

West Hove Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114403
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	326005
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Long HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	488
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	S Terry
Headteacher	Janis Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2005
School address	Portland Road Hove BN3 5JA
Telephone number	01273 388800
Fax number	01273 887768

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

West Hove Junior School is larger than average. The pupils come from generally advantaged backgrounds. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with those seen in most schools and of these, the largest groups have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or behavioural and emotional needs. An average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, and although the proportion with first languages other than English is currently below the national average it is rising. The headteacher joined the school a year ago. The school buildings are used by a private provider of after-school club and holiday activities which are reported on separately as they are not managed by the governors.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school, where pupils' personal development is now a particular strength. On her arrival the headteacher, together with the staff, took a hard look at the school's position. Accurate judgements were made and the painful conclusion drawn that although the standards reached by pupils were above the national average, they were not doing well enough based on their high attainment on entry. Some pupils were misbehaving and the school had not made progress on all the areas identified for improvement in the last inspection. The root causes were found to be weaknesses in aspects of teaching, a lack of consistency in behaviour management, and a curriculum which did not stimulate the pupils. The headteacher provided good leadership in raising the expectations of staff and pupils alike. A more ambitious vision for the future was developed into an action plan with challenging goals for pupils' personal and academic achievement.

Improving teaching is central to the plan and lessons have improved as staff have been supported in developing their practice. As a result, the standards achieved have begun to rise and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Lessons contain more exciting learning which meets the needs of pupils of differing abilities. However, this is not consistent and there is not enough good teaching to achieve the ambitious targets now set for pupils. The guidance given to pupils about how to improve their work is satisfactory although they are not involved enough in deciding how to improve their work in order to make better progress. The tracking of pupils' progress over time has been tightened and the support given, for example through booster classes, to those likely to underachieve is increasingly effective. The curriculum has seen considerable development, including through input from pupils about how they thought it could be improved. It is more engaging and includes logical links between different subjects. The learning environment is improving with better resources and displays. These changes have had a positive effect on the pupils' behaviour. This has been further supported by better care and guidance for the minority who find it difficult to manage their behaviour. Most now behave well and enjoy their learning. They have good relationships with the staff and feel safe and well cared for

Parents welcome the changes in the last year although they note these are the first stages in developing the kind of school they would like. In particular, they find the school more communicative about activities and about their children's progress. A typical response in a questionnaire said: 'I am delighted with the way the school has improved in the past year. Now parents are much more involved in school life and the children are happy and enthused about a new approach to the curriculum.'

Better leadership and management underpin the school's work. Using her wide experience of leadership, the headteacher has worked well with the governors to put together an effective senior leadership team. Middle leadership roles such as for year groups and subjects have also been revised although staff in these positions are not yet monitoring and leading their areas independently, as they will need to if the pace of improvement is to accelerate further. The governing body are dedicated. They are thoroughly involved in the changes being made, but do not monitor the success of these changes independently enough to ensure that they are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the proportion of teaching which is good or better by ensuring work is always exciting and matched closely to pupils' needs.
- Involve pupils more thoroughly in deciding how to improve their work so they become more independent as learners.
- Ensure all those with leadership responsibilities, including governors, actively monitor the quality of provision and use the outcomes to bring about improvement.

