

Littlehaven Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125837
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	328407
Inspection date	13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	104
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Williams
Headteacher	Sylvia White
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hawkesbourne Road Horsham RH12 4EH
Telephone number	01403 260608
Fax number	01403 260926

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- attainment on entry to Reception and the evenness of progress across Reception to Year 2
- the consistency of good teaching in each year group and its impact on pupils' progress
- the extent to which leadership is shared and its impact on raising standards by developing teaching and the curriculum.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, a review of the assessment data the school uses to track pupils' progress, and analyses of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than most infant schools and serves a mixed area that includes the local community and further afield. Most children are of White British heritage. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. These pupils' needs are mainly speech, language, literacy and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are either in a single-age Reception class or a mixed Reception/Year 1 class. The number of pupils attending the school has fallen since the previous inspection and there are now four classes. There have also been several changes to teaching staff since then. The school has gained the Active Mark and Eco Schools awards.

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. Pupils thrive in a friendly and caring atmosphere where the development of basic skills is given a high priority. The strong family ethos ensures everyone is valued and encouraged to develop confidence. High standards of care promote pupils' good personal development and behaviour. These ensure pupils achieve well, enjoy school and are well prepared for their future. The school takes every step to involve parents in their children's education, and parents are delighted with this and their children's progress. One expressed the common view with the comment: 'I am very pleased with the progress my child is making and he enjoys going to Littlehaven every day. I would not choose any other infant school.'

Reception children settle very well as a result of a well-thought-out induction programme. From starting points that are often a little lower than normally seen, children make good progress in Reception and this begins to lift their attainment. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and, by Year 2, standards are average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics and science, with pupils achieving well. Academic performance information shows that new systems for teaching phonics are helping to raise standards in reading in Reception and this means children are better prepared for Year 1. In all year groups, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The school has robust specialist support programmes for helping these pupils to catch up.

The headteacher provides very good leadership. Her sustained strong leadership is central to ensuring that accelerating children's progress is always a priority. The whole school team share her vision and are fully committed to improving the all-round education of each child. The decrease in school size and subsequent reduction in staffing have been well managed. Allocations of roles and responsibilities are sensible and appropriate for a small school. Shared leadership is developing well and this is very important in a small school where each teacher has many responsibilities. The arrangements for self-evaluation are good. The headteacher rigorously monitors teaching, promoting good practice, and subject leaders are given the opportunity to check and manage their areas of responsibility. Recently appointed subject leaders are receiving training so they can play a full part in raising achievement. Thorough assessment systems have led to the school having an accurate view of its own performance. Teachers are becoming more adept in evaluating assessments to judge the impact of their own teaching on the progress pupils make towards their demanding targets. However, the school acknowledges that this is not consistent throughout the school and that teachers do not always pinpoint how well individuals and groups are learning. Governors play an important part in challenging and supporting the school.

Teaching and the curriculum are good. Well-planned lessons have clear purposes, and activities are interesting. Grouping arrangements ensure there is good attention to the different ages and abilities of pupils. Pupils are helped to check how well they are learning and, as a result, they gain confidence in their achievements. However, occasionally, when pupils learn in independent groups, adults do not intervene often enough to move their learning on and then the pace of progress slackens. Cross-curricular links have been stepped up recently and parents remark on how much their children enjoy their exciting projects. Pupils are given a good range of enrichment opportunities, especially for sport, where specialist teachers provide some high quality learning opportunities. In Reception, outdoor play provision is underdeveloped. The school acknowledges there is more to be done to make this more exciting and purposeful. The

strong focus on eating healthily, sport and active playtimes underpin pupils' good understanding of what they need to do to keep fit.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel safe and show kindness and respect for each other regardless of age, background and ability. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and meet statutory requirements. Strong links with a wide range of external agencies support the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with speech and behavioural difficulties. Pupils' own contributions to the school and wider community are good. They develop a strong sense of responsibility for caring for their local environment through their ecological activities, such as litter picking and recycling. The thriving school council is a very good vehicle for enabling pupils to contribute to school decision-making. Steps to promote community cohesion are good. The school strives successfully to reach out to the local community and encourages pupils to understand and value people's differences, beliefs and lifestyles. The school is now exploring how to strengthen links with different communities in the UK. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and pupils are punctual. The rate of improvement and the structures and procedures in place show the school has a good capacity to continue to move forward.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Extremely good links with parents and carers and clear routines ensure that children make a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The high standards of care and safety help children to feel secure and happy. Children's attainment on entry varies but, overall, it is a little below that expected for their age. A substantial minority have limited speaking skills and many are below expectations in writing. Children make good progress and, by the end of Reception, their overall attainment is average, although writing is still below average as there is little attainment at higher levels. The school has recently strengthened the teaching of phonics and this is having a positive impact on raising achievement in reading, where the school acknowledges that children did not always do well enough in the past. Children are encouraged to develop good attitudes to learning and thoroughly enjoy the tasks that are planned for them. There is a good range of learning activities through direct teaching by adults and, overall, for learning through play. Opportunities for sowing different seeds and growing vegetables in the Reception garden provide really good learning experiences in science. Art and design is also strong and used well to promote learning across the curriculum, including about other cultures. There is a good quality covered outdoor area but the school has rightly identified the need to develop learning opportunities here. It is working with the local authority to create more exciting and purposeful learning opportunities. Currently, there are limited opportunities for role play and literacy and mathematical learning through outdoor play. Assessment of children's attainment is thorough but evaluation of the progress of different groups is a weaker element. Overall, leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a consistent approach in the way teachers evaluate assessments so they can check the impact of teaching on different groups and strengthen provision and pupils' progress.
- Improve outdoor play facilities for Reception children so that their self-chosen learning becomes more exciting and purposeful.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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	2

The quality of provision

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

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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?	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**

13 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Littlehaven Infant School, Horsham RH12 4EH

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our discussions with you and finding out about the interesting things you do.

Firstly, you need to know your school is a good one. Here are some good things about your school:

- You make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Those of you in Reception get off to a good start.
- You help to make your school a happy place because you are helpful, work hard and behave well.
- You understand how important it is to keep fit and healthy and enjoy lots of sport. You know you should not eat too many sweets and cakes.
- You have good opportunities to use computers and for sport.
- Your headteacher leads the school very well and all the staff and governors think carefully about what is best for you.
- Staff take good care of you. You get extra help if you need it so you can make good progress.

This is what the school needs to do to improve:

- Help teachers make better checks on how well you are progressing.
- Improve the Reception outdoor area so it gives the youngest children more exciting opportunities for learning.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and continue to work hard in all you do.

Yours faithfully

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector