

Telscombe Cliffs Community Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 114420 |
| Local Authority | east sussex |
| Inspection number | 338355 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 January 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Graham Lee |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 567 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Trude Thomas |
| Headteacher | Gillian Webb |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 March 2007 |
| School address | Telscombe Cliffs Way Telscombe Cliffs Peacehaven BN10 7DE |
| Telephone number | 01273 583113 |
| Fax number | 01273 589564 |
| Email address | office@telscombecliffs.e-sussex.sch.uk |

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 60% of their time looking at learning; they saw 19 lessons taught by 18 teachers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including the development plan and information about pupils' progress. They also took into account the views of pupils, staff and 144 parents and carers expressed in questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which the school's provision is helping pupils to improve their writing
- the impact of leaders at all levels in improving teaching and raising achievement
- the extent of any poor behaviour and its impact on learning.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has private nursery provision on site. This facility was not part of this inspection. The school also has before and after school childcare provision which is run by the governing body. There has been considerable staff turnover in recent times and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Telscombe Cliffs provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. A strength of the school is the good level of care it provides for its pupils. Arrangements for the safeguarding of children are strong and there are warm relationships between adults and children. Vulnerable pupils, in particular, are very well supported. This is recognised by most parents. One, typifying the views of others, commented that the school provides a 'safe, supportive, encouraging pair of hands'. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and almost all have confidence in the adults around them. Pupils' academic achievement remains satisfactory. They get off to a good start in the Reception classes and make broadly satisfactory progress thereafter to reach average levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school.

In 2008, too many pupils leaving the school had not made enough progress in Key Stage 2. This improved last year in mathematics and science but progress was slower in English, notably in writing. Currently, better teaching is leading to improved progress for pupils in lessons. Teachers generally plan well to meet the wide range of needs in their classes. They use the 'steps for success' strategy consistently to help pupils to understand what they are learning and to recognise if they have been successful. More remains to be done. In a few lessons, tasks are not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils who, consequently, do not make as much progress as they might. Teachers are using a range of assessment strategies well but marking and target setting are not consistent. Whilst there are some good examples that help pupils to improve, this is not the case in all classes. A significant minority of pupils confirm that they are not clear about how to improve their work. A focus on providing pupils with more motivation to write has been successful in accelerating their progress. Nevertheless, pupils' attainment in writing continues to lag well behind their performance in reading. They are not always provided with sufficient opportunities to write freely in other subjects. Sometimes there is an over-reliance on worksheets, and expectations of the presentation and accuracy of their work are not always as high as they should be. Consequently, pupils do not always transfer their literacy skills successfully to other subjects.

Pupils say that they enjoy school, a view echoed by most parents and carers. One pupil commented, not untypically, that 'I learn something new every day and have fun along the way.' Specialist teaching in music and sports contributes to their enjoyment and enhances provision in these areas. Most pupils are proud of their school and enjoy taking on responsibilities. For example, during the inspection, older pupils enjoyed acting as guides to prospective parents and carers during an 'open morning'. They contribute to the local and wider communities to a more limited extent. The school works well in partnership with a range of organisations to support pupils' welfare and

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learning. Its strategy to promote community cohesion, however, is at early stage of development, particularly in relation to developing pupils' limited understanding of living in a diverse society.

The school remains satisfactory because it has not been able to raise pupils' attainment since the last inspection although it has improved in other areas. A great deal has been done to provide pupils with a vibrant and welcoming environment for learning. Despite the misgivings of a small minority of parents and carers and pupils, a consistent approach adopted by all staff is leading to improved behaviour. Most pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. Recent appointments have strengthened leadership. Leaders and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and have secured the support of all in tackling weaknesses. This is evident in improvements in teaching and accelerating progress in writing. These improvements are relatively recent and are not yet reflected in improved attainment, which indicates that the school currently has a satisfactory capacity to sustain its improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in writing by:
 - providing them with more opportunities to write freely in different subjects and contexts
 - raising expectations of the presentation of pupils' writing and the application of their literacy skills in other subjects.
- Ensure that the vast majority of teaching is good or better by the end of July 2010 by:
 - providing consistent levels of challenge for the most able pupils in lessons
 - making use of the new assessment strategies to help pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Develop the school's strategy for community cohesion beyond the local area so that pupils have a good understanding of living in a diverse society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils enjoy learning and generally respond well to the challenges they are presented with. They want to do well and are keen to discuss their ideas and strategies. Mostly they cooperate very effectively with their 'talk partners' and in groups. In a Years 3 and 4 English lesson, for example, pupils worked excitedly together to act out the various elements of the setting of a story. This fired their imaginations and provided them with plenty of ideas for their writing. In a music lesson, pupils enjoyed writing and performing a 'nonsense' song in groups. Sometimes when they are asked to sit for too long and are not actively engaged in their learning, a few pupils lose focus and their progress slows as result. In a few classes, pupils are not as good at sustaining independent work, particularly when it is not challenging enough for them. Nevertheless, pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress and in many lessons,