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

Until a year ago, pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science was falling in comparison to their peers nationally with some, notably the more able, not making enough progress. Boys were underachieving in English and girls in mathematics. However, these weaknesses have begun to be reversed. As a result, the standards reached in national assessment tests by Year 6 pupils last summer were higher than those reached the year before. They were above national averages and represented satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points. The progress made by many pupils had accelerated markedly in the latter stages of Year 6. The more able pupils made better progress and a significant number exceeded the level expected for their age, especially in mathematics and science. The pace of learning within other year groups is gaining momentum although making up lost ground is a challenge. The boys have begun to do better in English and the girls in mathematics, and effective steps are being taken to sustain these gains. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are polite and welcoming. Most show respect and consideration for others, reflecting good social and moral development. Attitudes to learning are positive and most pupils settle quickly in lessons and behave well. Pupils say they feel safe and, on the rare occasions when bullying occurs, it is dealt with effectively. Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils attend regularly but a minority do not, often because families take holidays during term time. The school is working closely with education welfare staff to tackle this issue. The contribution made to the school and wider community by the pupils is good; for example, the school council members are active, carrying out responsibilities as 'playground leaders' and contributing to new curricular developments. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep fit and eat healthy food, as shown by their Healthy School award. Preparation for the next stage in pupils' education and future working lives is satisfactory now that progress in basic skills is improving. They have reasonable opportunities to experience the world of work and enterprise although these do not build pupils' understanding as progressively as they might.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and tracking their progress toward challenging targets have been overhauled and are now good. Most staff are clear about what pupils should achieve each year. As a result, planning has improved so that more lessons provide activities which match pupils' differing needs and sustain their concentration. Speaking and listening skills are developed well by some teachers through targeted questioning. In the more effective lessons, additional adults such as teaching assistants are deployed to good effect and make a good contribution to the learning of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, in other lessons, progress is only satisfactory because teachers sometimes spend too long talking, for example during introductions, and activities do not engage pupils in key aspects of learning at levels appropriate to their differing needs. This leads to a loss of concentration and pace in learning. Whilst many pupils talk with confidence about what they are doing, they do not always know how much progress they are making over time or what steps they need to take to meet long-term targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils are responding well to the new curriculum. For example, while working on a whole-school 'space' theme, pupils in Year 3 were thrilled to interview an astronaut prior to writing about his visit and a Year 5 pupil was rightly proud of making a rocket with a working parachute. These exciting developments are relatively new and need further development, in particular to ensure that the needs of pupils of differing abilities are met over the long term and that individual subject requirements are fulfilled. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology in different subjects. The curriculum is planned well to support pupils' personal development, including through personal, social and health programmes. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about a range of cultures, reflecting the minority ethnic groups in school and in the country as a whole. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory but some opportunities are missed to develop pupils' ability to reflect on complex issues. Extra-curricular provision is good. The pupils are keen to attend clubs in sport, music and dance. Visits are planned well to stimulate learning, and work with local partners such as museums, the Brighton Festival and the after-school club is well planned.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is monitored well. Those who are vulnerable or need extra support are identified effectively, including through information transferred from infant school. Support for the minority of pupils who find difficulty behaving well has improved through new procedures so that behaviour is managed more consistently. The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those speaking English as an additional language. Specialist support in withdrawal sessions for these groups is also good but activities in everyday lessons do not always meet their needs. The school has worked hard to improve supervision at break-times and pupils confirm they feel safe. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are rigorous and well understood by staff. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers' verbal feedback in lessons is sometimes good but does not always

challenge pupils to think independently about what to do next. Some marking is of high quality but most does not involve pupils enough in responding to teachers' comments, checking their own work or referring back to their long-term targets so as to develop their independence as learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The restructuring of leadership, including new assistant headteacher appointments, has added much to leadership capacity and senior leaders work well as a team. Their monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress yields a good understanding of areas needing attention and of progress toward priorities in the action plan. Those in middle leadership positions such as year and subject leaders are newly appointed in some cases and largely dependent on support from senior colleagues to effect change in their areas. Professional development is used well to improve teaching, and senior leaders are gaining considerable expertise from working with the headteacher and from external sources of training. The governing body was restructured last year to focus more on pupils' achievement. Governors meet regularly and work hard. The school provides good information to them but they are not sufficiently independent in challenging staff about how well the school is doing based on what they receive. Steps to promote community cohesion are satisfactory with a positive atmosphere between pupils and increasing curricular links with communities outside the school. Nevertheless, the school has justifiably identified this as an area which requires more systematic development, and already has suitable plans in place to improve it.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

30 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Hove Junior School, Hove BN3 5JA

This letter is to thank you for the welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. We found the discussions we had with you very useful when writing our report and your views are included in the judgements shown below.

- Your school gives you a satisfactory education and it is improving. Your parents and carers have noticed the improvements at the school.
- In the past, the progress you made in your work was not always been fast enough. This is changing because more lessons include work which is exciting and which makes you think hard, although this is not yet true of all lessons.
- The teachers give you a lot of help to improve your work but they do not always ask you to think enough about how to improve it yourselves.
- Some of you had found it difficult to behave well; this is less often the case now. The adults help you behave well but also you told us that you are enjoying topics such as 'Space' so you want to behave better anyway.
- We think you make a good contribution to the school, and those of you who help on the school council or as play leaders are keen to be helpful to others.
- The school does a good job in helping you eat well, take exercise and stay safe. For example you know about safety outside school, including how to cross the road safely and how to behave with strangers.
- The headteacher and the staff are working hard to improve the school and most have taken a lead on an area of the school's work. However, not everyone has started to take action yet. This is the next step, along with making sure they check carefully that what they are doing is making a difference.
- The governors have also been working hard to help improve the school but they need to check more carefully the impact of the changes made.

I have asked the headteacher and staff to include the following ideas in their development work:

- Make all lessons as good as the best ones, so they are always exciting and include work at just the right level for each of you - not too easy but not too hard either.
- Involve you more in deciding how to improve your work - you can help with this by thinking really hard about what you need to do next.
- To make sure that all staff begin to take the lead on the areas of the school's work they are in charge of and that they, and the governors, make sure the work they do and the changes made are improving your learning.

Yours Faithfully

Stephen Long

Her Majesty's Inspector