



Heene CofE First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126034
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293441
Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Sheila Browning

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

Type of school	First	School address	Norfolk Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Worthing
Age range of pupils	4–8		BN11 4BB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01903 201386
Number on roll (school)	247	Fax number	01903 215033
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Anne Bevan
		Headteacher	Diane Bonthrone
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Heene First School takes pupils mainly from areas of Worthing, which are recognised as having some social and economic deprivation. The school is working with the challenge of increasing numbers of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English. Most children are from White British families with a few from other ethnic groups. In recognition of its work the school has a first-level Travel Plan Award and has received the Investors in People Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding and popular school where the effective, efficient and inclusive provision of education, integrated care and any extended services are meeting the needs of learners exceedingly well. As one parent said, 'I couldn't have wished for a better start for them.' The outstanding care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and eagerness to learn. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Relationships between pupils are exemplary; one pupil said, 'when I leave I will miss all the kindness of everybody here.' Pupils become happy, confident learners with good basic skills that equip them for their future learning. Although attendance is satisfactory, it could be better. Whilst the school is working hard to reduce absences, there are too many occasions when children are kept away from school unnecessarily.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress as they move up through the school. Standards that are consistently above average at the end of Year 2 represent outstanding achievement; this is particularly the case for boys. High standards and achievement are maintained to the end of Year 3. There is, however, scope to develop pupils' skills in spelling. The reason pupils achieve so well is because the work they are given is purposeful and interesting and the curriculum is outstandingly rich. Pupils benefit from numerous visits, visitors and after-school clubs. Teaching has many strengths. As a result, the very effective teaching and learning, in meeting the full range of pupils' needs, means that learners thrive and are immersed in their learning. The school's outstanding assessment procedures enable teachers to know exactly how well each child is progressing. Consequently, they provide activities that are well matched to pupils' individual learning needs and set challenging targets for learning. The very effective leadership and management, in raising achievement and supporting all learners, has resulted in good improvement. This improvement has been driven by the headteacher's exceptional leadership, together with the strong support of staff and governors. They have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work with parents and carers to help them to do more to support their children's education by not letting them miss school unnecessarily.
- Review the teaching of spelling so that it has a significant impact on improving children's reading and writing skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are above average; pupils' achievement is at least good in nearly all respects and is outstanding in significant elements. The most recent test results for 2006 indicate that standards will be similarly high compared to the previous year. However, the school recognises correctly that there is scope to develop pupils' skills further in

spelling. More-capable pupils, those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language make very good progress. Their needs are identified early and they receive well-focused support and challenging work. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and are steadily rising year-on-year, despite the changing intakes of pupils. Since the last inspection, pupils' achievement and standards in science are much improved and the above-average standards in art, design and technology and music are maintained. In the Foundation Stage, children join the school with skills below the level expected for their age in most areas of learning. By the time they start in Year 1, most are making good progress and are on track to attain the levels expected.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The caring, Christian ethos is promoted successfully and is reflected clearly in every aspect of school life. Whilst attendance levels could be better, pupils' great enjoyment of school is evident in their very enthusiastic approach to learning and improving attendance. They feel valued as individuals and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and eating a range of good food. The school council is effective and the representatives are proud of their achievements in helping to improve their school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have a strong respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others, as shown by the positive way they listen to each other, respond and ask questions. Strong community links, including contributions to charities and helping to fund a child refuge in Nairobi, make a very positive impact on pupils' personal development and prepare them well for their future working lives. The strong focus on literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and the very good opportunities to work as a team prepare pupils well for their future working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

A major strength in teaching is the high quality teamwork among the staff to ensure lessons are carefully planned, and teachers are clear about what the pupils will learn. The teaching of philosophy is being used creatively to underpin pupils' communication skills particularly through formulating and responding to questions. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress ensures that their individual learning needs are fully met in the teaching of basic skills. Teachers know what pupils are capable of and ensure that work matches their individual targets in literacy and numeracy. All staff use good quality visual resources and methods to enable pupils to learn successfully. In one lesson in the Foundation Stage the teaching was outstanding. Here children enjoyed singing Christmas songs and responding to the reading of a story by joining in with specific phrases and playing in the 'Chilean House', which helped them make excellent

progress. Teaching assistants contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Pupils are very well supported and are helped to understand their work, which is marked regularly and explains how they can improve it. This allows pupils to flourish.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A rich and exciting curriculum is provided for pupils of all ages and stages of learning. Excellent links between subjects enable pupils to use skills learned in one subject in different contexts. For example, when extending literacy skills through geography, pupils identify and describe the differences between physical and human features on a map. One pupil said, 'It's something that Mother Nature has created by itself.' Intensive support in English and mathematics has helped to raise standards considerably since the last inspection. The use of interactive whiteboards makes learning fun and interesting. Opportunities to develop creative, performance and sports skills are very good. In Year 3, all pupils are learning to play the violin. Very good provision is made for pupils judged to be gifted and talented. Physical, personal, social and health education programmes effectively promote healthy and safe lifestyles. Visits by local artists, theatre groups and dance troupes, and visits to local museums and places of interest all enrich learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding relationships throughout the school mean learners are confident to approach adults with any problems. Procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are rigorous. Arrangements to help children settle into Reception, and to transfer to middle school, are smooth. This helps pupils become confident in dealing with new situations. A strong focus is given to promoting safe and healthy lifestyles. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and thoroughly. They have challenging targets and are involved in assessing their own progress and understanding. The school works particularly closely with outside agencies to meet pupils' specific needs. The personal support for pupils with learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and those identified as gifted and talented, is very effective because all achieve success. Equally effective guidance is given to learners at the early stages of learning English. Before- and after-school care clubs are further ways in which the school supports the needs of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides exceptional leadership. With excellent support from the leadership team, staff and governors, she has overseen improvements in teaching, the curriculum and resources. These in turn have led to a significant improvement in standards, high levels of pupil achievement, and learners' exceptionally strong personal development. The commitment to achieve the school's aims is a shared one.

The school's self-evaluation procedures accurately identify its strengths and areas for improvement. Development planning is detailed and well constructed and reflects the views of all those involved with the school. Parental and pupil views are sought regularly and taken into account when considering school improvement. The leadership team is highly successful in its quest to ensure the school's fully inclusive nature. Teaching and learning are monitored rigorously, and teachers' thorough knowledge of pupils' progress enables challenging targets to be set.

Governors carry out their duties most effectively. They manage finances very well, play their full part in strategic planning, and are effective 'critical friends'. Led by a headteacher with a passion to ensure pupils have the best provision possible and that all learners achieve the best of which they are capable, the school has clearly demonstrated that it has excellent capacity for further improvement.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work.

These are some important things we found out about your school:

- You all make very good progress.
- You enjoy school, are eager to learn and you behave extremely well.
- The school is extremely well led and it has kept on improving.
- Your parents are very happy with the school.
- The adults in your school look after you exceptionally well.
- Many of you take part in the numerous activities you have at school and you are very involved in the local community.
- You know how to stay safe, fit and healthy.

This is what we have asked the school to do to make it even better:

- To ask parents and carers to make sure you do not miss school unnecessarily because if you miss school you miss out on your learning.
- For teachers to help you improve your spelling so that your reading and writing becomes even better.