

West Dean Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 126004 |
| Local Authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 328440 |
| Inspection dates | 5 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Jacquie Buttriss |

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 | Voluntary Controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 97 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Allan Chapman |
| Headteacher | Gillian Moss |
| Date of previous school inspection | 2 May 2006 |
| School address | West Dean Chichester West Sussex PO18 0RJ |
| Telephone number | 01243 811247 |
| Fax number | 01243 811247 |

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|---------------------------|--------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who inspected the overall effectiveness of the school. They particularly investigated the following issues:

- achievement and standards in Years 1 and 2, especially in writing and mathematics
- all aspects of provision and the progress children make in the Reception Year
- how effectively pupils are helped to know how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.

Inspectors gathered evidence from discussions with adults and children, lesson observations, studying work in pupils' books and in displays around the school, analysing pupils' attainment and progress data, studying a variety of the school's documents and reading parents' questionnaire responses. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school in a rural area. The proportion of pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most schools. There are very few pupils of minority ethnic groups or for whom English is an additional language. Early Years Foundation Stage children are all in the Reception class. Most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The headteacher joined the school in September 2008. There is a privately run pre-school setting on the school site which has been inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It has a great many strengths and gives its pupils an excellent education. As one parent commented, reflecting the views of many, 'West Dean is the most fabulous school.' When asked what he liked best about school, a Year 6 boy answered 'All of it ... everything!' Children join the school with skills in line with national expectations and make good progress from the start. While provision in the Reception Year is good, there are insufficient opportunities for children to make their own learning choices or to work outdoors. As a result of outstanding teaching in Years 1 to 6, and the consistently high degree of challenge, progress accelerates throughout the school so that, by the time pupils are ready to move on to their secondary schools, they attain well above average standards. Learners of all abilities achieve outstandingly well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are very well supported.

Inspiring teaching and high expectations result in pupils developing a great relish for learning. The exciting curriculum is well planned to meet all pupils' needs and engage their enthusiasm for every aspect of their learning. 'I like doing work. It's fun!' said a Year 3 girl. 'I like work that's really challenging,' added a Year 2 boy. Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good and they really enjoy coming to school, as shown by their well above average attendance. This reflects their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and extends to an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves, and each other, healthy and safe. The curriculum is greatly enriched by a wide variety of stimulating additional activities, visits, visitors and themed days or weeks. There are also excellent partnerships with many local organisations which considerably enhance pupils' learning. Pupils of all ages help to set their own individual learning targets, which they review at regular intervals. Teachers help them to assess their own progress so that they know how well they are doing and the teachers' marking in pupils' books consistently helps them to know how to improve their work.

As one parent put it, 'West Dean school is a special, caring community.' All aspects of care, guidance and support are outstanding. Excellent relationships, enthusiasm and dedication are all hallmarks of the ethos of this school, promoted at every level by the strong staff team. Teaching assistants and other staff give excellent support, helping to create what one parent described as 'a very nurturing environment'.

The dynamic new headteacher has rightly received generous praise from parents, one of whom remarks that 'the school continues to develop and grow', whilst another says the new leadership 'will be great for the future of West Dean'. Governors provide good support for the school and undertake increasingly effective monitoring of the school's provision and outcomes. The school's contribution to community cohesion on all levels is good and this continues to develop through the setting up by the school of a local community cohesion group which meets regularly to plan further developments. 'A bold vision', as described by a local authority adviser, very clear direction, strong improvements since the last inspection, accurate and rigorous self-evaluation processes, highly challenging targets and excellent equality of opportunities all combine to give the school an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Parents are very supportive of their children's learning and entirely positive in their praise for the school and the education it provides for their children. 'West Dean has enhanced our son's life ... helping to make him a well-rounded and inquisitive little person!' said one. Another wrote, 'We are absolutely delighted with West Dean School – we couldn't be happier!' Finally, a parent's comment that echoes many, 'My children and I feel lucky and proud to be part of such a fantastic school.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage **Grade: 2**

The quality of provision in the Reception Year is good. Children join the class with skills broadly in line with expectations. The 'excellent transition', as one parent described it, enables children to settle quickly into the school and gain confidence to be happy in their learning and relationships. 'My son **loves** going to school,' confirmed another parent. Good teaching engages the children's interest and motivates them to make good progress in all the areas of learning. The classroom is lively and well arranged to support the youngest pupils' interests and there is an attractive outdoor learning area. However, this outside environment is not used as fully as it could be, although the lack of a canopy makes this difficult in bad weather.

A full range of learning is well planned and children's progress is continuously monitored to ensure that they all make good progress. There are many inviting activities for children to choose in their 'busy bee' sessions, 'creating a happy environment full of creativity and self-directed play,' as one parent put it. However, the proportion of time allocated to self-initiated learning is not sufficient. Welfare provision is good in all respects and teaching assistants provide very good support to ensure that all children's needs are met. Excellent relationships and a highly caring ethos lead to these children's outstanding personal development and well-being.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of children in the Reception Year by increasing opportunities for them to make their own learning choices and by greater use of their outside learning area.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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 is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| 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

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

Personal development and well-being

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| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 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

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

Leadership and management

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| 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| 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 | 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

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Dean C of E Primary School, Chichester PO18 0RJ

Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel very welcome indeed. We very much enjoyed talking with you. It was especially helpful to be able to talk with some of you in Year 6 while you were out of school on the inspection day. Yours is an outstanding school. It helps you to do excellent work and cares for you exceptionally well.

These are the things we especially like about your school:

- You make outstanding progress and achieve very high standards in your work. Well done!
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You have excellent relationships and look after each other exceptionally well.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and stay safe.
- You have outstanding teachers who work very hard to make your lessons exciting and fun.
- You enjoy school very much and your attendance is excellent.
- Your school has excellent partnerships with many local organisations and schools which greatly enhance your learning.
- Your headteacher and staff lead the school outstandingly well.
- Your parents and carers tell us that they are delighted you come to this school.

This is what we think your school could do even better:

- The Reception teachers could help children to make stronger progress by giving them more opportunities to choose their own learning activities and by making greater use of the outside learning area.

You could help by continuing to work hard and enjoy your lessons. I would like to wish you lots of success in your future learning. Keep up the excellent work!

Jacquie Buttriss
Lead inspector