listening, but also to address issues of emotional well-being. Because of the good support provided, these pupils achieve well. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily. Pupils from Traveller backgrounds are supported well, attend frequently, and, overall, make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school and eagerly support clubs and activities. They are very considerate of each other, feel secure, have confidence in adults and few concerns about bullying. They collaborate well in lessons. There have been no exclusions. Pupils' moral, spiritual and social development is good. Cultural development is not so strong. While opportunities for

involvement with the local community are good, and international awareness is being promoted well, pupils' engagement with the ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary Britain is too limited and an area for improvement. Pupils contribute readily to the school community through classroom responsibilities and their views are sought. The school council has recently been re-established. Pupils are confident that their views are listened to. Their impressive personal qualities, very positive attitudes and satisfactory basic skills ensure a sound foundation for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Much of the teaching observed was good. A range of evidence including school monitoring records and outcomes in terms of pupils' achievement and progress indicate that it is satisfactory overall. Relationships are a strength. Teaching generally motivates pupils well and encourages very positive attitudes towards learning. The focus on speaking skills is a particular strength. Many lessons have a good pace which moves learning on well, but occasionally the pace flags and achievement is weaker. The school recognises that expectations have not been sufficiently high to drive up standards, particularly for more-able pupils. A rigorous system for checking pupils' progress is raising teachers' awareness of what pupils could achieve. However, assessment information is not always used rigorously enough. The marking of pupils' work is variable. At best, it provides clear guidance for improvement, but too often it falls short of this and opportunities are missed to raise standards. Older pupils frequently record work independently and evaluate what they have done. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils with additional learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is broad, carefully tailored to pupils' needs, personal and academic, and well enhanced by a good range of clubs, visits and themed events. The school successfully undertook a major review, including the canvassing of pupils' views, prior to amalgamation. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, both discretely and through other subjects. Good opportunities exist to promote pupils' writing across the curriculum, for example, in topic work throughout the school, and science in Years 5 and 6. The creative and performing arts are well established. The school is about to implement an intensive programme to raise reading standards in Year 1 and there is a current focus on speaking skills. Practical science activities are developed well. Provision for pupils who need additional support is extensive, leading to good progress. Provision for academically able pupils has improved and the school now accesses a range of enrichment activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is outstanding. Procedures in relation to child protection, fire prevention, first aid and health and safety matters are rigorous and very effective. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Staff know pupils and families extremely well and go the extra mile to ensure that their welfare needs are met. For example, access to on-site counselling

services effectively supports pupils with emotional needs. The school successfully draws upon a range of agency support to meet individual and family needs. This contributes strongly to pupils' good personal development. The school is very committed in its support for pupils from the Traveller community and this ensures that they make satisfactory progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory because individual targets are relatively new. Where these are most securely established – with the older pupils – they promote better progress. Teachers' marking sometimes offers clear guidance for moving learning forward, but practice varies between classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has successfully united two schools with differing philosophies and has ensured a smooth transition. Staff work well as a close team. The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and has set an appropriate direction for the school. His evaluation of the school's work is accurate, recognising that the pace of learning has to improve if standards are to rise. Middle management roles are now securely established and there is a shared commitment to improvement. A rigorous programme of monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work has been implemented. Provision is improving, although challenging targets are not yet used effectively enough to drive up achievement. The school is highly committed to inclusion and very successfully supports pupils' personal development. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are increasingly ready to hold the school to account and to contribute to strategic planning. Despite the need to develop pupils' awareness of different lifestyles in Britain as a multicultural society, the school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory overall.

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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	NA
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

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?	2
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	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?	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	1
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	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?	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?	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	3
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?	3
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**

20 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sompting Village Primary School, Lancing BN15 0BU

Thank you for making us very welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and spending time in your lessons. We found that your school, while satisfactory overall, has lots of strengths.

- The main things that we found are these.
- You behave extremely well and work very hard. Most of you attend well.
- Standards in Year 6 are average, but are better in mathematics and science than in English. You need to make faster progress earlier on in school so that standards rise further as you get to the end of Year 6.
- While much of the teaching we saw was good and teachers are enthusiastic, some of you could learn at a faster rate. Teachers make quite good use of the information they have about your progress. Marking could be more precise about what you need to do to improve.
- The Reception class staff have made many changes and provide satisfactorily for the youngest children. However, some children could go further in their learning.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for exceptionally well. You conduct yourselves safely and you are well aware of how important it is to eat healthily.
- The curriculum is good, with lots of out-of-school activities. Those of you who need extra support and those who learn quickly are well provided for.
- Those in charge of the school make sure that it runs smoothly with good forward planning.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that you do even better.

- Ensure that you make more rapid progress so that standards are raised, particularly by the end of Year 2 and for those who learn quickly.
- Ensure that the marking of your work is more consistent across the school and that you get clear guidance about what you need to do to improve.
- Give you more opportunities to learn about the many different backgrounds of people living in Britain today.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

■ George Logan

Lead inspector