

Bredgar Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	118732
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	379672
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2012
Lead inspector	Margaret Coussins

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Evans
Headteacher	David Whitehead
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2008
School address	Bexon Lane Bredgar Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8HB
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons and six teachers as well as spending shorter sessions in each class, hearing children read and looking at their work. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, members of the governing body and pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, pupils' progress records and the safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires from 56 parents and carers were received and analysed along with those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Bredgar is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Their needs relate mainly to speech, language and communication or moderate learning difficulties. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. A daily breakfast and after-school club is provided. The school has gained a number of national accreditations including, Healthy Schools Status, Safe Schools accreditation, and an Activemark award. The school meets the current floor standard.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Behaviour and safety are outstanding, reflecting pupils' excellent attitudes to school and learning, and their consistently above-average attendance.
- Pupils' achievement is good, including that of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. All make good progress from their starting points. Achievement in English is stronger than in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels by the end of Year 6, in English and mathematics, is above average.
- Teaching is good because lessons are well planned and meet the needs of learners effectively, promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well. Marking and feedback are generally good with good quality guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. On occasions, pupils' learning is not fully extended because introductions to lessons are too long. Higher attaining pupils occasionally start at the same point as others and do not have time to complete the planned challenges.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, share a clear vision and high aspirations for the school's future. Leaders rigorously monitor the work of the school and make good use of information to plan school improvement and strategic development.
- Developing links across subjects has recently strengthened the good curriculum. The school recognises the need to embed this further and in particular, include more opportunities to develop mathematics learning in different subjects.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2012, embed the curriculum changes recently introduced and ensure that:
 - links between subjects are further strengthened
 - opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics skills in other subjects are increased.
- Give pupils enough time for independent learning in all lessons, enabling higher attaining pupils, in particular, to complete challenging activities and fully extend their learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire confirmed inspection evidence that pupils make good progress. In most years, children start in the Reception class with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress. By the time pupils enter Year 1, attainment is average. Pupils continue to make good progress from their starting points. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and including those with speech, language and communication difficulties, and those with moderate learning difficulties. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is above average. In English, attainment is stronger in reading than in writing, despite the accelerated progress evident.

In the Reception class, children make a good start in developing reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills because teachers plan purposeful activities in which to apply them. The addition of two guinea pigs to the class during the inspection provided children with opportunities to write instructions on how to look after them using simple sentences with capital letters and full stops. Their knowledge of phonics (linking sounds and letters) is good. Most children can add and subtract and apply their knowledge of number to problem-solving activities, for example choosing their own method of recording how much it would cost to buy the guinea pigs.

By Year 2, competent, fluent readers are reading to make sense as well as using their good phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. By Year 6, pupils read confidently and with enjoyment, express preferences for different authors and give considered reasons for their views. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment in reading is above average. Pupils enjoy writing in a range of styles and by Year 5 and Year 6 make good use of a range of features, to describe, for example, a mythical setting, to enhance their writing. Pupils know how to use a range of punctuation for effect, and enjoy using 'Kung Fu' sounds and actions to punctuate a piece of text. Pupils' excellent behaviour supports their learning extremely effectively and they collaborate and negotiate very well with mature attitudes.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers agree that teaching is good and inspection evidence confirms this. Pupils say their lessons are fun and interesting. Activities are imaginative and well planned. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they make good use of accurate assessment of pupils' previous attainment, knowledge and understanding to plan lessons that meet their wide-ranging needs. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour and motivate pupils very well with engaging activities. As a result, pupils show very positive attitudes and great enthusiasm for learning. This was demonstrated, for example, by older pupils working out what coins could be used to pay a lottery win, and by younger pupils looking around the school to find things that were longer or shorter than their 'magic pencil'. Very good relationships exist between all staff and pupils, which encourage pupils to work hard and want to do their best.

Teaching and the curriculum promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are encouraged to develop and use excellent personal skills to work collaboratively, creating a strong sense of community, tolerance and understanding of the needs of others. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to teaching and learning, especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to ensure that they make similar progress to others through well-targeted support and activities that meet their learning needs well.

