

Field Place First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125864
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340856
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Howcroft-Stemp
Headteacher	Linda Bateman
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. All class teachers were seen and 19 lessons were observed. Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors, other senior staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors looked at documents, including the school improvement plan, monitoring files, data on pupils' progress, documents relating to safeguarding, and the results of questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 110 parents and carers.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress and how well teaching contributes to their learning, looking especially at boys, more-able pupils in reading, those with English as a second language, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities at the level of School Action plus
- the effectiveness of assessment and the support systems to drive improvement
- the role of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, in securing and sustaining improvements
- provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly for communication, language and literacy.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average but is increasing with the reintroduction of hot meals. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, although gradually increasing, is below average, and of these few are new to learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just over twice the national average, including a higher than average proportion with statements of special educational needs. The main needs covered are behaviour, emotional and social, and speech language and communication. The school has a unit for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in the Nursery and three Reception classes. The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy Schools, Activemark, and Artsmark Gold.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Field Place is a good school. The views of pupils are summarised by one who commented, 'I think this is the best school you could ever go to', and those of parents by one who commented, 'The school offers wonderful opportunities to learn and explore, all within a safe and stimulating environment.' Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From well-below-average starting points, they make good progress in all of the areas of learning. Good progress continues throughout the school for almost all groups of pupils, including those in the speech and language unit. Pupils with more complex special educational needs and/or learning difficulties are extremely well supported, especially through excellent links with external specialists and the many intervention programmes that the school provides, for example for anger management and therapeutic writing. Although such measures are highly effective in supporting pupils' personal, social and emotional needs, these difficulties nevertheless restrict pupils' progress in earlier years. The success of the support for these pupils, however, can be seen in the good, accelerated progress made by them in Year 3. The school recognises that it has to monitor and evaluate these support programmes more fully, especially for their impact on pupils' learning and progress in earlier years, to ensure their maximum benefit.

The school tracks pupils' progress carefully, setting challenging end-of-year targets for them and taking measures to address any underachievement. It identified, for example, that further support was needed for reading. Well-organised daily guided reading sessions, opportunities for Year 2 pupils to read one-to-one with an adult, and guidance provided for parents and carers on hearing their children read have boosted progress in this subject, especially for more-able pupils. Weaker progress in writing is also being effectively addressed, particularly through the school's developing topic-based curriculum. Topics such as 'Castles, Knights and Dragons' provide exciting and purposeful opportunities for writing that appeal to all pupils, particularly boys. Opportunities for pupils to assess their written work, for example by visually displaying it for them to offer suggestions for improvement, along with individual targets to show them how to do better, are also contributing to raising progress. Given the effectiveness of leaders in bringing about these improvements and the school's accurate self-evaluation, it has a good capacity for further improvement.

Teachers use assessment information well to group pupils by ability in lessons. However, the level of work set for different groups at times does not fully match their ability and aptitude. Consequently, progress slows where work is insufficiently challenging or is too difficult. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning through observation, identifying areas for development to be addressed through further

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professional development. However, there is an insufficient focus on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils, such as those who are more able, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to ensure that they are all doing as well as possible in lessons.

A contributory factor to pupils' progress is their good behaviour and positive attitudes to school and learning. They enjoy many things about school, especially their topic work, practical lessons and opportunities for sport and physical exercise. Their understanding of the importance of physical exercise and keenness to adopt healthy eating habits are excellent and recognised in national awards. Excellent links with parents and carers are also very beneficial. Parents come into school with their children at the start of the day, displaying positive attitudes to school which are noticeably transferred to their children, who quickly settle to learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:
 - ensuring that teachers make the fullest use of assessment information to plan activities that match the learning needs of different groups of pupils, so that all make the best progress possible
 - ensuring that observations of teaching and learning focus strongly on the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Monitor and evaluate the many intervention programmes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure their maximum impact and effectiveness.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' achievement is good, and standards seen in lessons and pupils' books were broadly average. Assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2009 showed significantly low attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. About two thirds of this cohort had special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although the majority of pupils in this group made good progress from low starting points, those with more complex needs only achieved satisfactorily. Predictions for the current Year 2 indicate that attainment is likely to be low but broadly average, and that boys are doing as well as girls. By the end of Year 3, attainment is average.

Pupils feel safe in school and want to do their best. Nevertheless, attendance is only average' despite the school's robust efforts to improve this. Pupils enjoy their learning as teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and purposeful. In a mathematics lesson, a group of lower-attaining pupils developed their understanding and use of money by buying parts to stick on their dragons, such as wings and teeth. Although a little complex for some, pupils enjoyed solving mysteries through reading texts and clues linked to the four dragons displayed in the room, effectively developing their reading and comprehension skills

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Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. The school council have influenced playground changes and been involved in interviewing new staff. Pupils gain very good experience and understanding of the local community, for example through performances by the school choir and drumming group. However, their knowledge and understanding of cultures and communities beyond their locality is not strong enough. Pupils take part in different enterprise activities linked to their different topics. Given their level of personal development and good progress in acquiring basic skills, including information and communication technology, pupils are well prepared for their future learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships ensure that pupils are well behaved and quickly settle to work. Lessons are well planned and prepared, with clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils so that they understand the purpose of lessons. They also know what they are expected to achieve so that they can evaluate how well they have done. Good use is made of new technology to enliven lessons and involve pupils in modelling and

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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evaluating their learning. Learning support assistants mostly provide good support for the pupils and groups they are working with. At times, however, they are not fully used, sitting through introductions and overseeing what pupils are doing, rather than taking a more active role in their learning. In a small minority of lessons, assessment is not used fully effectively to plan work that is matched to pupils' different learning needs. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the worksheet for more-able pupils lacked challenge and less-able pupils spent more time sticking pictures of items in their books rather than working out the cost of them.