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where they are thoroughly engaged with their learning, progress is accelerating. Pupils' level of basic skills and average attendance indicate that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next of their education. Pupils with a range of learning difficulties become confident learners through the support they receive and make as much progress as their peers.

Pupils' improving behaviour is illustrated by significantly reduced levels of exclusions in recent times. A number of pupils do present challenging behaviour but they are helped to cope with their emotions, with the result that their behaviour does not disrupt their own learning or that of others for the most part. Pupils recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle and understand the contribution of sports activities in helping them to stay fit and healthy.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |

How effective is the provision?

Good care, guidance and support are illustrated by the range of activities provided to support pupils' emotional needs. For example nurture groups, sessions on anger management and the development of social skills, as well as counselling services, have

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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been particularly effective in supporting vulnerable pupils and their families. A number of parents and carers commented on how well their children with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities had been supported. A good team of teaching assistants work in an effective partnership with teachers to enable these pupils to make as much progress as their peers. There are some examples of these pupils doing very well, considering their additional needs. A consistent approach to managing behaviour is helping to create a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. The clubs which provide child care before and after school are well attended. They provide good quality care for the children and an invaluable service to parents.

The curriculum is considerably enriched through clubs, visits and visitors and is creative and imaginative in many respects. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning. Music has a high profile in the school and provides pupils with additional opportunities to take part in the school's choirs and 'opera' club. There are a range of programmes in place to support pupils' basic skills and, together with improving teaching, this is beginning to accelerate progress. The majority of lessons are now good and some are of high quality, although there is a residue of lessons that are less effective. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and manage them well. In most lessons, pupils are challenged effectively in their learning. This was evident in mathematics lessons in Years 3 and 4, where pupils were exploring ever more complex sequences of numbers. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils responded enthusiastically to the challenge of getting to grips with Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night'. This consistently high level of challenge, for the most able pupils in particular, is not yet evident in all lessons. Whilst there is evidence of targets being used well to help pupils to make good progress, sometimes they are not reviewed regularly enough to be effective. Moreover, whilst marking is supportive and regular it does not always indicate the next steps in pupils' learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported by all the staff, has been notably effective in creating a lively and stimulating environment for learning and in promoting good levels of care and support for pupils. Consequently, the protection of children has a high priority and arrangements to ensure their safety are robust. New appointments have considerably strengthened the capacity of leadership at all levels and are providing a new sense of

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urgency in the quest to raise pupils' attainment. Data about pupils' progress are being used more robustly to identify potential underachievement and challenging targets are being set to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. Phase leaders offer role models of high quality practice and have high expectations of their teams. This is leading to improving teaching but the impact in terms of pupils' attainment is not yet evident. Governors, whilst being very supportive, also challenge leaders effectively on areas of weakness and are playing a full part in seeking to secure further improvement. The school's commitment to equal opportunities and eradicating discrimination is evident in the way it tracks the progress of different groups of pupils. As a result, there is no evidence of significant underachievement of any group of pupils. Whilst the school has done much to promote community cohesion in the locality, its impact at the national and global levels is more limited. The school's strategy is at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with wide-ranging skills and understanding but they are often below those typical of their age. They quickly settle into school routines and become confident and eager learners in the warm and welcoming Reception classes. By the time they enter Year 1, they are working at levels that are average and above. They are very well looked after and make good progress in all areas of their learning because teachers provide them with many opportunities to develop their basic skills and to explore the world around them. There is a strong emphasis on the development of children's social skills and they learn to play together

