

North Lancing First and Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125841
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	328408
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	347
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	B Boggis
Headteacher	J Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mill Road North Lancing Lancing BN15 0PT

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2008
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Since the last inspection, the school has been reorganised from a first and middle school to a large primary school for children from Reception, the last part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), to Year 6. Over the last year, part of the accommodation has been refurbished to improve provision for the school's new designation. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is below the national average, partly because some parents do not take up the entitlement as there is no hot meal provision. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. A higher than average proportion of pupils come from Traveller backgrounds. A higher than usual number of pupils join the school during Key Stage 2. Recent awards include Dyslexia Friendly School, International School, Artsmark Gold, Football Association Chartermark School and Active 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

North Lancing is a good school. School leaders have successfully taken it through a period of change to an all-through primary school and the disruption of a building programme, whilst ensuring that standards have risen in line with the national trend. Standards are generally above average. Changes to the curriculum over the last year are having a very positive impact on pupils' good achievement and enjoyment of school. Children get off to a good start in Reception. From their earliest days in the school pupils have opportunities to work independently and pursue exciting and creative activities which interest them, as well as gain the necessary literacy, numeracy, scientific and computer skills to prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Pupils take care to present their work well, although their handwriting is not as well developed as creative writing. Good teaching through the school means that pupils make consistently good progress. Pupils say that they find their targets useful, although target setting, lesson reviews of learning and marking do not always give pupils enough information on precisely how to improve their work.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good because of good quality care and guidance. As one parent commented, 'Not only are staff fun, caring and very good teachers but the extra 'stuff' on offer is brilliant'. Pupils respond very well to adults' high expectations, as shown in their warm relationships with one another. Pupils relish the opportunities for community involvement, for example within the school as peer mediators and school councillors or beyond the school when contributing to a local arts festival. They show their exceptional enjoyment of school in their participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and excellent behaviour. Attendance is similar to the national average, but is brought down by the absence rates of a few pupils.

Parents drew attention to the school's strong leadership and management and the success of home-school communication. One comment summarised the views of others: 'Teachers are always ready to listen to your concerns. They report back explaining what has been done and any long-term changes that may have been put in place in order for the problem not to re-occur.' The headteacher, governing body and staff have a clear vision for the school and have effectively tackled all the issues raised at the time of the last inspection. In particular, more pupils now achieve higher levels. Such improvements demonstrate the school's good capacity for further development.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the EYFS are catered for well. Many parents commented on the excellence of the induction arrangements and on how well children have settled in. Children are comfortable in the quickly established routines and are already showing progress, for example in their understanding of sounds and letters. Children join the school from a range of pre-school experiences, and attainment is generally below that expected for their age. The school's data show that children achieve well through the Reception year, making particularly good progress in their language and communication development. The curriculum is planned well and enables children to learn to make choices and develop confidence from their first days in the school. Teaching encourages children to have fun learning. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Adults intervene well in children's play to direct their learning. Children are encouraged to do things for themselves and teaching assistants provide good support for

