

Little Ridge Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114481
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	357554
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Hodge

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Clarke
Headteacher	Tom Collins
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Twenty three lessons were observed, taught by 16 teachers and support staff. Inspectors visited classrooms, observed behaviour at playtimes, lunchtimes and around the school. They held meetings with members of the governing body, teaching staff, members of the school council and pupils in all year groups. Meetings were held with staff in the speech and language centre and inclusion centre. Inspectors examined pupils' work in lessons and school documents, including improvement plans, safety records and assessment information. They analysed 132 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, along with results from the school's own recent survey. Those completed by 100 pupils and 14 staff were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well pupils achieve in Years 1 and 2, particularly boys and those who are more able.
- The rate of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6.
- How well the teaching and curriculum cater for specific groups of pupils such as those who are more able.
- The way senior leaders use self-evaluation to identify further areas to improve.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than others of its type. The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has a speech and language centre, which can cater for up to 10 pupils with severe special needs. These pupils spend part of their time in the centre and part in mainstream classes. Up to six places are offered to pupils from other schools who attend the centre on a part time basis and return to their own school for the remainder of their education. Therefore, outcomes for this group of pupils are not included in this report. The range of other special needs covers academic, social, language and emotional needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national picture. Children in Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes. There are breakfast and after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body. The school is part of the Hastings West Local Partnership that helps to support children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable within school.

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

Little Ridge Community Primary is a good school. It lives up to its community status well as pupils and parents and carers alike readily testify to the family feel created, and the vast majority of parents say their children like the school and are happy.

Children make a smooth start in the Reception classes as they settle in quickly to school routines, helped by well thought through induction arrangements such as home visits and 'taster' days. They make good progress from their starting points so when they enter Year 1, many reach the levels expected and some achieve even better. This good start is not always capitalised upon in Years 1 and 2, where pupils' progress slows and in the past, has faltered because pupils found it difficult to engage with a more formal approach to teaching and activities. This progress is improving, and any differences between boys' and girls' attainment is narrowing quickly. Recent changes in staffing and lesson planning are aiding the improvement, but pupils' progress, particularly in writing and for more-able pupils, is not yet fully secure. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress picks up and, although good overall, is sometimes slightly uneven between year groups as there are variations in teaching. By the time they leave, their attainment is average and rising. The combination of their good attitudes and behaviour means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well. The quality of provision and leadership and management of the speech and language centre is good. Good, specialist teaching and support enables pupils to make good progress in their language development and to make the most of the opportunities they are offered in their mainstream classes.

Teachers form good relationships, usually making the most of pupils' natural enthusiasm. Lessons are interesting and pitched at the right level for most, but not all, pupils. Those who are more able are not always stretched sufficiently in their thinking or learning. An interesting curriculum also helps enliven pupils' learning and the addition of modern foreign languages such as French and Spanish is popular. 'Forest school' where pupils learn outdoors in natural surroundings is also a high point for pupils' learning. Changes in approach to teaching handwriting, reading and writing skills are starting to improve pupils' skills. Pupils develop skills systematically in information and communication technology (ICT) but do not have enough opportunities to use their skills in day-to-day activities.

Improvements since the last inspection have been secured in the quality of teaching, leadership and pupils' achievement, which were also noted in a recent monitoring visit by Her Majesty's Inspector. The headteacher, supported by senior leaders and members of the governing body, have used effective self-evaluation procedures carefully to search out and diagnose what areas need improving, such as increasing progress for younger pupils. Changes in staffing and curriculum design have been implemented to good effect. The senior leaders are particularly good at developing links with outside providers and professionals, local schools and community organisations to complement the good levels

