



Durrington Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125952
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293410
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary	School address	Salvington Road
School category	Community		Worthing
Age range of pupils	8–12		BN13 2JD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01903 260761
Number on roll (school)	401	Fax number	01903 691714
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ged Harbinson
		Headteacher	Robert Pavard
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

Age group 8–12	Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006	Inspection number 293410
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

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 three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

The school serves an area of significant social deprivation. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry into Year 4 is below average. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the normal times. Some very recent arrivals are in the very early stages of learning English. There have been several staff changes in the past year including new senior staff appointments.

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 satisfactory education for its pupils. Leadership has been significantly strengthened by recent appointments of senior staff. This has resulted in increased rigour in the school's development and improvements for the pupils, for example, in providing more opportunities to develop computer skills. There is still more to do, such as making links between different subjects to reinforce pupils' learning, so they have opportunities to use their numeracy and literacy skills in subjects such as history and geography.

While there has been some underachievement in the past, effective measures have been taken to improve pupils' attainment and match work more effectively to their needs. These are beginning to bear fruit. Pupils' achievements are now satisfactory and they reach broadly average standards. However, the feedback given to pupils and the marking of their work is inconsistent in quality, particularly in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils do not always make as much progress as they should in these subjects. While teaching and learning have been improved and are satisfactory overall, some lessons still lack pace and a degree of excitement. The large numbers of pupils with learning difficulties receive good support and they make at least expected and sometimes good progress.

Most parents speak highly of the school and are happy with their children's progress. As one parent wrote 'My child comes out of school every day with a smile on his face from a good day had.' The school works hard to provide a stable environment to deal with the effect of significant numbers of pupils who move in and out of the school at other than the normal times and to ensure these pupils build on their previous learning. The school has welcomed some new pupils with little or no English and ensured that they have settled readily into school routines but does not have the expertise to cater for them adequately. Meanwhile their progress in learning English is stalling as the school awaits the advice and support that it needs.

Several features contribute to pupils' good personal development. Pupils are well cared for. Positive relationships support their enjoyment of school and they speak highly of it. Most behave well and show good levels of interest in their learning. The curriculum places a good emphasis on pupils' safe and healthy living. Pupils play their part well in the school community by taking on roles of responsibility with eagerness and commitment. They also engage well with the wider community. Pupils' sound skills mean they are ready to cope with the next stage of education and later life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in English and mathematics by ensuring that pupils are given consistent guidance on how to improve their work in English and mathematics and have opportunities to use their skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Add pace and inject a degree of excitement into lessons to ensure that there are more instances of good and better teaching.

- Urgently seek advice on the best ways of supporting those pupils who are in the early stages of learning English

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 4 is below average. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. Results in the 2006 national tests did not meet the projected targets in mathematics and English because a significant number of pupils left or joined after the targets were set. Several of these newcomers had major learning difficulties. The school has just taken in a number of pupils with little or no English who currently struggle and are not making the progress that they should with learning the language.

Girls often attain more highly than the boys in English and the boys attain more highly in mathematics. The school has identified this, but not the reasons for it. Pupils attain best in science because they enjoy practical learning and write freely about their investigations. By contrast, too many worksheets in history and geography restrict the opportunity for pupils to write independently about the knowledge they are gaining in different topics. Their skills in using mathematics are limited because they do not apply their knowledge enough to real life situations. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average and supported by satisfactory opportunities to use ICT in other subjects. Pupils in Year 7 generally reach the expectations for their age and achieve soundly. Throughout the school pupils with learning difficulties and more able pupils make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils know about keeping safe and understand features of healthy living, such as the safe handling of food and regular exercise. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop a good understanding of the need to support others. Pupils understand difference in backgrounds and beliefs and how this influences individuals' responses and actions. They are sensitive to problems experienced by minority groups, including the local homeless.

Pupils are friendly and usually enjoy their lessons. Behaviour is mostly good. Pupils do not consider bullying to be a serious issue. They make a good contribution to the community through work with residents of a local care home for the elderly, local church links and taking part in Durrington Carnival. School council activities support pupils' understanding of democracy and decision-making. Pupils' own efforts to raise money to support school visits make a good contribution to their financial understanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Rigorous monitoring and advice by senior staff have eradicated unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers' expectations are increasing and pupils are now given opportunities to learn in different ways. Teachers are analysing more effectively the stage pupils have reached in their learning in English and mathematics, though the quality of feedback about their work is still inconsistent. Where it is good, pupils know what they need to do to improve. An improvement in matching work to the needs of able pupils is combating some previous underachievement. Positive relationships with, and support from, teaching assistants aids the work of teachers well.