The school continues to develop a creative skills-based curriculum, adding interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning. The views of pupils and parents are actively sought when planning new topics. Very well-produced topic folders are a testimony to this development. They show not only good opportunities to use and develop basic skills, but also to develop skills in subjects such as art and design. The effective development of techniques in this subject, along with good provision for music and drama, have helped the school to gain a national award. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and further opportunities are provided for gifted and talented pupils, and for sport, through excellent links with other local schools. The school draws on specialist support for pupils who are new to learning English, but recognises that it has to develop its own expertise in this area to ensure the good progress of this group. Special events, such as science week, and numerous visits and visitors make an effective contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. The school provides a safe and secure learning environment for pupils and ensures a very high level of pastoral care. Vulnerable pupils and their families are extremely well supported through the work of the parent support advisor and learning mentors, and close links with the local children's centre. In school, well-trained learning support assistants, excellent links with outside specialists, and very well-managed provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure a very high level of support for these pupils, both in the speech and language unit and the main school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior management are clear about the actions needed to drive school improvement, shown in the measures they have taken to raise attainment and progress in reading and writing. Governors provide a good level of support for the

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school and ensure that safeguarding procedures are fully in place. Whilst they are keen to challenge the school on its performance and monitor its improvement, they need to develop sharper knowledge and understanding of the data relating to attainment and progress if they are to do this effectively. Links with parents and carers are excellent, with full encouragement given to contribute to their children's learning and development, for example through parenting courses and learning workshops. Events, such as a breakfast for the parents and carers of Nursery children, are encouraging more diffident parents to play their part. Some inconsistency in the progress of pupils and groups of pupils means that the promotion of equal opportunity is good rather than outstanding. Although school actively promotes pupils' understanding of local communities and cultures, it has yet to evaluate fully the impact of this and to extend its promotion to national and global perspectives. With this in mind, plans are underway to make links with schools abroad and in other parts of Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they enter Key Stage 1, children overall are below the expected levels for their age in the different areas of learning. However, from these very low starting points, children make good progress in all of the areas of learning, especially in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Recent improvements here are due to initiatives to address these previously identified weaknesses. A high priority is given to purposeful and meaningful talk, which is proving successful in improving progress in children's speaking and

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listening and social skills. Opportunities are nevertheless missed to provide high quality interaction with children, to capitalise on their interests and move their learning forward. More opportunities for mark making and writing and the valuing of children's work means that they are confident in committing their ideas to paper. A strong focus on linking sounds and letters has improved the level of children's early reading skills. Relationships with adults are strong, so that children feel safe, secure and valued. As a result, they have good attitudes to learning and behave well. One parent of a Nursery child commented that 'teachers are highly dedicated and caring, which has helped to develop self-confidence and personal development. This has helped make the children feel very secure and loved.' There is a good balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities, encouraging children to develop a good level of independence. Staff are particularly skilled at engaging children in new activities as their concentration and interest wanes. Some of the activities provided, however, lack focus and purpose, especially in the outdoor area.

The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has accurately identified priorities for development, and action taken has quickly resulted in improvements. Children's progress is carefully observed and recorded so that the next steps in their learning are carefully identified. There is now more encouragement for parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning.

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

A high number of parents and carers completed inspection questionnaires, and the very large majority are happy with their child's experience at school. The few individual concerns that were expressed were discussed anonymously with the headteacher. Inspectors found no evidence to substantiate these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Field Place First 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 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 330 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	74	28	26	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	83	76	27	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	71	65	36	33	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	58	42	38	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	67	34	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	72	66	31	28	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	63	38	35	3	3	0	0
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)	60	55	41	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	60	40	36	0	0	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	47	47	43	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	52	45	41	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	64	58	40	36	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	81	77	27	25	1	1	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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:	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. ■ 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.



13 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Field Place First School, Worthing BN12 6EN

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and found you interesting to talk to, and very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all the things you take part in. Field Place is a good school.

These are the things that the school does well.

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You work hard in lessons.
- The school looks after you extremely well.
- Those of you who find learning difficult get very good support, both in the speech and language unit and the school.
- You behave very well and are keen to take on responsibilities and to do jobs around school.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit
- Teachers plan lessons that are interesting and enjoyable. We were impressed with the work you were doing on 'Castles, Dragons and Knights'
- The school encourages your parents and carers to support you in your learning.
- Your headteacher and staff are doing a good job.

We have asked the school to work on the following things.

- Teachers need to keep more information on how well you are doing and make fuller use of this when planning lessons so that the work is just right for each one of you, not too easy and not too hard. This will ensure that all of you make the best progress possible. Your headteacher and other teachers will need to check that this is happening
- The school provides many additional groups for those of you who find learning difficult, or who find it hard at times to settle into school. It needs to check how well these groups are working. This will ensure that you gain as much as possible from this extra support and do as well as you can in school.

Thank you again for your help. You can do your bit to help by continuing to work hard in lessons and enjoying all that you do in school.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead inspector

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