

Danehill Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114499
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	326021
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Long HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Willifer
Headteacher	Mrs P Eastley
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited seven lessons, and held a series of meetings with members of staff, pupils, governors and with a member of the local authority school support team. He observed the school's work and looked at assessment information, samples of pupils' work and the teachers' marking, the school development plan, records of governors' meetings and the questionnaires completed by 29 parents or carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the use made of the outdoor area
- standards in writing across the school
- curriculum developments, including the connections made between subjects and the use of information and communication technology (ICT)
- the use of assessment information to plan teaching and provide feedback to pupils
- the steps taken to improve attendance.

Information about the school

The school serves the village of Danehill and the surrounding area. It is smaller than most schools and has four mixed-year classes. It has a Healthy Schools Award and an Activemark. Pupils live in relatively advantaged socio-economic circumstances and are mainly White British, with few speaking English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average and the main areas of need relate to specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The school site is shared by the Danehill Childcare Centre which provides care for children aged two to four as well as clubs for older children before and after school and in school holidays. The Centre is not managed by the school and is reported on separately. The headteacher joined the school at the start of the last academic year and two other teachers, including the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, joined at the start of this academic year.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Danehill Church of England Primary School is an outstanding school which offers a very purposeful environment in which its pupils thrive. A representative comment from a parent said: 'Danehill is a special place. The headteacher and the staff are hardworking and approachable and are always trying to find ways to improve...' Its small size means that the pupils and their families are well known and each is equally valued and supported. It is an outstandingly caring community where mutual respect is successfully fostered and high standards of behaviour are the norm. Within this environment, the pupils learn to live safe and healthy lives and to enjoy working and playing together with enthusiasm. They are proud of their school and take every opportunity to contribute to it by taking on roles and responsibilities.

The pupils' learning gets off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress accelerates from Year 1 and is outstanding until they leave at the end of Year 6, when they reach high standards in the core areas of English, mathematics and science. Progress is excellent in developing pupils' social and organisational skills which are essential for their success in later life.

Lessons are characterised by an enthusiasm for learning among pupils and the staff. Activities are highly engaging and well organised. Those in English and mathematics are very well planned to meet the needs of each pupil and guidance from staff to help them improve their work is excellent. This is not as consistently evident in other subjects, where the effective use of assessment, marking and target setting is less well developed. There is much good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, leading to children's good progress, but some opportunities are missed to ensure that children are always learning purposefully and choosing a wide range of activities when selecting for themselves. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is highly effective so they make excellent progress.

The curriculum provides exceptionally rich experiences which sustain the pupils' enthusiasm through to Year 6 and balance the need for strength in literacy and numeracy with learning in other subjects. Valuable links are made between different subjects for younger pupils, and the school is making good progress in extending this approach to the curriculum for older pupils. Excellent use is made of ICT to support learning, after significant investment in resources in recent years.

The school has shown an excellent capacity for further improvement. The pupils have achieved high standards for some years. These have been sustained and improved upon where areas of weakness, such as in writing, have been identified. The changes in staffing have not derailed the school's progress and have been taken as an opportunity to look afresh at the school's work and set new challenges. Highly effective leadership means the school has an accurate view of its overall effectiveness and is committed to improving weaker areas. The school does much to promote community cohesion within its own walls and in the local community but pupils have less awareness of cultural and ethnic diversity in the country as a whole.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the highly effective practice in assessment, marking and target setting which is a notable feature of teaching in English and mathematics is employed consistently in other subjects.
- Improve provision and outcomes further in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring all interactions between adults and children lead to the children extending their learning
 - making the children more responsible for choosing a balance of activities from across all areas of learning.
- Strengthen the school's promotion of community cohesion and of the pupils' cultural development by giving them more comprehensive experience of the diversity of cultures within the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

From the moment they arrive each day, the pupils are keen to make the most of their time. Effective routines for learning are embedded and the pace of learning in many lessons is outstanding. As they move up through the school, the pupils develop excellent skills in independent learning. They have an exceptional ability to sustain high levels of concentration on their work and to think carefully about how to improve it. Pupils demonstrate strong collaborative skills and settle quickly when moving into different classes as they do for some subjects. When asked to undertake discussions to solve problems or generate ideas, they throw themselves energetically into the task.

By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are high in reading, writing and mathematics, with boys and girls making equally outstanding progress from their starting points. Progress continues to be excellent in Key Stage 2 so that by Year 6, the pupils achieve very high overall standards in the core areas of English, mathematics and science. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding because of the closely focused support they receive in lessons and when working in small groups. The school identified over a year ago that progress in writing could be improved further and set about tackling this with determination. Pupils at all ages have been given better stimulus for writing, for example through drama or memorable experiences such as visits. These have had a notable impact on

speaking and listening which in turn has led to improvements in writing. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, the group imagined a meteorite strike on their spacecraft before producing high quality writing involving adventurous language and employing metaphor and personification with skill.