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of care the school itself provides. These have had a significant impact on helping and supporting vulnerable pupils. Given the improvements since the last inspection, with clear priorities for action resulting in an upward trend in pupils' attainment, the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and attainment in Years 1 and 2 in the coming academic year by:
 - ensuring that that they have more frequent opportunities to use their writing skills, particularly in other subjects
 - extending the changes in planning for teaching basic skills into Year 2 classes
 - ensuring that pupils have a clearer idea about how to improve their next steps in writing skills.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and pupils' learning through the school in the coming academic year by:
 - ensuring that work is closely matched to the abilities of pupils, particularly those who are more able
 - those staff helping in class focusing on helping stretch pupils' learning as well as aiding their medical or social needs
 - involving middle managers more in monitoring teaching to identify where improvements can take place in their subject speciality and responsibility.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils say they feel safe, enjoy attending school and the good promotion of their spiritual, moral and social development means they behave courteously to each other and to visitors. Pupils recognise that behaviour occasionally dips, but are appreciative of the help that the school gives them when difficulties occur. Parents and carers voice their appreciation of the school's ethos and only a very small number feel that behaviour is sometimes an issue. Pupils' exercise levels are high at playtime, in games lessons and in after-school clubs, with the all-weather pitch aiding all year access to outside games. Breakfast and after-school clubs are well liked by those attending, helping to ensure pupils keep healthy. Pupils' generally good attitudes help their learning. Although it has not been good in the past, there are clear signs from current work that pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is improving. In a well-taught poetry lesson in Year 1, on the subject of bubbles, the teacher aroused the pupils' attention well by blowing actual bubbles so pupils could see them move. New initiatives have helped improve pupils' writing skills in the short time they have been introduced, although pupils do not always have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills within other subjects. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress increases and recent national test results have been the highest for some time. More-able pupils increasingly reach higher levels, but not consistently so in Year 2. Although progress sometimes varies between classes, by the time they leave, pupils achieve well from their below average starting points in the Reception classes. In a particularly well-taught lesson in Year 4, the pupils were skilful in choosing expressive words to embellish their writing. Those pupils from minority ethnic groups also achieve well and the small group activities

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help them and others with their number, language and social skills to keep pace with their peers. Those pupils taught in the speech and language centre make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points, especially in developing their basic skills as the specialist teaching is effective at meeting their specific needs.

Pupils' involvement within the school and in the local community is good and the school council appreciates its role in influencing decisions such as how to keep the school grounds tidy or which community events to support. Lunchtime monitors particularly like giving out stickers to those who finish all their dinner. Pupils' knowledge of their local community is particularly good. They know and appreciate the views of others from differing backgrounds, although their first-hand multicultural awareness is a weaker aspect of their knowledge. Pupils' mature attitudes, combined with good transition routines to secondary school and their confident grasp of basic skills, prepare them well for their next stage of education and 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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers promote good levels of cooperation and enjoyment within lessons, increasingly trying innovative ways of making learning fun. In this respect, the recently revised 'cre8' curriculum is providing better opportunities to link learning between subjects. In a well-taught lesson in Year 5, pupils were trying out some useful painting techniques prior to painting pictures connected to a project on the Amazon rainforest. Teachers generally

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pitch lessons at the right level for most pupils, particularly those in the middle- and lower-ability bands, but those who are more able often start at the same point as their classmates, which means they are not always stretched in their thinking. Pupils usually know the aims of lessons and teachers check on progress with questions and regular marking in most, but not all, classes. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not always aware of how they can improve as they are not as aware of their writing targets. Additions to the curriculum such as a good range of well-attended clubs help broaden pupils' horizons. Breakfast and after-school clubs further add to pupils' range of activities.

Good partnerships with a range of professionals beyond the school and the clear focus upon ensuring pupils' well-being are clear strengths of the school's provision. The speech and language centre and inclusion team are particularly effective aspects of the school's provision for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and well-developed transition projects with secondary schools help to make the move as smooth as possible for those leaving. At the other end of the age spectrum, staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage visit local playgroups and make home visits to new pupils so parents and carers are well informed and children start school confidently. Pupils say they feel well cared for, which is echoed by the vast majority, if not quite all, parents and carers. These levels of care are increasingly filtering into helping the academic side of pupils' well-being, to complement the good levels of pastoral support.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders use clear, accurate self-evaluation routines to judge where weaknesses exist and to suggest remedies. For example, their drive to raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2 is now beginning to bear fruit. The range of initiatives to raise attainment is taking root, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The systematic monitoring of teaching has improved its quality since the last inspection, but is not yet consistently good. Although monitoring by senior leaders is systematic and accurate, middle managers have not yet fully contributed to observing teaching to gauge how well subjects are taught. Members of the governing body give effective support, are linked with classes so they are aware of day-to-day outcomes for pupils, and their roles are clear. They ensure that safeguarding routines are robust and carry out the required checks on staff. Following improvements to ensure pupils' safety, the governing body is reviewing how it can enhance routines even further. Senior leaders do not tolerate discrimination between pupils and try hard to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities to participate in all activities where possible. The school is aware that, for a very small number of parents and carers, this may not always appear to be the case. The school analyses the relative performance of different groups, such as of

