

East Hoathly CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114501
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338382
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	June Woolhouse

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lindsay Wiggins
Headteacher	Mrs Anthea Hill
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors saw seven lessons and each teacher at least twice. Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher, a senior leader, subject leaders and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school policies, particularly those relating to safeguarding; teachers' planning; assessment information; governors' minutes; the school development plan; pupils' work; photographs and displays. Parents and carers returned 30 questionnaires and inspectors also looked at questionnaires from pupils in Key Stage 2 and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- levels of achievement of the current pupils, in both key stages, and whether or not they are on track to meet their targets
- the effectiveness of teaching in mixed-age classes and pupils' progress, especially in English
- provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the quality of children's communication, language and literacy skills
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance.

Information about the school

East Hoathly is a small rural school which has undergone a degree of turbulence and changes in staffing over the past four years. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average and most of these have speech and language or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Provision is made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. A privately run, pre-school group meets on school premises each day and many children then transfer to the Reception class. The school gained the Healthy Schools silver award in 2007.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

East Hoathly Primary is a satisfactory and inclusive school which has improved in many aspects since its last inspection. Most notable amongst these is the significant improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and make good progress. Parents and carers confirm the improvements made and believe that their children are progressing well. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they move through school but make more in the last two years of their schooling because teaching is pitched at the appropriate level and expectations are high. Early identification of, and good provision for, special educational needs and/or disabilities mean these pupils' progress is at least satisfactory.

Some parents and carers have voiced their concerns that, as a consequence of falling rolls, more than one year group is taught together and progress is adversely affected. Progress in Key Stage 1 and the early part of Key Stage 2 is more variable because teaching does not always take account of this wide range of ability. However, the determination of the headteacher to improve pupils' performance is beginning to have an impact and initiatives to improve writing, for example, are showing positive results. Staff fully support her drive and ambition to improve further and this is already reflected in pupils' outstanding behaviour, attitudes to each other and above average attendance. Pupils feel safe and secure because they are well cared for and supported by adults who know them individually. Pupils understand extremely well how to become and remain healthy. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is securely embedded within the school's Christian ethos.

The curriculum offers a wide range of interesting opportunities to learn through well-chosen themes and first-hand experiences. It is enriched effectively with after-school clubs, visits to places linked to topics, and visitors to school, for example an artist who managed the production of the attractive school mural. Continuing changes to staff have slowed down embedding and refining curriculum plans, and subject leaders have not fully established continuity of learning within and between classes. Despite these shortcomings, the curriculum is meeting the needs of the pupils well, particularly in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Systematic procedures for subject leaders to evaluate pupils' outcomes, in all year groups, are at an early stage of development. The headteacher's evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate but at present the school development plan does not have clear enough criteria against which all leaders and managers can test the success of initiatives. Although the chair and vice-chair of governors are experienced and committed to the school's further progress, new governors are less familiar with how to hold the school to account in important areas of pupils' performance

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and provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - planning more precisely, using age-related expectations, for each group within each class
 - deploying teaching assistants more effectively to supervise learning within specific groups
 - ensuring that pupils evaluate their own progress in lessons against success criteria linked to age-related learning objectives.
- Improve governance by increasing governors' knowledge and understanding of their strategic roles and responsibilities in order to hold the school to account for pupils' learning outcomes and the provision in all year groups.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - increasing subject leaders' responsibilities to focus on monitoring, planning of learning objectives and outcomes for all groups of pupils
 - monitoring effectively to ensure teachers identify explicit learning outcomes for all pupils linked to these objectives
 - enabling progress to be tracked regularly against these age-related objectives within and between year groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science and pupils in Year 6 are well on track to meet their targets by the end of the year. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress by the time they leave school, including the more able and those with special educational needs. Progress for those who are in younger year groups within a class is more variable because what they are expected to learn is not matched precisely enough to their stages of development.

In effective lessons, pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. This was the case in a writing lesson where they developed an interesting paragraph because they used adjectives and adverbs well and wrote complex sentences. They rehearsed their ideas first on whiteboards, discussed them with a friend and then had opportunities to refine their work before writing up in their books. Less progress is evident when the pace slows and the whole class listens while a few pupils need more explanation of the requirements of the task. The older pupils in mixed-age classes do not always produce sufficient writing within the time available and the younger pupils struggle because they have insufficient understanding and skill to complete the task. Pupils use computers well to research information on their topics, for example the Ancient Greeks. They enjoy organising work that includes relevant illustrations with information about the topic. At present, they do not produce sufficient writing that they have organised into their own

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words from the information they have researched.

In all classes, pupils work well together and support each other's learning, which is a good example of their outstanding behaviour. They contribute well to school and the wider community undertaking responsibilities such as organising equipment and participating in village events. Pupils are well regarded for these contributions and those that support children less fortunate than themselves. The school council is active and enables pupils' voices to be heard. Older pupils are making sound progress in understanding what skills are needed in the wider world of work. Altogether, pupils have a good understanding of how to treat others and show respect to each other and adults.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Variation in the quality of teaching, which does not always match the extra demands caused by the wide range of age and ability in each class, results in satisfactory rather than good progress overall. Assessment of pupils' learning has not yet been translated into sufficiently precise lesson planning that takes account of the wide range of needs in each class. The focus on improving writing is beginning to result in more progress,

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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especially for the oldest pupils, but is less secure for those in younger year groups reflecting a legacy of disruption in learning from the recent past. Teachers are making good use of a programme to promote writing skills and there is now a consistent approach to content and planning. At present, the precision needed to match tasks to needs accurately is not fully in place. The deployment and training of teaching assistants are satisfactory but the potential for extended support with particular year groups is not always realised.