a wide range of activities. Leadership is good and adults work as a good team. The leadership has accurately identified areas for further improvement, such as improving the outside area to address children's physical development, and action is under way to achieve this aim.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking and targets identify exactly what pupils have to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Establish a clear and consistent approach to develop handwriting through the school.
- Broaden approaches for promoting good attendance, particularly for those pupils whose attendance is a concern.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from the EYFS and standards in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 have been significantly above average for the last three years. Progress is also good in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, school data show that standards are also above average, despite more pupils than usual leaving and joining the school during the key stage. In the last few years, English standards have risen across the school and a strong focus on phonics has improved reading and writing skills, particularly for younger pupils. However, pupils' handwriting is usually not as strong as their other skills, which slows their fluency in expressing their views clearly in writing. Pupils from Traveller backgrounds, those who join classes through the school and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are all achieving their potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school. They show it in their welcome to visitors and courtesy to adults. They demonstrate polite behaviour and friendliness with one another, so that collaborative learning in pairs or groups is productive. Pupils recognise that sometimes they fall out with friends but know how to resolve such issues, for example by involving peer mediators. Pupils say that they feel safe, knowing that bullying is not tolerated, and know exactly who to approach if they have any concerns. They have a first-class understanding of how to look after themselves and their health. They have an excellent awareness of the importance of a balanced diet. All pupils have at least two hours of physical education each week and very high numbers of pupils participate in the many sporting activities on offer in the school, giving them a strong foundation for leading a healthy lifestyle. Attendance is similar to the national average. This has improved recently as a result of the firmer approach by the school, but the attendance of a few pupils is still well below average. Pupils have a good awareness of their own and other cultures, such as through links made whilst achieving the International School award. Pupils contribute well to their own and the wider community. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and are rightly proud of their achievements in raising funds for their chosen charities and additional playground equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers produce stimulating classroom environments which enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers are enthusiastic and manage pupils very well so that, in turn, pupils work hard and rapidly gain confidence in their learning. Pupils respond well to the imaginative and interesting tasks and the practical research and independent learning opportunities they are given. Lessons are challenging and well paced, and pupils produce high quality work. On occasion, teachers give overly long explanations or do not make the learning objectives clear enough for pupils to be able to check their own progress throughout or at the end of the lesson. All teachers make good use of technology in the classroom to make learning relevant and interesting. Work is marked regularly, giving pupils good encouragement by praising achievement. At its best, marking also gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve, but this is not consistent enough across the school. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in a number of subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Teachers are taking advantage of the greater classroom space in implementing a more creative curriculum. Classroom displays represent the rich learning experiences and pride in the achievement of all pupils. The school is not complacent and is continually improving the curriculum to match individual needs and develop basic literacy and numeracy skills more effectively for all pupils. For example, the introduction of a daily phonics programme for younger pupils is matched closely to their attainment levels. Drama and role play in English are effectively stimulating pupils to write with flair and improve their speaking and listening skills. Both science and mathematics are promoted well with real-life tasks and investigative questioning. The school has made good progress in countering the previous inspection's issue to develop information and communication technology; it is now an everyday experience for all pupils across the curriculum. The curriculum is further enriched by a very wide range of visits and special events, and older pupils eagerly anticipate their residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All adults are fully committed to the care of the pupils and this has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development. All safeguarding requirements are met. The strong emphasis on forging good relationships effectively contributes to a pleasant and harmonious school community. Pupils who experience learning difficulties are identified at an early stage. They receive good individual support within the school, and when available involving the assistance of external agencies. Good academic tracking procedures identify pupils who are not making the expected progress, and action is taken quickly to give them extra help. Teaching assistants have received specialist training and work closely with teachers to run a range of support programmes. These are effectively ensuring that pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils find the targets identified in their books and displayed in classrooms helpful. However, targets for older pupils do not always give them a good understanding of the level of their work against national expectations.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership, and is ably assisted by a strong leadership team. He has used his wide experience and thoughtful approach well to build a cohesive staff team with a common purpose. Governors are supportive of the school and strongly committed to its future development. They are well trained, so that they have the essential tools to be critical friends. The school has well-defined aims and priorities to strengthen its ethos, improve standards further and play an essential role in the local and wider community. Many of these areas have been successfully developed in the past year and parents show universal approval of the school's performance. Implementation of the school improvement plan is monitored regularly so that the school has a very good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses, although its evaluation of some of its activities is a little optimistic. Subject coordinators thrive in their responsibilities because they are empowered to drive their subjects forward, and consequently standards have improved. Teachers are well used to being observed and the rigorous feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching on pupils' learning helps to improve practice further.

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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 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?	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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**

Dear Children

Inspection of North Lancing Primary School, North Lancing BN15 0PT

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. As we promised those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime to talk to us, I am writing to tell you the main points in our report below.

- These are some of the things we particularly liked about the school.
- You enjoy school a lot because of the many exciting things you do in lessons and the clubs you can attend.
- You make good progress because teachers make learning interesting and this helps you to work hard.
- Peer mediators help to make the playground a happy and safe place.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Adults take good care of you. You say that there is always someone to turn to if you need help so that you feel safe and enjoy school.
- Your headteacher and staff work well together and are always looking for new ways to make your school even better.
- You know that you attend a good school and the school council tries hard to suggest things to improve facilities even more.
- There are just three things we have asked your headteacher and staff to do.
- Make sure that marking and your targets help you to know exactly what you have to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Help you to improve your handwriting.
- Find ways to encourage all of you to attend school every day that it is possible for you to be there.

You can help by continuing to work hard and making a real effort to attend as well as possible.

Please thank your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires. It was helpful to hear what they think about the school. We wish you all the best for the future and hope that you have an enjoyable and successful year ahead.

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead inspector