Pupils feel very safe and well cared for. Their social and moral development is outstanding and pupils are very friendly to one another. Both pupils and parents said this was one of the aspects of school life they most valued. Behaviour is exemplary and older pupils set an excellent example. Pupils are supportive of each other and encourage each other to do their best. They reflect carefully on difficult issues. For example, Year 6 pupils showed great maturity when discussing the reasons for charitable giving. The pupils' good cultural development is evident in their enthusiasm for learning through the arts. While they are respectful toward other cultures, such as when studying other faiths, they have relatively limited direct experience of the cultural diversity within the United Kingdom.

The school has gained its Healthy School Award and its Activemark since the last inspection, reflecting the pupils' strong commitment to eating well and taking exercise. The gardening club is well supported and the teacher running the football club commented on the pupils' great enthusiasm, especially that of the girls. The pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community and are active in furthering the school's work. For example, they helped develop the teaching and learning policy and regularly take on roles on the school council and the eco-council, and help in the playground and at assemblies. The pupils undertake very many activities in the wider community, including through the church, raising money for charitable causes and taking part in concerts so that the school is an integral part of the local area. Attendance had fallen last year because of holidays taken in term time. The school has worked very hard to impress on parents the importance of regular attendance so that it is above average again and suitable efforts are continuing to bring about further improvement with the few who still take their children out of school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	2

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

How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good, with outstanding qualities. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils' academic and personal development. They are enthusiastic and work very closely with other adults such as teaching assistants, especially to provide support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or others who require extra help. They make very good use of resources such as interactive whiteboards as well as objects and images to make learning fun. Teachers' questioning is often very skilful in testing, extending and sharing pupils' understanding. Lessons are well paced so that pupils move briskly through tasks. Rooms and other spaces are organised very well so equipment is easily to hand and displays support pupils' learning.

The pupils' progress toward challenging targets is very carefully checked in English, mathematics and science. Concerns about individuals or groups are responded to quickly, including through extra teaching sessions or adaptations to programmes, such as those seen in writing. Excellent use is made of information about each pupil's attainment to plan lessons in English and mathematics which meet their individual needs and to provide targeted verbal and written feedback. In these lessons, the pupils are thoroughly involved in deciding how to improve their work for themselves. However, this is not so consistent in other subjects, where opportunities are missed by teachers to refer to assessment information when planning lessons or giving feedback to pupils to help them reach their targets.

The curriculum is adapted and developed extremely well to support pupils' learning and sustain their enthusiasm. The school has made excellent progress in building on existing strengths to include more visits to inspire pupils and to make links between subjects. Year 2/3 pupils were keen to act as scientific investigators around the school grounds after a visit to woodland with 'the animal lady' (from the RSPCA) and were keenly awaiting her return visit. Year 5/6 pupils found the topic of 'Space' useful in connecting science, English and ICT. Their work in this area illustrates the great strides made in using ICT as they turned to laptops when writing or logging pertinent questions into the school's developing VLE (virtual learning environment). Many pupils now reach high standards in ICT, and those in Year 6 identified this as one aspect of the school which has moved on considerably in recent years.

Exceptional levels of care and support are provided for pupils, based on the school's depth of knowledge about each one. Those requiring additional academic or pastoral help are identified early. The school is very good at working with parents and carers in these circumstances. Where the school believes the support of other agencies such as local authority staff is required, it is proactive in getting them involved and effective in working alongside them. Arrangements for welcoming pupils into the school are very effective as they are for preparing them for the move to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has established herself securely at the heart of the school and provides outstanding energy and vision for improvement. She is very well supported by the other teachers, all of whom lead on significant areas of work. Morale among staff is very high and they work as a cohesive team so that the school regularly exceeds the challenging targets it sets for the pupils' progress.

The school checks the impact of its work carefully by referring to a rich range of information, including assessment data, lesson monitoring and pupil discussions. It is ambitious when deciding what could be better. Being a small school allows for a close focus on the outcomes for individual pupils to check all are fulfilling their potential. The school is also proactive in checking the outcomes for particular groups of pupils, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and is mindful that the needs of each year group may vary widely given its small size. Excellent use is made of resources and staff development to bring about the improvements needed.

Leaders and managers at all levels take very seriously their duty to safeguard pupils. Procedures for checking adults who have contact with them are thorough as is the school's approach to health and safety procedures. The school ensures staff are trained in child protection. It consults fully with parents over its work in this area, leading, for example, to parents being on duty at the start and finish of school to ensure children enter and leave the site safely from the road.

