

Orchards Middle School, The

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125866
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	359959
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Grace Marriott

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	585
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Papps
Headteacher	Dr Paul Jones
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
School address	Nelson Road Worthing BN12 6EN
Telephone number	01903 520202
Fax number	01903 526133
Email address	head@orchards.w-sussex.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 30 lessons and 25 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff and informally with parents and carers in the playground and by telephone. Inspectors considered the responses in 157 questionnaires that had been returned by parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, teachers' plans and records, the school improvement plan and monitoring information and minutes of meetings.

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

- the action being taken to raise attainment in English and mathematics
- the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- the effectiveness of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly the work of the speech and language unit.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average for a middle deemed primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than in most schools. The school has a specialist unit for children with speech and language difficulties. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and, of those pupils from minority ethnic communities, very few are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools Award Activemark Gold, Artsmark Gold and Investors in People.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

'We would highly recommend this school to anyone' is typical of many comments from parents. This is a good and improving school where the lively, caring and welcoming atmosphere enables pupils to grow and develop academically, personally and socially. In several aspects, the school's work is already outstanding. The excellent range of enrichment activities and the outstanding pastoral care contribute strongly to pupils' all-round development. Much of the school's success stems from the headteacher's energetic and inspirational leadership. His commitment to 'aiming high' is fully shared by staff, pupils, parents, carers and governors.

Pupils make good progress overall from their starting points and, by the time they leave in Year 7, attainment is broadly average, though with differences between English and mathematics. Attainment in mathematics is above average, and average overall in English, with pupils' writing not reaching the levels that they achieve in reading. Raising attainment in English, particularly in writing, is a current priority. The pupils who attend the speech and language unit and other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and participate fully in school life, as do the few pupils who have English as an additional language. Pupils' good progress is a result of good quality teaching, which engages their interest and motivates them to want to learn. Teachers assess and mark pupils' work carefully and give them good guidance on how to improve.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and are very confident that adults will provide the care and support they need. The emphasis on physical education supports pupils' excellent understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. Behaviour is good and pupils show respect and consideration for others. They respond enthusiastically to the responsibilities they are given, such as junior governors or sports leaders. When given the opportunity, they are very willing to be involved in the wider community; however the school's work in promoting community cohesion is underdeveloped. Attendance is average overall but a small number of pupils do not attend regularly enough.

Development planning focuses on sensible priorities, such as improving assessment and increasing the proportion of good teaching in order to raise standards. The impact of this is seen clearly in the raising of standards, particularly in mathematics, and the wide range of opportunities the school provides. Given the strong focus on raising standards and the capacity of leaders to bring about improvements, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing, so that they are in line with the national average by the end of the current academic year (July 2011) and subsequently raise attainment in English to an above average level, on a par with mathematics.
- Build on the success in developing pupils' contribution to the school community, to enable them to understand what it means to live in the wider local and national communities.
- Improve attendance by increasing the focus for monitoring and support on those pupils and families where attendance falls below 90%. Improve attendance by increasing the focus for monitoring and support on those pupils and families where attendance falls below 90%.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the school with knowledge, skills and understanding which are below the levels expected for their age. Given their starting points, pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to make good progress because work is planned carefully to meet these needs both in the speech and language unit and in other ways. This was evident in an outstanding spelling session with a small group where pupils' enthusiastic response to activities which were well matched to their needs helped them make excellent progress.

During the inspection, there was no significant variation in the progress made by different groups of pupils. All pupils show positive attitudes, are keen to learn and show enthusiasm in all they do. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 5, they relished the opportunities to use their skills to solve problems. Pupils collaborate well in pairs and small groups to complete tasks. They are also developing their independent learning effectively. For instance, they are being increasingly involved in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and outstanding in terms of moral development. They learn to respect the beliefs of others and develop a very clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils do not regard bullying as an issue and, should it arise, they are confident that it would be dealt with swiftly. Pupils take part enthusiastically in all that the school offers. The high levels of participation in physical activity is evidence of their understanding of health-related issues. The school sports teams are very successful but other physical activities are also promoted well; for example, the boys' dance club is very popular. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and make a very strong contribution to the life of the school. On occasion, they also contribute to the local community, for example by organising and carrying out fundraising events. Pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy school and most attend well, but a small number remain to be convinced that regular attendance is important. Given their good progress and well-developed personal skills, pupils are well prepared for their next school and for