Although teaching has improved, not all lessons extend learning in the best ways. For example, opportunities to discuss and share ideas in small groups to develop pupils' speaking skills are spasmodic and they do not explain their thinking enough in mathematics. Lessons often lack excitement, which limits pupils' natural interest. In those lessons where pupils are given a specific amount of time for work to be completed the pace is swift and pupils show good commitment to their tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is gradually being made more relevant to pupils' needs but opportunities are missed to promote literacy and numeracy skills in subjects such as history and geography. Pupils' learning is not reinforced enough through links between different subjects but ICT is being used increasingly successfully in this way. The curriculum for modern languages is well established throughout the school and this, combined with a residential visit abroad, contributes well to pupils' cultural development.

The school's silver eco-award reflects the good attention given to environmental education and pupils' keen engagement in gardening. The good range of extra-curricular activities makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The provision for personal, social and health education, including visits from the police and the school nurse, is well structured. It contributes effectively to pupils' awareness of safe living and personal health.

The school has introduced a programme for enrichment one afternoon each week to try to increase pupils' enjoyment in learning. In this, not enough thought has been given to skill development and some activities are more suited to extra-curricular time. Others, such as drawing, are too leisurely and lack sufficient challenge. Whilst the school waits for advice and help, the recently admitted pupils with little or no English are not yet having their needs addressed well enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. Pastoral aspects are particularly strong. Child protection, health, safety and the welfare of pupils have a high priority. Arrangements to promote good behaviour and improve attendance are effective. The school is a safe and orderly community. Pupils' views are listened to and are gradually being reflected in changes to school organisation, such as providing chairs in assemblies. Pupils' well-being and personal concerns are supported effectively through the very close links with external agencies.

Systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting individual targets are improving. In English and mathematics pupils increasingly understand their learning targets and what they need to do to improve. However, the quality of marking and expectations and feedback to pupils, particularly in English and mathematics, lack consistency and this stops pupils from making even better progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and are helped to meet their individual targets. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils effectively and is developing enrichment programmes for them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The determination of the headteacher, senior staff and governors to raise standards and improve the quality of provision is shown in recent major changes. The revised staffing structure and the appointment of senior staff are bringing about improvement. The school is moving forward at a good rate because expectations of what pupils might achieve have been heightened. When rigorous monitoring and evaluation revealed narrow teaching methods, training effectively extended teachers' skills and eradicated unsatisfactory teaching. However there are still issues to tackle to ensure that all lessons have a good pace and engage pupils' interests. Self-evaluation is accurate and school development is well focused on the right priorities.

Partnerships with external groups to support vulnerable pupils and their parents are a major strength. Governors have been pivotal in recent developments, are well informed and ask challenging questions of senior staff. The strengthening of the leadership team, combined with improvements to teaching and the curriculum have successfully moved the school forward over the past year. Satisfactory, albeit uneven, progress has been made since the last inspection, but recent developments are beginning to show beneficial impact in significant areas. The school has a sound capacity to improve further.

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?	2
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	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	3

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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	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	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 for the warm welcome to your school when we visited and for talking to us about your work and what you do. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and continues to improve. We were very interested to learn of the silver eco-award for your understanding of, and interest in, the environment. We were also impressed with your links with the local community and your concern for homeless people.

Most of you behave well and enjoy your lessons. You have good opportunities to take part in extra activities during lunch time and after school and you enjoy these. Your teachers take good care of you and make sure that you understand about living safely and healthily. You make steady progress with your work and most of you reach the expected standard for your age. Those of you who are new to English need a bit more help so that you make quicker progress in learning the language.

You cover all the subjects that you should, but some lessons could be even more interesting for you if they went at a faster pace and they were a little more exciting. The senior staff know this and are speeding up the changes that are still needed in your school. As part of these developments we want the school to make better use of the records that they keep on your progress. We think that this will help to give you feedback on the next steps in your learning, especially in English and mathematics, so that you reach an even higher standard of work. We have also suggested that you need more opportunities to use your literacy and numeracy skills in subjects such as history and geography.

We wish you all well for the future and hope that you will work hard to achieve your ambitions.