



The Windmills Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125939
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293405
Inspection dates 14–15 February 2007
Reporting inspector Kathryn Taylor

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Dale Avenue
School category	Community		Hassocks
Age range of pupils	7–11		BN6 8LS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01273 842421
Number on roll (school)	232	Fax number	01273 844675
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Andrew Coop
		Headteacher	Eileen Sharpe
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002		

Age group 7–11	Inspection dates 14–15 February 2007	Inspection number 293405
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but most pupils are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Free school meals entitlement is very low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a happy welcoming and orderly environment. The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is promoted well and is good. Consequently pupils enjoy school, develop maturity, and are polite, friendly and well behaved. Relationships between pupils and with the staff are good.

Standards are above average. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory but are inconsistent. As a result some pupils, which include those with learning difficulties, are making good progress, while some other pupils' progress is slow. Senior leaders are beginning to analyse the school's data more effectively and take action to address these inconsistencies.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is some good teaching and general strengths include effective classroom organisation, clear explanations and good skills in delivering lessons. However, some teachers' expectations of pupils' finished work are not high enough, and marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work and make better progress. Despite the good pastoral care for pupils, which parents are justifiably pleased with, care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall because of the weaknesses in academic guidance. Staff ensure that pupils are safe, happy and well cared for in school. Pupils settle quickly into Year 3 because the school works well with the local infant school to ensure that they do so. As one parent said, 'My son has settled well into Year 3, loves coming to school and is making good progress.' Pupils in Year 6 say they feel confident about moving on to secondary school. This is because good links have been established with the local school. Pupils also benefit from the use of the secondary school's specialist science facilities. During the past two years this has contributed to pupils' good standards and progress in science.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements in some areas such as developing the curriculum, which is now satisfactory with particular strengths in its contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and their understanding of healthy lifestyles. Teachers' subject knowledge has also improved, especially in those subjects that have been a whole school focus, such as English, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. The school's progress in addressing some of the other weaknesses has not been quick enough. Too little delegation of responsibilities means that the majority of subject leaders do not have a role in monitoring teaching and learning, or checking pupils' work and progress. There are few action plans for subjects that outline how the subject might be developed, or how it might contribute to achieving the school's overall priorities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that subject leaders are given the responsibility for monitoring work in their subjects and improving provision, the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress.

- Improve teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about what they should do to improve their work.
- Ensure that senior managers analyse data and check pupils' academic progress thoroughly, so that they can address any inconsistencies in pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the time pupils leave the school. From an above average starting point on entry to school, pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in science. Standards and progress are not always consistent across subjects, however, and pupils' progress is uneven. Although the school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils each year, not all of the pupils meet them. The school can suggest reasons why there might be variations in progress and standards, but systems to monitor teaching and learning and pupils' work in each subject are not yet robust enough to provide a full picture. The school has focused too much on analysing and comparing standards and test results in Year 6, rather than analysing pupils' progress in all years.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in relation to their capabilities. This is because their needs are identified quickly and they receive good support and additional teaching. Standards and progress in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in the consistently above average attendance rates. Pupils listen well and contribute well in lessons, but they could on occasions make more effort with the presentation of their work. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities for regular exercise, including the 'Friday Run'. They say that they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and lifestyles. Pupils respect themselves, the staff and each other. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and show care and consideration for one another. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to protect the environment and enjoy growing produce in the school garden. They appreciate their own and others' cultures. Pupils regularly contribute to the local community and to charities, including projects initiated by pupils themselves. Pupils undertake a variety of responsibilities well, such as representing the school in sporting competitions or on the school council. Pupils' well developed social skills and good basic skills mean they are well prepared for secondary school by the time they leave.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is also good teaching in some lessons and a number of overall strengths. Strengths include teachers' good subject knowledge, clear explanations, good presentational skills and effective use of resources, including ICT. Teachers plan activities that make learning interesting. Questioning is often good, which encourages pupils to contribute and to extend their thinking. Weaker aspects of teaching that the school has identified and are already addressing successfully, relate to ensuring that tasks are consistently matched to the needs of all ability groups, and teachers make effective use of teaching assistants. The weaknesses evident in marking remain an area for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has improved well since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. It gives appropriate attention to teaching the basic skills. Links between subjects are developing well, which is increasing pupils' enjoyment of learning. Literacy skills are well linked to work in other subjects, but because pupils' finished work is not marked thoroughly or monitored sufficiently, there are missed opportunities to ensure that pupils correctly apply the skills taught in literacy lessons to their written work across other subjects. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. Provision for the gifted and talented is satisfactory and is currently being extended. There is good provision for physical education. A large number of pupils attend the wide range of after-school clubs on offer, and visits and visitors are used well to enrich the curriculum. Pupils' personal and social education is planned well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils trust and like the staff and they know they can turn to an adult if they need help. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are securely in place. The needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are clearly identified and well met. Their progress and personal development are monitored carefully. Links with external agencies to support pupils are good. The academic guidance given to pupils is variable. Pupils know their targets for improvement in English, but are less sure about what they are working towards in other subjects. Pupils receive verbal feedback on their work and are increasingly encouraged to reflect on their learning and to assess their own progress, but guidance to pupils through marking is limited.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the school has a secure understanding of some of its strengths and weaknesses, overall its self-evaluation is too generous. This is because the evaluation of the impact of improvement is not rigorous enough. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in some areas, such as in developing the curriculum, assessments and teaching and learning. Weaknesses in school development planning and subject leadership have not yet been eliminated completely. Monitoring of lessons takes place termly, but not enough leaders are involved in this process, and pupils' finished work is not checked frequently enough. The school improvement plan sets out broad targets for development each year, but the focus has most often been on English. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and staff and resources are deployed appropriately. The school provides good personal support and promotes pupils' personal development well. The governors are very involved in the school and they support it well. They ask critical questions to challenge the school but recognise that improvements to monitoring and evaluation will strengthen their understanding of school performance.

Parents are supportive of the school and their children's education. Overall their views of the school are positive. Parents would nevertheless like more opportunities to meet with the staff and to receive more information about their children's progress throughout the year. While there has been some improvement to the information provided for parents, including the quality of pupils' reports, the school recognises that more can still be done to consult with parents and seek their views.

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.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	2
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	2
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?	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	3
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 very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We found that The Windmills Junior School provides a satisfactory standard of education.

These are the things that work well in your school:

- You make good progress in science.
- You are very friendly, well behaved and polite. You get on very well together and take good care of each other. You listen and concentrate well in lessons, but we feel that some of you could try harder to improve the presentation of your work.
- The staff make sure that you settle into school quickly, are safe and well cared for.
- The staff provide many interesting activities during school time and lots of clubs and activities after school. These help you to learn, to enjoy school and to stay fit and healthy.
- You attain good standards by the time you leave and are well prepared for secondary school.

These are the things that need to improve:

- We have asked your senior leaders to check your progress more carefully so that you can all do well.
- We have asked your teachers to improve their marking so that you will all be clear how you might improve your work.
- We have asked the subject leaders to check provision in their subjects and to draw up plans to show how it can be developed, so that teaching can be even better.

We feel certain that you will want to help your headteacher, teachers and other staff to make improvements to the school, and you can do this by working hard on improving the presentation of your work and ensuring that you complete written tasks.