

Clapham and Patching CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125977
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315378
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	David Bertwistle
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2002
School address	The Street Clapham Worthing BN13 3UU
Telephone number	01903 871214
Fax number	01903 871495

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller-than-average village school with two mixed-age classes. Over half the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, some with complex physical and emotional needs. High numbers of pupils join and leave the school each year. The small numbers of children starting in the Reception Year (presently only two) means that comparisons of starting points are unreliable.

There have been significant staff changes in the last two years and the headteacher has been away for a year. At the time of the inspection, the second acting headteacher had been in post for two weeks.

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 an adequate quality of education and the acting headteachers and staff have successfully brought the school through a difficult time. Notably, there has been a concerted drive to provide a more realistic balance between personal and academic achievement. Consequently, the standards and progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science have significantly improved. Pupils and parents have remained supportive of their school. The Year 6 pupils note how calm the school is and how behaviour is much better. They say that teachers now take more notice when 'things are not right', and this makes them feel secure. All these improvements have been based on accurate and effective self-evaluation, showing that the school has the capability to build upon its recent success.

The school has gained a strong reputation for dealing with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but, in the past, some of those in the middle- and higher-ability range have not always been fully stretched. Standards have been too low and pupils have not made enough progress. This is no longer the case. In 2007, nearly all pupils in Years 2 and 6 gained at least the expected levels for their age in national tests. For the first time in four years, significant numbers achieved levels above this. More importantly, the school's data indicate that a significant proportion made more than the expected rate of progress. This has happened because of the better-focused teaching and higher expectations for pupils' potential.

Space in the school is at a premium, creating difficult organisational problems. For example, daily use of computers is not easy and the youngest children have insufficient opportunities for independent play. The school does well to use other local facilities to ensure curricular coverage, and new developments have made a difference. Lesson planning has strengthened and includes subject-specific skills as well as relevant and exciting themes. These are beginning to provide pupils with an understanding of how to use the knowledge they have previously gained and become more responsible for their own learning. In addition, teachers' assessments are realistic, challenging and well timed. They are used to intervene quickly when pupils are not making the correct progress and to support the high turnover of pupils. Attendance is too low because of the frequent absences of a very small number of pupils who nevertheless form a significant proportion of this small school's population.

The determined interim leadership team has made the right changes. The school's accurate self-evaluation rightly highlights the need to extend the improvements in academic achievement to all subjects. It also rightly acknowledges that, because of the lower achievement in the past, pupils are not fully prepared for their future education. This is most noticeable in their inadequate use of writing for different purposes and in information and communication technology (ICT).

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

While provision and teaching in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, improvements are needed to ensure a smoother transition between the Reception Year and Year 1. Children start school ready and eager to learn. They are managed well and build upon their early experiences. The mixed-age class, which includes pupils aged four to seven, has only recently been able to provide the appropriate opportunities for all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This has resulted in a lack of balance between teacher-directed activities and more independent play.

Consequently, by the start of Year 1, some children have lower-than-expected levels of social and language development than they are capable of achieving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing through providing better opportunities to develop language skills across all subjects, particularly ICT.
- Improve the transition between the Foundation Stage and Year 1 by developing more play opportunities for children to build upon what they learn through teacher-directed activities.
- Improve attendance by rigorously following up the small number of persistent absentees.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

