

# High Wych Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	117398
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379411
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	222
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Ashworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mandy West
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	High Wych Sawbridgeworth CM21 0JB
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	24–25 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	379411



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Selwyn Ward

Additional inspector

Jacqueline Bell-Cook

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 27 lessons taught by 12 teachers, with a particular focus on the teaching and progress of boys and girls in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors listened to pupils read, and spoke with parents and carers, groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school development planning, school self-evaluation, leaders' monitoring of teaching, the notes of the School Improvement Partner and the questionnaire responses of 107 pupils, 28 staff and 95 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British, with a small, but growing proportion coming from other minority ethnic backgrounds. Only a small proportion of pupils is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low, as is the proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs. Mobility at this school has been above that of similar schools, with a higher proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school partway through their primary education. High Wych has Sports ActiveMark and Eco silver awards, as well as a Becta mark for information and communication technology (ICT) and Healthy Schools status. Government floor standards have been met. The school runs an after-school club each afternoon.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- High Wych provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory and their attainment is average.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are well motivated, interested and engaged, but teachers do not always challenge them enough because they do not make enough use of assessment information. The work for more-able pupils is frequently too easy.
- Although the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, staff assessments of children’s attainment have been inaccurate and have not provided leaders with reliable information about how well children are doing, or of their starting points when they join Year 1.
- Pupils feel safe at school and most behave well and show they are eager to learn. However, pupils report that bullying incidents occur. Although most pupils feel such incidents are dealt with effectively, parents and carers do not feel they are kept sufficiently informed of the action taken by school leaders.
- School leaders have an accurate picture of the school’s strengths and of those areas where improvements are needed. They recognise that they have more to do to accelerate pupils’ progress and they have begun successfully to make changes to move pupils’ learning on at a faster rate.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the autumn term 2012, increase the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in all year groups and accelerate pupils’ progress in lessons, particularly that of more-able pupils, by:

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- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do
  - ensuring that learning objectives set out what pupils are expected to learn and not just the activities to be carried out
  - making full use of assessment information always to match work to pupils' different capabilities
  - giving pupils success criteria that are matched to their different abilities
  - maintaining a brisk pace of learning and ensuring that activities always enable pupils to build on what they have learnt before
  - encouraging all pupils to take a pride in the presentation of their work.
- By the start of the autumn term 2012, improve the effectiveness of assessment by:
- assuring the accuracy of teachers' assessments, particularly of children's skills and knowledge when they start school and at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - making sure that all pupils know and understand their targets and the next steps they need to take to move their learning on
  - maintaining appropriate rigour in correcting spelling and punctuation errors when marking pupils' work
  - giving all pupils clear guidance consistently through marking that shows them what they need to do to improve their work
  - giving pupils throughout the school the opportunity routinely to check and assess their own and each other's work.
- Develop more robust management systems by the end of the summer term 2012 through:
- focusing leaders' lesson observations on pupils' learning and rates of progress
  - following up rigorously the points for development identified by school leaders when they visit lessons and scrutinise assessment and pupils' work
  - ensuring that parents and carers are kept fully informed of actions taken to deal with incidents involving misbehaviour or bullying
  - reviewing the organisation of letters and sounds (phonics) sessions within the curriculum so that learning is matched much more closely to pupils' prior attainment and that all pupils can hear phonemes without distractions
  - providing training and support for staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage to assure the reliability of their assessments.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage acknowledge that they have been uncertain about the accuracy of their assessments, including those at the end of the

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Reception Year and at the start of the Nursery. Some recent assessments showing low attainment and below-average starting points for the children have been identified as inaccurate. This makes it difficult for leaders to gain a clear picture of progress, both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In lessons, children make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is in line with the national average. This represents broadly satisfactory progress, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, pupils learning English as an additional language, and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils who join the school partway through their primary education, generally, make similar progress to their peers. It is more-able pupils whose progress is too often slower than it could be. This is because these pupils are often given work that is too easy for them. 'My daughter is very able and we are not convinced she is being pushed enough.' This comment from a parent summed up the views of several who recognise that more-able pupils are not challenged enough, although the very large majority of parents and carers are satisfied with their children's progress.

In the Year 6 national tests in 2011, when attainment was average, boys did markedly less well than girls. The school's progress tracking data show that there continues to be a gender gap in the current Years 5 and 6, although it is much smaller in these year groups than it has been in the past.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teachers are successful in motivating pupils so that they work with concentration and effort. Parents and carers appreciate the encouragement that teachers give to pupils, which helps the pupils to grow in confidence and contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils benefit from high-quality specialist teaching in music and modern foreign languages; the latter is arranged in partnership with a local secondary school.

Throughout the school, teachers' questioning invites pupils to have a go, so that it is common for a sea of hands to go up when a teacher asks for a response. That pupils' progress is more often satisfactory than good is due to teachers not expecting enough of the pupils. This can sometimes mean lessons proceeding at a pedestrian pace. Other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at the start of Key Stage 1, teachers, mostly, have detailed information available to them on how well each pupil is doing. They do not all make enough use of this information to plan and deliver work that is matched sufficiently closely to the different abilities of the pupils in their classes. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit often from targeted support from teaching assistants, but teachers' planning does not always reflect and explicitly cater for these pupils' specific learning needs.

More-able pupils are rarely challenged sufficiently, even in otherwise good lessons. Sometimes this is due to the way the curriculum is organised. Phonics, for example,

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is currently taught within each class, either with the whole class together, or with different groups sharing the classroom space. This means that pupils are not always grouped according to their language development or learning needs. In Year 1, for example, the entire class spent much of a phonics lesson repeating basic letter sounds. This was appropriate for some, but insufficiently challenging for those pupils who, in a later part of the lesson, showed they could already write complex sentences mostly accurately and unaided. In a Year 2 phonics session, where the class was split into two groups, pupils had the distraction of hearing the sounds being repeated in the neighbouring group.

'Learning objectives' are frequently set out at the start of each lesson, but often these show the task to be carried out, rather than what the pupils are expected to learn. When 'success criteria' are given to the pupils, they also often merely detail the tasks to be completed and so do not help pupils to assess their own learning. Rarely are they matched to pupils' different capabilities.

Teachers are diligent in marking work, but they do not always use this marking to give pupils a clear steer on what they need to do to improve. There are inconsistencies over the correction of spellings and punctuation errors. There is also variability over the extent to which pupils are expected to check their own and each other's work before handing it in. In most classes, pupils have group rather than individual targets. Even among older pupils, not all are aware of what their targets are. They do not know the levels at which they are working, or those they are aspiring to achieve in English and mathematics.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Inspectors saw good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning in the great majority of lessons. Pupils are eager to learn and readily volunteer answers to teachers' questions. They get on well together mostly and work well when collaborating in groups. Generally, they treat each other with respect, but they do not always listen as intently as they should to each other's contributions in class. Although many take a pride in their work, that is not universally the case. Some pupils' work is let down by poor presentation and careless errors.

Behaviour and safety are only satisfactory because of the bullying incidents that occur. A number of pupils, parents and carers voice concerns over behaviour and bullying. Pupils confirmed to inspectors that incidents were mostly sorted out, following either their or their parents' and carers' complaints. However, parents' and carers' comments indicate that they do not all feel informed well enough of the actions taken by leaders when bullying incidents occur. As a parent explained, 'Whilst the school communicates generally well through email, there is a lack of communication on incidents and issues that arise in the classroom.' Attendance is above average because of the good communication with parents and carers over the importance of minimising absence.

### **Leadership and management**

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Inspection grades are lower than those in the last inspection report. Leaders and the governing body acknowledge that the school coasted for a period after the last inspection and that some aspects of provision slipped. Results in the 2010 national tests came as a jolt to the school. Though these were average, they were lower than was expected for pupils who had previously done well in their Key Stage 1 assessments. This acted as a stimulus to the school, prompting a series of initiatives to improve provision. The initiatives included training for the governing body on interpreting data and changes to the deployment of the leadership team. There have been improvements to the systems for tracking pupils' progress and the introduction of more targeted interventions, booster groups and support for pupils identified as at risk of falling behind. These measures have begun to have an impact in tackling incidence of underachievement and in accelerating progress. They show the school's capacity to improve. Although a gap remains between girls' and boys' attainment, boys' attainment is rising and the recent initiatives have contributed to equal opportunities by narrowing the gap.

Leaders have an accurate picture of where improvements are needed, but their monitoring of lessons has given them an overly positive view of the effectiveness of teaching. This is because their lesson observations have focused on the features of teaching, rather than on the progress made by all groups of pupils. Leaders identify points for development when they observe lessons and, commendably, they make these a focus of subsequent observations. However, there is a lack of rigour in ensuring teachers all act on the feedback they are given. Several of the shortcomings identified in leaders' monitoring are still evident in some teachers' current practice. The monitoring carried out by external advisers has confirmed that staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage have not all had sufficient training to give them confidence in making accurate assessments of children's levels of attainment when they start school and at the end of the Reception Year.

The curriculum has many strengths. Vibrant enrichment activities help to make school a stimulating and enjoyable experience for pupils and contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They include activities as part of the school day, as well as a broad range of extra-curricular clubs and the after-school club, which is valued greatly by pupils, parents and carers alike. One described it as providing 'a variety of craft and sports activities that our children may not regularly do at home'. Throughout the school, pupils learn about many different Western artists and all have the opportunity in Years 4 and 5 to learn to play a musical instrument. The many visits over the course of Key Stage 2 to different places of worship covering the major world faiths help to broaden pupils' horizons and contribute to the school's harmonious sense of community. The curriculum is satisfactory, rather than better, because it is not tailored sufficiently to pupils' different learning needs and especially the needs of the more able. Opportunities are missed sometimes to provide a practical application for pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The arrangements for ensuring pupils' safeguarding meet current regulatory requirements.



## Glossary

### 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.
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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**

26 January 2012

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of High Wych Church of England Primary School,  
Sawbridgeworth, CM21 0JB**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we came on our recent visit. We found High Wych is giving you a satisfactory education. Most of you make satisfactory progress to reach average standards, but we think you could be doing better. We would like to see more of you reach above-average standards in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests in reading, writing and mathematics. To that end, we have suggested some ways in which teachers can help you all make good, rather than just satisfactory progress in lessons. Key to these is for staff to be sure always to match work to your different capabilities. You can help by telling teachers whenever you find the work you are given is too easy or too hard.

We have also asked teachers to give you a clear picture through marking and your targets so that you each know exactly what you need to do to do better. Again, you can help by always taking care to read your teachers' comments and doing your best to follow their advice. It will help you to make faster progress if you have a clearer understanding of the levels you are working at in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as the levels you are aiming to reach. Although many of you told us you were proud of your school, you do not all take enough pride over the presentation of your work. You can help to do better by taking care to produce neat work and always checking it for errors before you hand it in.

We saw good behaviour during our visit, but several of you and your parents and carers told us that behaviour was not always as good and that bullying sometimes occurs. We learnt that this is mostly sorted out, but we have asked the school to make sure that parents and carers are kept more fully informed of the action leaders take to deal with bullying.

The headteacher, leadership team and governing body have an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and of where improvements are needed. We have suggested some ways in which they can help to drive forward improvements at a faster rate. Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit and our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely  
Selwyn Ward  
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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