

Durrington First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125862
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293382
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Joan Greenfield

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ged Harbinson
Headteacher	Alison Cornell
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	Salvington Road Worthing BN13 2JD
Telephone number	01903 260138
Fax number	01903 693057

Age group	3–8
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Durrington First School is larger than the average primary school. Pupils mainly come from the surrounding area, parts of which have pockets of considerable disadvantage. Fewer pupils than the national average are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry to the school is lower than usually found and many children have weak speech, literacy and language skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Durrington First School is a good school and many elements of its provision are outstanding. It is highly regarded by parents. The overriding impression is that of a calm, friendly, yet purposeful environment in which meeting the needs of all pupils and helping them do the very best they can are of the utmost importance. The ethos within the school successfully promotes care and respect for others. From the moment children arrive in the Nursery, these qualities are nurtured through the excellent relationships that permeate the whole school and the high expectations that staff have of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and response. As a result, pupils' personal development is excellent. They show this in the way they play and work together so well and take on additional responsibilities. For example, the 'playground monitors' actively promote harmonious relationships by making sure everyone has a friend to play with. Pupils feel safe in school and confidently seek support from adults, from whom they receive outstanding care, guidance and support.

Pupils achieve well from their below average starting points. Standards are average overall, and are above average in mathematics. Although improving, standards in reading and writing are not as strong as in mathematics. The school has introduced a number of initiatives to improve pupils' skills in these areas, but a few teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to share their ideas with one another before they are asked to write. Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage because of the good quality of the provision. Throughout the school, excellent systems identify and support pupils who are at risk of underachieving, as well as those with learning difficulties or disabilities, or who have particular gifts and talents, enabling them all to make good progress. This support is carefully targeted to their individual needs.

Effective teaching, the systematic development of the pupils' skills, especially in reading and spelling, the good curriculum and the school's robust tracking systems all contribute to the pupils' good progress, enjoyment and well-being. Recent developments in the curriculum are helping pupils to engage more effectively in their learning and increasing their motivation. The opportunities for pupils to make decisions, become independent and assume responsibility have a strong impact on their excellent personal skills. Attendance has improved and is average. Although the school does all it can to encourage regular attendance, a small number of pupils do not attend regularly.

The driving force behind the school's effectiveness is the headteacher. Under her outstanding leadership, together with the strong support of her deputy and the highly effective chair of governors, the school has continued to improve. Through their rigorous checking systems they have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear sense of the school's future direction. However, not all subject leaders monitor and evaluate the work in their areas of responsibility well enough and as a result, leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve are good overall rather than outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to explore and share ideas to help them improve their writing.
- Extend the role of a few subject leaders in checking the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility.
- With the support of external agencies, work closely with a small number of parents to improve their child's attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. Standards are broadly average and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils do particularly well in mathematics. In 2006, the Year 2 national test results overall were broadly average. They were well above average in mathematics but slightly below average in reading and writing. Of this year group, which is now in Year 3, between a quarter and a third, mainly boys, have additional learning needs, mostly in the areas of literacy and language.

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and achieve well because of the expertise of the teacher and the skilled, motivated team who work effectively together. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage although the proportion reaching the goals expected for their age by the end of Reception is slightly below average. The predominantly good teaching ensures that pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 3. The school sets challenging but realistic targets for individual pupils, who usually reach them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in developing their personal skills, particularly their confidence and independence. In the Nursery, children settle well into school routines and rapidly become confident and enthusiastic about all they do. They play and work happily together, and trust and like all the adults who work with them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, as the calm and happy atmosphere throughout the school shows. They clearly enjoy being at school. A group of children agreed, 'We can't think of anything that could be better because it's perfect.' Behaviour is excellent, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils moderate their own behaviour in response to the school's high expectations.

Pupils enthusiastically and skilfully take on responsibilities within the school community. The school council feels that its voice is heard. Its work to make the playground a more exciting place is an excellent example of the pupils' care and concern for the school community. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, seen by the safe practices and healthy attitudes they adopt. One child said, 'Fruit and vegetables make you fit not fat.' They also raise money for charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is typically engaging, lively and sharply related to what pupils are to learn, with a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It is supported by careful planning which ensures the needs of individuals are met, although a few teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to explore and share their ideas before they are asked to write. In the Foundation Stage, children experience a wide range of activities and make their own choices and decisions. Across the school, relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves are excellent, and help to produce a positive and supportive climate for pupils to learn. Teaching assistants work effectively and sensitively with pupils, knowing when to

guide or support them in their learning and when to encourage them to try things for themselves. Occasionally, they provide a little too much help to pupils who are capable of being more independent.