There are strengths in the curriculum because planning includes a range of subjects within a topic. Learning is enlivened by visits to places of interest and visitors into school. Pupils benefit a great deal from topics that are planned for whole weeks such as the Second World War, the Arts or a geography week. Pupils' personal development and well-being are promoted well by having at least two hours of physical education per week, a sensitive programme for sex education for older pupils and an expectation that playtimes are used productively for vigorous exercise or challenging games. This is recognised in the awards for basic skills and games and the achievement of the Healthy Schools silver award in 2009.

Care, guidance and support for all pupils are good, and they are confident in their relationships with adults and know who to go to for support or help with a problem. The school is a welcoming place, spotlessly clean and maintained to a high standard.

Improvements to the playground, with a splendid mural and attractive seating arrangements, provide pupils with many opportunities to spend social times with friends, play games or meet brothers and sisters. Pupils have targets for their learning and the oldest pupils understand what they mean and how to check their own progress. Marking is good and comments give appropriate guidance about what needs to be improved. At present, the match between comments and carefully tailored success criteria are not consistently in place in all lessons.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is well led by the headteacher who understands what needs to be improved to assure pupils' higher attainment and better progress. She is managing the deployment of staff appropriately within a demanding context due to the falling number of pupils on roll. She has established appropriate priorities and tackled the main weaknesses identified from previous inspections. The appointment of an assistant

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headteacher has proved successful and increased the capacity to manage the challenges of mixed-age classes. There is a desire on the part of all staff to improve teaching and learning but some staff are new to their post. They are getting to grips with the complexities of mixed-age classes while making some inroads into subject leadership across a broad curriculum. The leadership team recognises this as an area for immediate development.

Governors are fully supportive of the school but many are new and are not yet fully conversant with their strategic roles of holding the school to account for its performance. Partnerships with parents and carers are improving, although there is still some criticism of how the school is organised. Partnerships with other schools and agencies help to increase learning opportunities for pupils, for example sports initiatives and classes for the more able. Equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are promoted well and this is reflected in pupils' work, very good behaviour and supportive attitudes towards each other. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. There is a clear understanding of the local context but as yet there has been no formal audit of provision to build on this work and reach out further to address in a coherent way the nature of national and global communities. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and policies are routinely checked and revised to fit with current best practice.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of education in the Reception class is good and children make good progress. This provides a good foundation for future learning. Last year, data showed

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that some children's language skills were underdeveloped. This was because of their specific learning difficulties. The inspector found no evidence of any deficit in children's ability to communicate in the present class. In fact, the opposite was the case as children talked excitedly to each other either in vigorous role play involving 'finding a robber', or negotiating skilfully to share equipment in an extended activity to construct a farm and house. Children play and learn in an idyllic setting, have many interesting activities to choose from and are well supported in their all-round development by skilful adults. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is thoughtful in her organisation of the setting and children genuinely enjoy the scope of experiences available to them. They behave very well and are attentive in direct teaching sessions. This is reflected in good levels of social development and their confident interaction with adults. Children's welfare and safety are paramount and all procedures are fully in place. Regular assessments, through first-hand observations, are meticulously recorded. Good links exist with the pre-school group and transition to the Reception class is smooth. Parents and carers are fully involved in their children's education and have opportunities to discuss issues if they arise. The balance between activities led by an adult and those children choose for themselves is good. Children develop well the independent learning skills of which they are capable.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About half of parents or carers responded to the questionnaire. All agreed that their children enjoyed school. A few parents and carers did not think their children were making enough progress. The judgement of the inspection is that a small number of pupils who are the youngest in a class, while still making satisfactory progress, are making weaker progress than older pupils in their classes. A small minority of parents were critical of how the school is led and managed but, given the circumstances of falling roll and the concomitant pressure on the budget, the inspection team judges that the leadership team is managing the situation as well as can be expected. A small minority of parents and carers also believe that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with well. However, the inspection team judges that behaviour is excellent and inspectors found no evidence to the contrary.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 58 pupils registered at the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at East Hoathly CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	73	8	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	67	9	30	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	50	11	37	4	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	67	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	63	10	33	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	60	11	37	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	57	9	30	2	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	50	12	40	3	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	40	8	27	4	13	2	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	43	10	33	2	7	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	13	43	7	23	8	27	2	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	67	9	30	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of East Hoathly CofE Primary School, East Hoathly, BN8 6EQ

I would like to thank you for helping me and my colleague when we came to inspect your school recently. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour and the kindness you showed to younger children when you were outside on the playground. I enjoyed talking to older pupils and was pleased that what they told me about their experiences agreed with what I had found out. Giving accurate information to other people is a very important skill to learn for the future. I enjoyed watching the younger children in the Reception class garden looking for a robber and riding their bikes very skilfully. I think they got a photo of the robber, too!

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to ensure that you get very well-planned work in the future so that, although you are in a class with children from different year groups, you are doing the work that is expected of you for your particular year group. This is to make sure you make the right amount of progress wherever you are in the school. We have also asked them to make sure that the teaching assistants help those of you of different ages in each class. It is also important that those responsible for each subject check that you are being given the right things to learn for your age and that they keep a close check on your progress and help you to keep a check as well by telling you what you should be learning. Many of your governors are new so we have asked them to make sure that they work hard to understand what they need to do to help your headteacher and teachers continue to improve the school. You can help by letting your teachers know when your work is too easy or too hard and by asking them what you need to do to improve your work.

I do hope you have a good time and learn a lot for the rest of the year. It will pass very quickly and then the children in Year 6 will be off to the big school. I think you will be able to manage this move very successfully because you have been taught to work together very well and know how to relate to each other and adults respectfully.

Best wishes to everyone for the future

Yours sincerely

June Woolhouse Lead inspector

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