The pace of learning is good overall because teachers use observations and questioning effectively to assess pupils' ongoing understanding and adjust teaching or the activities to ensure a suitably brisk pace of learning is maintained. On a few occasions, however, the pace of learning slows because too long is spent on the introductions to lessons. Sometimes, higher attaining pupils do not have enough time to complete the extension work planned for them because they start on the same tasks as others before moving on to their challenges. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly, clearly identifying strengths and what to improve, consistently applying the effective marking policy.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a good balance of activities that are directed by adults and those where children can make their own choices. During the inspection they could choose, for instance, making books for their guinea pigs, tending to 'sick animals' in the role-play area or building a guinea pig cage outside. Adults encourage children's growing independence effectively. Early reading, writing and communication skills as well as number skills are all promoted well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour around the school and in lessons is exemplary and pupils show excellent levels of courtesy, care, respect and kindness towards each other and adults. School records show that this is typical of behaviour over time in the school. The headteacher has received letters from members of the public commenting on pupils' excellent behaviour on school trips. Pupils show high levels of confidence and friendliness. Their very positive attitudes are having a strong impact on achievement and are reflected in attendance, which is consistently well above average for all groups of pupils. Pupils are very proud of their school and appreciate the benefits of a small school community commenting that because everyone is known, 'we get on really well and look out for

each other and make great friends’.

The behaviour policies are well established and promote consistently high expectations that pupils meet. Consequently, they manage their own behaviour with very little intervention from adults. Relationships are excellent and the atmosphere and ethos of the school contribute outstandingly well to pupils’ learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and all parents and carers agree. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand what constitutes bullying in all its forms, including cyber bullying and prejudice-based bullying. Pupils are confident that there is none in the school, reflecting the work the school has done to gain Safe School accreditation. Parents and carers are unanimous in their positive view of behaviour in the school. The school gives importance to promoting e-safety and as a result, pupils are very confident that they know exactly what to do to keep safe on the internet. Pupils mostly are very positive about behaviour. They say there may be the ‘the odd falling out’, which they are able to settle themselves or it is dealt with swiftly by staff.

Leadership and management

Leaders’ and managers’ strong focus on teaching and learning and professional development has brought about better outcomes for pupils since the previous inspection. Accurate self-assessment informs priorities for development. Work on these has improved the overall effectiveness of the school to good, showing good capacity for further improvement. One parent, echoed by others, wrote, ‘The new teachers and headteacher have made fantastic improvements to the school, which has hugely benefited children’s education and welfare.’

The effective curriculum has recently been strengthened with planned links in learning across different subjects, promoting the good development of skills particularly in literacy and communications. This is not yet fully embedded across the school and although there are good examples of mathematical skills being developed and applied in other subjects, these opportunities are not systematically or consistently as well planned as they are for literacy skills. There is a wealth of enrichment activities including stargazing, video conferencing with other schools and participating in a ‘Horrible Histories’ project. These opportunities, along with the school’s involvement with the ‘Olympic Get Set’ project, provide memorable learning experiences and promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The before- and after-school care provides a good, nurturing start and end to the day for those who participate.

Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of school life and the school engages them well, providing regular communication on their children’s progress and school events. Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. The good progress made by all groups confirms that the school promotes equality of opportunity well. Pupils learn in a safe and secure environment without fear of discrimination. All parents and carers rightly feel that the school takes good care of their children. This comment sums up their views: ‘The staff, teaching and non-teaching, are friendly, helpful, supportive and approachable. Above all is the fact that both my children enjoy going to school and even miss it during the holidays.’

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).

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.



6 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bredgar Church of England Primary School, Sittingbourne, ME9 8HB

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school. I really enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking to you and your teachers and looking at the work you have been doing. Thank you for responding to the questionnaire.

Bredgar is a good school. These are the things that your school does particularly well.

- You are doing well in English and mathematics and you are making much better progress in your writing than previously.
- Your behaviour, the way in which you keep yourselves safe and the way in which you care for each other are outstanding. Well done for this. You are all very polite and friendly. The very positive attitudes you have to learning is one of the main reasons why you are doing so well, including those of you who find work difficult.
- Your teachers plan interesting lessons to help you learn and motivate you to do your best. Some of these link subjects together well, and this helps you learn.

Although the school is doing well, there are still things it can improve. I have asked the governors and headteacher to help make sure you have lots of lessons that link subjects together and need you to use your mathematics skills. On a few occasions, the beginning of your lesson goes on for too long. I have asked your teachers to make sure you have enough time in the lesson to work on the tasks. In this way, even those of you who find work easy would have more time to complete the interesting challenges that your teachers give you.

You can help by continuing to work as hard as you do and being so positive and happy in your learning.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins
Lead inspector

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