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girls and boys and other groups where circumstances may make them vulnerable. There are good signs that any variations are reducing and in current school work little differences are apparent. The school's well-developed links with a school in Sierra Leone, and more recently in Spain, expand the pupils' horizons into the global field. Harmonious relationships within the school and community, noted by many parents and carers, and pupils' knowledge about more distant places within the United Kingdom, mean that the school promotes good levels of community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are confident and eager to explore their class environment, which is stimulating and well planned. The majority of children enter Reception with skills and knowledge below those levels expected for their age, with a significant number having weaker communication, language, literacy and, in some cases, social skills. Good teaching in the Reception classes helps children reach standards that are at the levels expected when they start in Year 1, and some exceed these levels, particularly in the social, emotional and some number skills. Children make especially good progress in their social development, learning to behave well and developing good relationships with others. Children's personal and emotional development and their communication and language skills are particularly focused on, and develop well, because adults make expectations clear and constantly encourage and challenge all children to learn at a good pace. Children enjoy using their pedal trikes to extend their physical skills, using the computer to improve their counting, and enjoy discovering Pirate Pete's treasure around the class. Adults encourage children to respond individually to questions and supervise them well when undertaking activities. Children are sometimes left for too long before an adult gives them some brief help to extend their learning further. The leader responsible for this age group is currently absent from the school, but along with the class teachers, correctly recognises

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that the outside areas are not fully effective in enticing children to play outside or to extend their learning more fully. The welfare arrangements are good and well-established links with local playgroups, combined with home visits to new entrants, mean they have a smooth start to school.

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

There was a higher than average return of questionnaires by parents and carers. About 22% contained comments. The vast majority were positive, citing the friendly nature of the school, the quality of the teaching, the community feel to the school and the way children's healthy lifestyles are developed. The small numbers of concerns were followed up with the headteacher, and included those parents and carers who thought that behaviour and bullying issues were not always dealt with firmly, and some specific concerns revolved around financial contributions. The inspectors found pupils' behaviour to be good and pupils said they felt safe and that bullying, should it occur, is dealt with fairly by the school. It is difficult to respond either way to individual concerns connected to finance, but the governing body follows guidelines which are typical for primary schools in this respect.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Ridge 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.

The inspection team received 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 425 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	58	55	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	59	51	39	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	42	74	56	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	45	64	48	4	3	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	71	54	60	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	44	68	52	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	46	69	52	1	1	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)	49	37	71	54	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	42	69	52	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	34	76	58	3	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	35	69	52	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	69	52	59	45	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	66	42	32	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



28 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Ridge Community Primary School, St Leonards-on-Sea TN37 7LR

Many thanks for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at and hearing about what you like doing. Yours is a good school. We really liked looking at your displays around the school and talking with you.

Here are some of the things we found out:

- You reach the expected standards when you leave, and you achieve well in most aspects of your work.
- You behave well and work hard in lessons.
- You all said you feel very safe as the school cares for you so well.
- You are good at keeping active at playtimes and I know most of you try to eat healthily.
- The range of things you do, such as languages and sports, is good.
- The school helps those of you who sometimes find work difficult or have a particular difficulty to achieve well.
- The staff teach you well and the school involves your parents or carers in the life of the school effectively to help it become even better.
- The school works really well with other organisations outside of the school.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body work well together and are quick to spot where improvements can be made.

We have asked the school to do two things to help it improve further:

- Help those children in Years 1 and 2 to learn even faster, particularly those who are capable of doing harder work.
- To try and make the teaching good in every class so all of you learn quickly right through the school.

All of you can help the school continue to improve, so keep behaving well and continue to help each other.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge

Lead inspector

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