



Telscombe Cliffs Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114420
Local Authority East Sussex
Inspection number 289903
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Jacquie Buttriss

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Telscombe Cliffs Way
School category	Community		Telscombe Cliffs
Age range of pupils	4–11		Peacehaven BN10 7DE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01273 583113
Number on roll (school)	544	Fax number	01273 589564
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Matthew Bridgman
		Headteacher	Gill Webb
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average school with 16 mixed-age classes and two reception classes. The newly appointed consultant headteacher took up her post in February 2007. Children's attainment on entering Reception is in line with national expectations. There is a privately funded nursery on the same site. Before-school provision and an after-school club serve the community on this site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school has recently undergone changes in the leadership team, with the appointment of a new consultant headteacher and intensive support from the local education authority. As one parent accurately put it, this has given the school a 'new start'.

Since the last inspection, standards have declined and significant numbers of pupils have not done as well as they should have. As a result of the changes there is now a rapidly improving picture of progress in all areas. Standards and achievement have been rising over the past few months and are now satisfactory. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are happy to come to school, enjoy their lessons and their behaviour is good both in and out of the classroom. The school helps pupils to have a clear understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and to stay safe. Pupils take an active part in improving the school environment and they are effectively developing the skills to aid them in their future lives.

Provision in the Reception Year is good. Teaching is satisfactory across the school, with pupils in the majority of classrooms benefiting from well-paced and stimulating lessons in which the teachers' high expectations motivate pupils to work hard and do their best. All pupils other than Reception children are taught in mixed-age classes. This has presented difficulties for teachers in matching work to the very wide range of abilities in each class, with the result that some pupils, particularly the more able, do not always fulfil their potential. The good teaching of pupils with learning difficulties helps them to make good progress. Curriculum provision and care, guidance and support are satisfactory. There is very good care and support for vulnerable pupils and pastoral care is a strength of the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The headteacher, together with the energetic leadership team, has instituted a range of improvement strategies which are already having a demonstrable impact on increasing pupils' progress and improving the quality of provision. Strong teamwork is a characteristic of the school and the new leadership structure has greatly boosted staff morale and given them a clear sense of direction to help them focus on the key task of raising standards. As a result of these recent changes in the leadership team and their positive impacts on raising standards, together with good governance, the school now has a good capacity to improve. School self-evaluation overall is accurate, although leaders have insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching.

Parents are generally supportive of the school, but several of them expressed their concerns about pupils being taught in mixed-age classes. The school is aware of their concerns and is taking appropriate steps to ensure that pupils in all classes benefit from improved teaching.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in the core subjects by increasing the level of challenge in mixed-age classes for all pupils, especially those who are potentially higher attainers.
- Provide regular opportunities for managers and subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Children in Reception make good gains in their personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory progress in other areas of learning. As such, they enter Year 1 with standards broadly matching those expected for their age. Until recently, standards at the end of Year 2 had fallen for four years, and, for the last three years, achievement at the end of Year 6 had been unsatisfactory. To redress the situation, the school has implemented a range of strategies to improve writing and numeracy. Whilst these have been successful in improving pupil performance in recent months, the school acknowledges there is still some way to go to completely eradicate underachievement.

Standards of pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are now in line with national expectations, with an increased proportion of pupils on track to reach the higher levels of performance at the end of the year. Whilst the progress of most learners is satisfactory, and good for those with learning difficulties, there is a minority of pupils, particularly higher attainers, who do not do sufficiently well when compared with their capabilities. The challenging targets set for 2007 reflect the school's high expectations and drive for the continuing improvement of standards and achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and respect the needs of others, learning to understand their own feelings and to help each other. From early on in the Reception Year, children develop independence well. They gain good grounding in personal development. Their good behaviour and attitudes set the pattern for the following years. Pupils throughout the school behave well and happily participate in lessons, taking responsibility and working well with others. Pupils enjoy school, as shown by their good attendance. They feel safe and secure. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as organising games for younger ones in the playground. Most pupils are aware of the need for a healthy diet and take opportunities to keep fit. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Silver status and the Activemark. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example, as Eco Warriors collecting waste for re-cycling. The school council has worked successfully to improve playground equipment. Pupils support the wider community through a number of charities and have a link with a