Through their tracking systems, teachers have a good understanding of where their pupils are at and what they need to do to improve. The pupils' own knowledge of their short-term targets and how to improve their work are not as secure. Marking is undertaken regularly, and is usually helpful, with clear pointers for pupils themselves and reminders for teachers to help them in their planning. At times, the comments refer too much to improving handwriting and letter formation at the expense of more specific comments about the work itself and the learning that has taken place.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The introduction of a more integrated curriculum meets the needs of the pupils well and is rigorously planned. Although not fully established, the impact of this change is that pupils are more enthusiastic about learning and have a better understanding of the links between subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage have a good balance of activities, with particular emphasis placed on their personal and social skills and their early reading and writing experiences. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and helps them to develop skills they will need in later life, such as communication skills, as well as prepare them satisfactorily for their future economic well-being. Their increasing confidence and ability to work together prepare them well for the next stage of their education. The school receives many visitors and all year groups have regular trips out of school to enhance the curriculum. Pupils participate in a variety of clubs, such as the E2M (exercise to music) club and library club. Parents say that productions are very enjoyable and of a high standard, and that special projects are well thought out and give an added level of interest and fun.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is a caring community. High quality relationships between adults and pupils foster confidence and trust, and as a result, pupils feel safe. Pupils and parents agree that children are looked after extremely well. All staff clearly understand the school's systems for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare, and the school works extremely well with other services to ensure their well-being. The support provided for pupils with additional needs is outstanding. The procedures for making sure that children's start at school is a happy one are first rate and support both children and their families. Communication with parents is good and parents feel they can approach the school with any queries or concerns. There are excellent procedures in place to ensure that the pupils' move to their next school is a smooth and positive experience.

Systems for tracking pupils' progress, especially in literacy and numeracy, and recording their achievements, are rigorous and systematic, enabling teachers to know exactly how well pupils are doing. The school is setting challenging targets and its evaluation shows it is on track to meet them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's outstanding leadership, effectively supported by her deputy, provides clear educational direction to the school and a strong focus on continual improvement. Together, they support and motivate staff, enabling them to do their jobs well. Change has been well paced and managed, with high but achievable expectations.

Senior leaders, with the strong support of the chair of governors, have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school's self-evaluation is accurate. Procedures for checking all aspects of the school's work, including pupils' progress, are robust and systematic, and mean that areas for improvement can be tackled swiftly. The governing body works effectively to fulfil its statutory duties, knows the school well, and provides good levels of support and challenge.

Subject leaders are developing their roles well but a few do not do enough to check the quality of the work in their areas of responsibility. The Foundation Stage is led effectively and the changes made since the last inspection ensure greater consistency for children in the Nursery and the Reception classes.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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 making us so welcome in your school when we visited it recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and hearing how much you liked your school, as well as coming into lessons and looking at your work. I am writing to tell you some of the things we found out:

- You go to a good school and it is well run by those in charge.
- You work hard and make good progress in lessons, and reach the standards that are expected of pupils of your age.
- You do especially well in mathematics and you are getting better at reading and writing.
- There is a lovely friendly atmosphere in the school. This is because your behaviour is excellent and you look after and care for each other very well.
- The adults in the school take very good care of you and make sure that you are safe and happy.
- Teachers are good at making sure that your learning is fun and interesting, and they help you to do your best.
- Your headteacher and other staff know how well you are doing and make sure that you get the right kind of support to help you do even better.

We have asked your school to do three things to make your school even better. To help you to improve your writing, we have asked some of your teachers to give you more chances to explore and talk about your ideas before you write them down. We would like the teachers who are responsible for particular subjects to spend a little more time checking whether you are getting the right kind of help in improving your work. The third point is that some of you do not come to school as often as you should so we have asked teachers to work closely with your parents to get all of you to come to school every day. This will help everyone to make the best possible progress.

You and your parents are right to be proud of your school. It is giving you a lot of interesting activities to do and helping you to grow into helpful and friendly young people. You can help by always doing your best and coming to school every day. We wish you every success and happiness in your future education.