The governors provide an excellent level of challenge and support for the school. They work very hard on its behalf, are well trained and collect a wide range of evidence to check the impact on pupils and to set future goals. Communication between the governors and parents is effective, in part because of the significant number of parents serving on the governing body.

The school works very effectively to ensure that it connects with all parents and carers, regularly setting itself a goal for example of full attendance at parents' evenings. Innovative features of its work include producing curriculum guides for parents, such as in mathematics. The school responds positively to parental requests, as seen in the increased range of curriculum visits now offered.

The staff make every effort to work with external partners to the benefit of the pupils. Full use is made of the 'cluster' arrangement of local schools to share best practice in teaching and learning. The school works closely with the Childcare Centre to ensure effective transition into the Reception class for its children and there is

very effective liaison with local authority staff in support of individual pupils and in relation to staff and curriculum development.

The school demonstrates a clear commitment to promoting community cohesion and is very successful within school and with the local community, notably through its work with the church. However, some opportunities are missed to promote greater cohesion between the pupils and the wider community nationally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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 community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

From starting points which are broadly average but which vary from year to year due to the small numbers, the children make good progress in the Reception class. The majority reach, and many exceed, the goals expected for their ages by the time they enter Year 1. Many children join with positive dispositions to learning and good knowledge and understanding of the world. This gives them a solid platform to build on so that many experience very good social and emotional development, behaving very well and cooperating sensibly with each other. Relationships with adults are very good and the children are comfortable asking for help and when discussing their work. The children are confident to explore the world around them and learn how to take sensible risks. This was evident when one boy proudly showed he could hang upside down on the climbing frame but was well aware of how to get down safely. Progress is slower in some areas of communication such as linking sounds and letters and in calculation as a component of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.

The classroom and outdoor area are well organised and provide a warm nurturing environment within which safeguarding children's welfare is a priority. The children are pleased to be there and keen to make a good start to the day. The space offers stimulating activities to cover the required areas of learning. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-selected activities in the daily programme, and routines for learning are well established. The children's progress over time is tracked carefully, including through observation. Good use is made of the information to plan suitable

activities and staff do well in helping the lower attaining children catch up with their peers. There are some high quality interactions between adults and children in order to move learning on. However, this is not consistent and some opportunities are missed to extend children's learning and to challenge them to choose activities for themselves from across the full range available. Communication with parents is very good so they are well aware of the progress their children are making. Good steps are taken to involve them in their children's learning for example through providing 'chatterpacks' of activities for the children to use at home.

In her relatively short time in the role, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has set about her task with energy. She has sustained the good provision seen at the last inspection and demonstrates the capacity to develop outstanding provision. She has clear priorities for improvement, based on accurate analysis of strengths and weaknesses. A significant impact has already been made by making more use of the outdoor space and good teamwork is being forged among staff.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers were universal in saying the school does a very good job for their children. The response rate compares well with that in other schools. They report very favourably on the extent of their involvement in school life. They are particularly impressed with the way the school safeguards their children's welfare and the information received about the progress being made with their work. A number of parents single out for praise the support given to their children when extra help is required in relation to social or academic progress. Communication with the school is seen as a great strength, with the headteacher noted as setting the tone for the way the school works with the community it serves through her approachability.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Danehill Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspector received 29 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 64 sets of parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	5		

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
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.

8 May 2009

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Danehill Church of England Primary School, Haywards Heath
RH17 7JB

This letter is to thank you for your participation in the recent inspection of your school and to tell you what I found out. I judged that yours is an outstanding school which is doing a very good job in helping you prepare for the next stage of your lives. These are the main features of your school.

- You make excellent progress with your work and reach high standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to work are outstanding and it is clear that you enjoy coming to school and want to do the best you can. The way very many of you spoke to me about your school showed what a very good job it does in helping you become mature and thoughtful young people.
- You are very kind and helpful toward each other and to the adults in the school. Where you can help out by doing extra things in school or in the community, you are keen to do this and you do it well.
- The adults in school know you all very well and many of you told me how kind and helpful they are but that they expect you to work hard as well. Your parents and carers also feel you are very well looked after.
- Teaching is excellent, especially in English and mathematics, where the adults are really good at helping each of you make the best possible progress.
- You work very hard in lessons and do particularly well when discussing ideas, for example before writing a story, and you have very good opportunities to use computers for your work.
- The adults always think carefully about what they can improve about the school and, like you, they want to do their best as well to help you.

To help the school become even better I have asked the headteacher to do the following:

- ensure lessons in all subjects are as good as those in English and mathematics.
- help the very youngest children make more progress by making sure they do a wide range of activities when choosing what to do for themselves and checking that they are making the most of their learning time.
- give you more experience of people living in other areas of the country.

Thanks again for your help, and good luck for the future.

Stephen Long
Her Majesty's Inspector

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