school in Ghana. Although the development of social skills and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) provide a good basis for future life, some other skills, particularly in writing, need to be developed further.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils show positive attitudes and enjoy their learning. Good relationships help pupils to work well together. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of basic skills and good opportunities for learning through experience in the Reception Year. The recent support to help teachers plan for mixed-age classes is beginning to raise the quality of teaching. In the majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations and clear learning intentions and lessons are well paced and stimulating, with the result that pupils are well motivated and strive to do their best. Assessment is beginning to effectively help teachers plan and to help learners know how to improve. However, occasionally in mixed-age classes work is not sufficiently well matched to the needs of all the pupils. As a result, a significant number of more able pupils in these classes are not sufficiently challenged and they underachieve. Indeed, some learners told us they felt they could work harder. Behaviour is well managed. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and this helps them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and focuses well on basic skills that are used increasingly well to support learning in other subjects. Provision is enhanced by a good range of out-of-class clubs and activities. In Reception, children benefit from purposeful activities in all areas of learning. Provision for ICT has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. The school is successfully developing links between subjects to enhance pupils' creativity and enjoyment. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their design and technology lessons to design and make containers for pizzas they had prepared at a nearby restaurant. The curriculum is successfully adapted to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. To improve further, the school is taking sensible steps to make sure that the curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils taught in mixed-age classes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Some aspects of care and support are very strong. Vulnerable pupils are very well looked after. Children with learning difficulties are quickly identified and receive good support within lessons, both individually and in small groups. Their progress is checked very carefully, they are listened to and they make good advances. The school works

very well with a range of support agencies. Nurture groups, art therapy and the provision of 'worry boxes' all ensure that children can voice their concerns and learn to understand and manage conflicting emotions. Smooth arrangements for children starting school in Reception help them to settle quickly and happily. The efficient monitoring of pupils' absence has led to improved attendance. Pupils know and understand their targets for English and mathematics, but not yet for other subjects. It is generally the case that teachers' marking helps pupils to know how to improve their work, but this is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers keep detailed assessment records, but these are not always shared with pupils and therefore do not yet have sufficient impact on raising achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Following a period of decline in pupils' standards and achievement, the consultant headteacher has introduced a clear-sighted and well-structured week-by-week action plan to drive forward improvement. This is already having a positive impact on provision across the school. Good links with the Local Authority and other agencies have supported a programme of focused support to raise standards and achievement. This is also improving the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher is giving clear direction and enabling the senior leadership team to work purposefully together with renewed vigour, a shared commitment to driving up standards and a clear focus on school improvement.

Candid and accurate judgements in the school's self-evaluation demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and accurately identify priorities for improvement. Pupils' performance is now monitored and tracked increasingly effectively and careful analysis of their progress is beginning to be used to help raise their standards and achievement. However, this work is still developing and managers and leaders do not yet have regular opportunities to monitor the quality of classroom teaching. Governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively and they are now able to confidently challenge the school to do its best.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 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.

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	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel very welcome and we enjoyed talking with you. Yours is a satisfactory school that helps you to make progress and helps some of you to achieve well.

These are the things we especially liked:

- You are friendly, polite and helpful and your behaviour is good – well done.
- The head, the teachers and staff work together well.
- The school cares for you all well and helps you to achieve good personal development and well-being.
- The school helps you to understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and gives you good opportunities to take part in extra activities.

These are the things we think your school could do better:

- Some of you told us that you could sometimes do harder work, so we have asked your teachers to make sure that the work they give you is at the right level for each of you in mixed-age classes and to make some of your lessons more challenging to help you improve the standards of your work.
- The school could give senior teachers more opportunities to observe classroom lessons to help raise the quality of teaching and learning.

We would like to wish you all lots of success in your future education.