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later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is generally lively and imaginative in approach. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to introduce new concepts successfully. They provide interesting activities, which make good use of technology and develop a range of skills and motivate pupils to work hard. They aim to challenge their pupils, as, for example, in an outstanding Year 7 English lesson where the questioning really made pupils think about how to present their arguments. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to build on what pupils have already achieved and make sure that needs of pupils of different abilities are met. Occasionally, however, the match of work to pupils' needs was not accurate enough to enable all pupils to make good progress. Teaching encourages pupils to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. The recent developments in checking the progress that pupils make has led to teachers using assessment more effectively to support learning. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers in the specialist unit and in class. They are well trained to work very effectively with individuals

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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and/or small groups of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has put considerable effort into developing a creative curriculum where specific projects are used to extend pupils' experiences and engage their interest. Themed weeks and days, visits and visitors stimulate a lot of interest and older pupils were able to talk knowledgeably about topics such as the Victorians or fair trade. Access to specialist facilities and teaching in art, science, food technology, physical education and music greatly benefits pupils' work in these subjects. The quality of art on display is outstanding. All pupils can take part in musical and dramatic productions and learn the saxophone and the guitar. The opportunity to learn French extends the curriculum still further.

The well-being of each pupil is given a very high priority and staff know pupils and their families well. This enables them to provide the right support for individuals and intervene quickly if they have concerns about the well-being of any pupil. Parents spoke very highly of the quality of individual care and the support they had received. The school has excellent links with outside agencies to provide extra support for vulnerable pupils when required. New entrants settle very quickly and the transition to secondary school is very well managed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, governors and staff have high aspirations and the drive to improve the school is made explicit in all aspects of its work. Governors are challenging and supportive, and fully involved in influencing the school's development. Pupils, parents and carers are consulted regularly about developments in the school and their views are taken into consideration. Leaders at all levels understand their own accountability and contribute strongly to school development. Their contributions are valued and acted upon. Senior leaders provide very effective support for less experienced colleagues.

The school's self-evaluation is systematic. In practice, it enables leaders and managers to identify key areas for development and take very effective action, even though in places, some aspects are graded too generously, for example judging attainment as above average. The impact of the action has been better outcomes in mathematics for all groups of pupils, and the work being done to improve writing. The school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity is shown in its approach to inclusion. This is particularly evident in the success with which the provision for pupils with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities, both in the specialist unit and in the school as a whole, results in their good progress and achievement. Partnerships with a wide range of organisations as diverse as Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and universities are used very successfully to extend and enrich pupils' experience, as well as to provide high quality professional development for staff. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well together in the school and issues such as fair trade are part of the curriculum, but the school recognises that it needs to do more to help pupils understand the multi-ethnic nature of British society and life in different parts of Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to inspection questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of staff. This matches the response to the school's own questionnaires. One said, 'As a parent, I couldn't ask for more.' Another parent wrote, 'I have had four children at the school; all enjoyed their time and have done well.' A few parents and carers expressed concerns about parking outside the school and supervision at the school gates. The evidence shows that the school takes its responsibility for pupils' safety very seriously. There are very effective procedures for supervision involving senior staff and the school works with parents, carers and the authorities to try to improve access and parking. A few were concerned that too much reliance was placed on children to give information to their parents and carers. The evidence suggests that the school uses 'pupil post'

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appropriately.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Orchards Middle 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.

The inspection team received 157 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 585 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	107	68	46	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	103	66	50	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	67	43	74	47	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	46	62	39	6	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	88	56	55	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	44	63	40	9	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	45	74	47	3	2	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)	62	39	74	45	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	72	46	69	44	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	36	82	52	3	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	31	87	55	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	95	61	52	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	94	60	53	34	1	1	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



17 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Orchards Middle School, Worthing BN12 6EN

On behalf of the team, thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to so many of you and watching your lessons. You told us how much you like school and we agree that you are right to be proud of it. You go to a good school and it is outstanding in several ways.

What we found about your school

- Lessons are interesting. Good teaching helps you to learn and make good progress so that you reach the standards expected for children of your age.
- You thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities to take part in sport, dance, drama, art, charity fundraising or learn a musical instrument.
- It is a really friendly place in which to learn. You behave well and work and play well together.
- Adults look after you very well and make sure you are safe.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to help you do even better.
- You make an excellent contribution to the life of the school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- make sure all of you do as well in English, particularly in writing, as you do in mathematics
- help you to understand what it means to be part of the wider community living in Britain and what it is like to live in different parts in this country
- make sure that you all attend school regularly.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and by taking notice of the advice your teachers give you. Also, a small group of you need to attend school more regularly.

Yours sincerely

Grace Marriott Lead inspector

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