For some years, pupils had been achieving very low scores in the standard assessment tests — sometimes over one and a half years below their age-expected level. The recent dramatic improvement in pupils' achievement is ensuring that all pupils are now making the progress they should in English, mathematics and science. Significant numbers are doing better than expected. Evidence of this can be seen in the much-improved performance in national tests. In 2007, the proportion of pupils reaching higher-than-expected levels in Years 2 and 6 was significantly improved. Evidence from pupils' work and the revised and highly challenging targets set indicate that the improvement is continuing this year. Improvement in writing has been slower than in other subjects. This is due to the lack of opportunity over a period of time for pupils to use these skills in extended stories and reports, letters and research or to use word processing more regularly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils really enjoy school. They have good attitudes towards learning and are well behaved. There are just a few occasions when some pupils with complex needs challenge the authority of staff. However, the clearly understood systems and skilful support mean that other pupils are not distracted from their learning. Evidence of the significant improvement in behaviour can be seen in pupils' responses to questionnaires and parents' comments, and by the school's own monitoring. Pupils have a suitable understanding of how to stay safe, such as when playing in the playground. They develop healthy lifestyles, for example, through their enthusiastic participation in sport. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution towards the community by helping with locally organised events. Connections with the parish church are being strengthened. The introduction of 'Year 6 guardians' is giving older pupils more responsibility. Pupils are not well enough prepared for future personal and economic well-being. They have difficulty taking on real initiatives and using the skills they have acquired because, until recently, they were not given the chance to do so.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that teaching is 'satisfactory with some good and some outstanding elements'. Planning is focused well on promoting learning. Lessons are structured to balance the need for gaining knowledge and for experimentation, enquiry and research. They are often conducted in an exciting way. Assessments, including marking, are used to direct the work of individuals. This is ensuring that pupils are challenged by both age and ability and underpins their better progress. There are still some isolated instances where work is not sufficiently challenging and then the pace of learning drops. In addition, pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop their independent writing skills across a wide range of subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets all necessary requirements. Innovative ways have been found to solve problems caused by the accommodation. For instance, one teacher, after finding that too much time was being used to travel to a local school, is now using the local village hall for physical education. However, it is still difficult to provide for gymnastics. Computers are not used regularly enough to improve pupils' basic skills. There is a small range of extra-curricular activities and visits are used regularly to reinforce work in the classroom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good, something the parents and pupils have particularly noted. The family atmosphere of the school means that all pupils are well known to adults and any personal problem is quickly dealt with. The school's own evaluation highlights that this has sometimes been at the expense of academic rigour, and recent developments have actively sought to remedy the situation. The comprehensive tracking of individual pupils is being used to determine different groupings and to focus on those who could be doing better. Marking is undertaken conscientiously and new targets set for improvement. Much of this is new and not fully embedded and so pupils are not used to the approach. When discussing their targets, it is clear that pupils do not fully understand the purpose of these small steps in learning. Often, they see them only as ways of providing the teacher with information about how they have progressed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteachers have been single-minded and successful in improving the provision for the pupils. Priorities have been tackled realistically and many already achieved. Although it is early days, all staff have the determination to succeed. In light of this, the new acting headteacher has quickly drawn up a revised plan to continue the school's improvement. For instance, the statutory targets for pupils presently in Years 4, 5 and 6 have been significantly raised and are based on pupils making very high levels of progress over the next few years. The

governing body has supported the school in its endeavours and has provided some challenge when it is necessary. Difficulties in recruiting new governors have made it difficult to provide a good outside perspective about the work of the school. The governing body is now actively seeking to widen its range of expertise.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	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	4

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

27 September 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School, Clapham, West Sussex BN13 3UU

Thank you for making me so welcome during my recent visit. I enjoyed talking to you and joining you in your lessons. I have included the main points of my report below.

- I know there have been a lot of changes recently but now you are getting the right education, although there are some things that could be improved.
- You told me how much you enjoyed school and you felt that things were getting better. I agree. You have good attitudes to learning. Your behaviour is good and you know how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- The standards that you achieve have improved and you make satisfactory progress. The results from the SATs tests in July were some of the highest ever so you have a lot to live up to during this year.
- The youngest children are learning satisfactorily. I have asked your teachers to try and give them more play opportunities to practise the things they have learnt in class. I know this will be difficult because space is so restricted but the teachers have already started to develop some ideas that will help.
- You appreciate the work that your teachers do to try and make your learning interesting. I enjoyed watching you test your 'ice hands'. It was a good example of you thinking hard. I have asked your teachers to help you improve your writing by using these skills in more subjects and by having more chances to use the computers. This will also help you be better prepared for the future.
- Your acting headteachers have introduced lot of new ideas which have helped improve your school. All the staff are very committed to making sure this continues and they have some good ideas about how to achieve this.
- Just a very few of you do not attend school regularly enough and so I have asked that this be carefully checked in the near future.

Finally, good luck for the future. You can do your bit to help. Work hard and help make all the new staff welcome. Try and make sure that you all attend school regularly.

Best wishes,

David Collard (Lead inspector)

27 September 2007



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