

Cradle Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114434
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311600
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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 on roll	
School	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Davis
Headteacher	Gianni Bianchi
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2002
School address	Lexden Road Seaford BN25 3BA
Telephone number	01323 892773
Fax number	01323 898084

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who investigated the overall effectiveness of the school and focused particularly on the progress children make in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) and the extent to which this is sustained in Years 1 to 6. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and, in addition, school information including self-evaluation was scrutinised.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. It offers an extended school day, with breakfast and after-school clubs that together provide for pupils from 8.00am to 5.30pm. The headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils of all abilities grow in confidence and achieve well. Parents express overwhelmingly positive views, typically referring to Cradle Hill as 'a superb school with a great atmosphere'. They are especially pleased by how much their children enjoy school. As one parent put it, 'They positively bounce into and out of school every day.' Children get off to a flying start in their Reception Year and, as a result, they start in Year 1 with above average skills and capabilities. Standards at the end of Year 6 are significantly above average, with pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills preparing them well for their move to secondary school. Although teaching is good overall, school leaders' monitoring shows that pupils make notably better progress in Years 5 and 6 than lower down the school. This is because teachers' expectations have not always been high enough in Years 1 to 4 and work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different abilities. Though the school sets challenging targets for Year 6 tests that have helped to keep standards high, those for the Year 2 national assessments have not been particularly challenging. However, pupils consistently meet the targets set by the school for its Year 2 test scores. Among key strengths of teaching throughout the school are teachers' effective use of lively questioning and their engagement of pupils' interest. Pupils comment that their teachers 'always try to make learning fun'. Pupils get on well with their teachers and they work with considerable enthusiasm. Their individual targets mean that they generally have a good idea of what they each need to do to improve their work. As parents also confirm, the standards pupils attain in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are not at the expense of other subjects. Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities on offer, both within school and in the unusually wide range of clubs. They are especially proud of their many sporting achievements. Parents speak exceptionally highly of the new headteacher. Many wrote to commend his 'vision and enthusiasm'. What has particularly impressed parents is the open way in which he has immediately shared ideas and plans with them and with their children. With the senior leadership team, and working closely with governors, he has quickly established an accurate view of the school's many strengths and those areas where improvements are needed. As a result, school leaders have identified that some of the initiatives introduced in recent years have not been implemented consistently well in every class. Teachers are encouraged, for example, to set out for pupils at the start of each lesson what it is they are expected to learn. All set out lesson objectives, but some of these are still not sharp enough, so pupils know what they should be doing but not what they are expected to learn. This makes it difficult for them to assess for themselves the progress they are making. Although, inevitably, many of the new leadership arrangements have only just been introduced, the ambition and expectations for improvement that are already shared among staff, governors, parents and pupils testify to the school's strong capacity to build on and extend its success. Pupils feel safe at school because there are good arrangements to look after their welfare. The school has recognised, however, the need to update its systems for making police checks on adults in the school and this is in the process of being remedied. Both attendance and behaviour are good, and pupils say that if bullying occurs it is quickly dealt with. Pupils have a good understanding and appreciation of the need to exercise and eat healthily, although some still hanker for the pre-organic salad days when their school lunches were not quite as worthy.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When the school was last inspected, provision in the Foundation Stage was a key issue for improvement because children made less progress in their Reception Year than in the rest of the school. Since then, the improvement has been impressive. Some of the systems for keeping track of children's progress have only recently been established and are still being fine-tuned, but the curriculum in the Reception Year is now carefully tailored and adapted to individual children's needs. Very close liaison with the various pre-schools from which they come means that the children settle quickly into school and make rapid progress. From a broadly average starting point, they reach standards by the end of the Reception Year that are ahead of those expected for their ages. Parents recognise Foundation Stage provision as being a strength of the school. As one typically wrote of their child's experience last year, 'He has grown in confidence since starting school and I put it down to the care and support received.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work is matched more closely to pupils' different abilities, especially in Years 1 to 4.
- Make sure that pupils all know what it is they are expected to learn so that they can assess for themselves how much they have achieved in lessons.

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Annex A

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 September 2007 Dear Pupils, Inspection of Cradle Hill Primary School, Seaford BN25 3BA
Thank you for making me welcome today, and particularly those who helped me on my brief visit. I know that you and your parents are very proud of your school and I think you have every right to be. Cradle Hill is a good school and it is well run. Mr Bianchi has only just joined you but he has obviously made a very good start. Many of your parents told me how impressed they were with the plans he has already shared with them for making your school even better. I was impressed with how well behaved you are, how well you get on with each other and especially how enthusiastic you are in lessons. You enjoy all the interesting activities at the school and many of you take part in lots of clubs. Year 6, I know, are already looking forward to their trip to Holland once the SATs are out of the way. The youngest children get off to a great start in the Reception classes, where they do well because they are looked after and taught well by the staff, ably assisted by Marvin the Monkey and Ozzie Owl! You do well by the time you leave in Year 6, but you do not all make quite such good progress in every class. Sometimes teachers in Years 1 to 4 could set harder work for some of you. I see that teachers regularly set out 'learning intentions' and 'success criteria' for you, but sometimes these only tell you what you are doing and not what you should be learning. If you are always clear about what you should be learning, you will be able to check for yourselves that you understand and are making good progress. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you. Yours faithfully, Selwyn Ward Lead inspector



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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Selwyn Ward'. The signature is somewhat stylized and includes a horizontal line extending to the right.

Selwyn Ward
Lead inspector