

Fittleworth CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125984
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315380
Inspection date	9 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Murray
Headteacher	G Bloomfield
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Fittleworth Fittleworth RH20 1JB
Telephone number	01798 865419
Fax number	01798 865807

Age group	4-10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of provision and pupils' progress in mathematics, and standards and achievement in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 5. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of school tracking and assessment data and discussions with the headteacher, mathematics co-ordinator, members of the governing body and pupils. The views of parents were gathered from the school's recent questionnaire, together with the returns of the Ofsted questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's self-assessment is not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Pupils travel from a wide area to this small and very popular village first school. All four classes have mixed age groups. Attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year due to the small year groups. It is generally slightly below that usually found, particularly in some key literacy and social skills. None of the few pupils from minority ethnic groups is at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average, but varies significantly between year groups. The school holds the Basic Skills and Healthy School awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good and rapidly improving quality of education with significant strengths in some areas of its work. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has been the driving force behind improvements over the past year. He has created a very strong team of staff and governors who are working extremely well together to provide outstanding collective leadership and management to achieve their aim of providing the very best quality education for pupils. Parents are exceptionally pleased with what the school does for their children. As one parent put it, 'I am more than pleased with my child's progress.' Pupils love school and are unanimous that 'it's great!'

Self-evaluation involving the whole school community is excellent. The school has an exceptionally clear view of what needs to be done to improve further. Development planning is aspirational and very effective. Development strategies and pupils' progress are monitored especially well including by subject leaders and governors. Governors have an exceptionally good understanding of how well the school is doing. Their considerable expertise, such as in financial planning and building maintenance, benefits the school considerably in helping maintain a high quality learning environment.

Progress in mathematics has improved and all pupils, including the higher attainers, now make good progress. Staff and governors are determined to continue this upward trend until pupils do as well in mathematics as they do in English, where progress is very good and standards in reading and writing are well above those normally seen. Achievement across the school is good and by Year 5, standards are above those expected for the pupils' age. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being. The school's success over the past year, together with very effective development planning and the determination to do even better, means it is especially well placed to improve further.

Very effective teamwork ensures that a whole-school approach is benefiting pupils' progress. Good provision in the Foundation Stage results in the children making good progress and gives them a good start for Year 1. In Years 1 to 5 teaching and learning are also good. They are excellent in English and the school is successfully developing a similar approach in other subjects, notably in mathematics. An especially good feature is the way staff plan to build on and extend individual pupils' skills, providing them with challenging activities to help them do their very best. For example, the younger higher attainers often work on topics with the older classes. This very good attention to the needs of individual pupils also benefits those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities so they achieve as well as their classmates. Under the guidance of the headteacher, provision for information and communication technology has much improved over the last year and pupils' progress is now good. Links between subjects are very well established to allow pupils to use and develop their literacy skills, but numeracy development through other subjects is not quite as advanced and the full effect in raising standards has yet to be seen. Curriculum enrichment is excellent and clubs are very popular. During the inspection pupils were very keen to attend the gardening club despite the heavy rain. Outstanding links with parents and other agencies or schools, particularly the 'Petworth Area Schools', have considerable benefits for pupils and enhance their enjoyment of school.

The outstanding relationships staff have with pupils and the interesting activities planned for them generate a great enthusiasm for learning. On a few occasions, teachers do not take full advantage of this and pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet whilst the lesson is explained,

even though they are ready and want to get on with their work. In lessons, staff are very good at intervening to support pupils who find the work hard or to challenge them to do even better.

This is a very caring school which looks after pupils especially well. Excellent arrangements for risk assessments and staff vetting and child protection procedures ensure that pupils feel very safe and secure in school. Their understanding of how to keep safe, particularly in the school's own swimming pool area, is particularly good. The guidance and support for pupils' personal development including in the Reception class are excellent. As a result, they make outstanding progress in this area including in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils work and play very well together. They love coming to school, work very hard in lessons and are determined to do their very best. Attendance is above average. Pupils are very mature and thoughtful, with an excellent appreciation of how they can contribute to the school and wider community. Their ability to reflect on important issues is very good at helping them develop a clear understanding of cultural and economic differences in third world countries. Pupils recognise what constitutes 'fair trade' and their commitment to recycling and their growing involvement with environmental issues are very good. Pupils' appreciation of how to achieve a healthy lifestyle is excellent. They are enthusiastic participators in sports activities and grow, cook and eat their own healthy food.

The majority of academic support and guidance is of a high quality and makes an important contribution to pupils' very good progress in English and improving progress in mathematics. The 'I can do books', allowing staff and pupils to monitor individual academic and personal improvement targets and pupils' self-assessment surveys, provide excellent support. In lessons, guidance on how to do better is very good, but staff miss opportunities when marking pupils' written work to show what they need to do to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The well-managed provision has many strong features, particularly in the high quality care and support, such as induction procedures that ensure children settle in especially well. Exciting and highly motivating activities encourage children's good progress. By the end of Reception, standards are above expectations. Children's outstanding personal and social development underpins the excellent development throughout the school. The well-planned curriculum encourages children to discover things for themselves. It is especially good for their communication, language and literacy skills where every opportunity is taken to encourage children's development. It is not so strong in developing their numeracy skills across other areas of learning. Teaching is good and inspirational in encouraging children's reading skills, as was evident in the exceptionally good role-play to encourage children's understanding of the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. Very good information on children's progress is used especially well to move them on to the next steps in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by (i) giving greater attention to the timing of lesson introductions so that pupils get on with the tasks more quickly (ii) ensuring marking indicates to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Increase the rate of progress in mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities to use their skills in 'real life' situations in mathematics and in other subjects.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

10 October 2007

Inspection of Fittleworth First School, Pulborough, RH20 1JB

Dear Children Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so friendly, polite and helpful. I particularly want to thank the pupils who showed me around school and who gave up their lunchtime to talk with me. The school provides you with a good standard of education. It is improving all the time and some things are already excellent.

- This is what I thought was especially good about the school:
- Your headteacher, staff and governors provide excellent leadership and management to help the school become even better.
- The school has excellent links with your parents and other schools or groups, which help you to do well.
- Staff take excellent care of you.
- Your personal development is outstanding. You behave well and get on very well together.
- You enjoy school very much, work hard and are developing into mature and thoughtful young people.
- The interesting activities planned for you and good teaching encourage you to do your best.
- You make good progress and reach standards higher than in most schools by the time you leave. Standards and progress are even better in English because of the high quality planning and teaching in this subject.
- You get lots of very good advice on how to improve, particularly in the way teachers help you check your targets and advise you in lessons.
- What I have asked your school to do now:
- Make sure you do not spend too long sitting on the carpet when lessons are explained, and that when teachers mark your written work, they show you how to improve.
- Help you to do as well in mathematics as you do in English by ensuring that you use your mathematical skills in practical ways across a range of subjects. You can help by always trying your very best.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson Lead inspector

Annex B

10 October 2007

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Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson
Lead inspector