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happily and take turns as well as working independently. There is a good balance of activities led by the adults and those that children choose for themselves, although outdoor learning is restricted in bad weather because the outdoor area is not covered. Teachers make learning interesting and fun; for example, children enjoy singing number rhymes when developing their understanding of sequencing. They also display confidence with interactive technology when describing these sequences to their friends. Staff assess children's progress carefully and use this information to plan for the next steps in learning. Staff work very well together as a team and the Early Years Foundation Stage is led very effectively. The new leader has quickly identified the strengths of the provision and areas for development, and has put in place measures to bring about further improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

There was a good response to the questionnaire, with more than one in four parents and carers taking part. The large majority were very supportive with nine out of 10 saying that they were happy with their children's overall experience at Telscombe Cliff. Where the positive responses were supported by comments, these tended to confirm how happy their children were. A number commended the support for pupils with special educational needs and others were effusive in their praise of the headteacher and teaching staff. Inspection evidence tends to support these positive views. A small minority parents and carers are not confident that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and cited a number of examples. The school undoubtedly has pupils who present challenging behaviour from time to time. Nevertheless, inspectors found a consistent approach to managing behaviour. This has resulted in classrooms that are generally calm and purposeful places for children to learn and in a significant reduction in exclusions. The largest number of comments expressed concerns about the impact of mixed age classes on their child's progress. The majority of lessons seen by inspectors were good and teachers were challenging all pupils within the two-year range effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Telscombe Cliffs Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 567 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 69 | 48 | 64 | 44 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 71 | 49 | 68 | 47 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 50 | 35 | 77 | 53 | 15 | 10 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 48 | 33 | 69 | 48 | 23 | 15 | 4 | 3 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 53 | 37 | 75 | 52 | 13 | 9 | 3 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 53 | 37 | 66 | 46 | 21 | 15 | 3 | 2 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 43 | 30 | 89 | 62 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 36 | 25 | 84 | 58 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 48 | 33 | 75 | 52 | 16 | 10 | 4 | 3 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 40 | 28 | 63 | 44 | 26 | 18 | 10 | 7 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 43 | 30 | 71 | 49 | 23 | 16 | 5 | 3 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 53 | 37 | 63 | 44 | 20 | 14 | 7 | 5 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 58 | 40 | 70 | 49 | 11 | 8 | 5 | 3 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 39 | 58 | 3 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 13 | 50 | 33 | 4 |
| Secondary schools | 17 | 40 | 34 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 18 | 43 | 37 | 2 |
| Special schools | 26 | 54 | 18 | 2 |
| Pupil referral units | 7 | 55 | 30 | 7 |
| All schools | 15 | 49 | 32 | 5 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Telscombe Cliffs Community Primary School, Peacehaven BN10 7DE

You may remember that I visited your school recently with three other inspectors. I am writing to thank you all for being so welcoming and friendly. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

You go to a satisfactory school which has many good things about it. Everybody in the school cares about you and looks after you very well. This helps you to feel safe, although some of you and some parents and carers still have worries about behaviour. We found that most of you behaved well in lessons and that your teachers and other staff make sure that learning is not disturbed by others. You told us how much you enjoy school and we found that you worked hard in lessons. You also enjoy the responsibilities you take on around the school. We were really impressed with the guides on Open Day, for example. You gave a very good impression of the school. Well done! Teachers make lessons interesting and usually give you work that is not too hard but not too easy. This means that your progress in English and mathematics is getting better and by the time you leave, you are doing as well as most pupils in other schools. Some of you are not doing quite as well in writing as you do in other subjects.

Your headteacher and all the staff want to make the school even better for you. These are the things we have asked them to do to help with this.

- We want them to improve you attainment in writing. We have asked that you get more chances to write when you are learning about other subjects. You can help with this by making sure that you use all the skills you have learnt in literacy when you are writing about other things.
- Although quite a lot of teaching is already good, we want it to be even better by making sure that those of you who find learning a little easier are always given work which challenges you to do even better.
- We have asked the school to do more to make sure that you learn about what it is like in other parts of the country and the world.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector

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