

Littlebourne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	118657
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	379656
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2012
Lead inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Coleman
Headteacher	Jacqueline Reed
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jacqueline Marshall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 10 lessons, observing four teachers, and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, school leaders and representatives of the governing body. She took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at the school's documentation: policies, including those relating to safeguarding, data on pupils' progress, attendance figures and the school's improvement planning. She scrutinised pupils' work and evaluated 53 questionnaire responses received from parents and carers, 49 from Key Stage 2 pupils and 11 from staff.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage; others are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. A higher proportion of pupils than usual in primary schools join or leave the school at other than the expected times. Most of these are from service families at the nearby army barracks in Canterbury. In some year groups, over half the pupils did not start in the school in the Reception class. The school meets the government's floor standard.

The school has achieved a number of awards. These include Healthy Schools status, the Activemark and Silver accreditation for the provision of modern foreign languages.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Good relationships with families, including those in the services, have been a key factor in securing above average attendance, which is a significant success and improvement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils’ attainment is broadly average by the time they leave the school. It is weaker in mathematics than in English. Progress in writing has come on in leaps and bounds because of the positive impact of the school’s work in recent years. While some inconsistencies remain, marking is more effective in English than in mathematics because teachers are better at making comments that help individuals know how to improve their work.
- The progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is at least good, and better for some, because of the quality of learning provided by the strong leader. In the rest of the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Progress is better for pupils in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 where assessment is not always used as effectively by all staff to plan tasks that are well matched to individual needs and challenge all pupils to achieve well. Teachers use questioning well to reinforce learning, but on occasions lessons lack pace. The school works hard to narrow any gaps that may occur for a significant number of pupils who have moved from another school or education system and is successful in ensuring these pupils achieve as well as their peers.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders regularly check pupils’ work and teachers’ planning and lessons. While they have been successful in improving pupils’ progress in writing they have not been successful in securing consistently good teaching for pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- The school promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. As a result, a caring and friendly atmosphere pervades the school. Pupils behave well and feel safe and happy.

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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?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - developing teachers' marking so pupils understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work and know the next steps in their learning
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the use of assessment in order to secure good progress across the school by raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils are capable of and using it to match work to pupils' abilities.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that, by February 2013, teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - increasing the pace of lessons so that all pupils are actively engaged and involved in their learning at all times
 - ensuring teachers stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities when they are working together as a class, particularly at the start of lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, the current cohort of children arrived with skills broadly in line those expected for their age, though weaker in communication, language and literacy and calculation. They are making good progress in all areas of learning because planned activities are very closely tailored to match their individual needs. Across the rest of the school, pupils make satisfactory progress and leave Year 6 with average attainment in English and mathematics. The school's data and inspectors' observations in the classroom show that progress is improving, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 2, where progress is often good. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates, because staff pay careful attention in small group work to matching work to their capabilities. Similarly, the school quickly settles new pupils enabling them to achieve as well as their peers. Most parents and carers express a high level of satisfaction in the progress their children make. Inspection evidence suggests that progress is improving, especially in Key Stage 2.

In the current Reception class, children are making good progress and have a very secure grasp of letters and their sounds because of consistently high quality teaching. Children acquiring new sounds often independently relate these to the books they have been reading in class. One child learning the 'oo' sound, for

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example, noticed it could be found in 'h-oo-k'. He accurately sounded it out to his group, remarking it was 'like Captain Hook we've been reading about'. While standards in reading by the end of Year 2 are below average, this represents satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points in Year 1. Pupils increasingly make good progress and reach average standards in reading by the time they leave in Year 6. Across Key Stage 2, competency in reading is improving and pupils talk confidently about what they are currently reading and their personal preferences. Well-planned lessons effectively develop higher order reading skills, such as skimming and inference, and pupils are enthusiastic about reading because teachers make it fun.

Where learning is best in lessons, pupils respond with interest to tasks that are well matched to their abilities and they are clear both about their learning targets for the lesson and their work in general. For example, they talk eagerly about what they have learnt, about what strategies they might need to solve the problems they are set and whether they will meet the success criteria for the lesson. Older pupils are confident when sharing what they need to do to improve their writing. They are becoming more aware of their next steps in mathematics because teachers' comments on their work are improving to match those in English. Where learning dips, especially in Key Stage 1, pupils complete work that is not always best matched to their needs, such as working through pages from the mathematics scheme. Across the school, pupils usually work well collaboratively, explain their reasoning and show resilience in staying on task. However, where work does not challenge pupils, particularly at the start of lessons when the teacher is talking to the whole class, their attitude to learning sometimes dips.

Quality of teaching

Teachers' good rapport with their pupils puts them at ease with their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff are especially welcoming and make learning positively fun. Most teachers plan lessons thoroughly and ensure different ability groups are well catered for with suitably challenging tasks to promote their learning. However, on occasions teachers' introductions to lessons do not stretch all pupils and so some lose concentration. Similarly, as they start their independent work sometimes pupils, especially the most able, have to complete a series of easier tasks before reaching those best suited to their ability. Consequently, when this occurs, the pace of learning slows. Teachers usually organise lessons so there is an interesting range of activities to keep pupils' attention. They take the opportunity to thread the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development into their teaching.

In mathematics, there has been an over reliance on the use of published schemes. Some teachers have already started to adapt their planning to reduce this and are giving pupils more opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in a range of contexts. However, for others, improvements are less secure and opportunities are missed, particularly in Key Stage 1, to provide sufficient chances for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in order to raise standards.

Many teachers are good at questioning pupils to find out if all are making the

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expected progress and to challenge them to think more deeply. Work is marked regularly, with some good examples of marking to extend pupils' learning, particularly in writing. However, this good practice is inconsistent and opportunities are missed to show pupils how they can improve their work. Teachers do not always use the knowledge they gain from assessment to set high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and so progress overall is satisfactory. The vast majority of parents and carers are content with the quality of teaching. Although nearly all pupils who completed the survey believe the school helps them to do as well as they can, a few are not sure how well they are doing at school or that they learn a lot in lessons. The inspection team agrees with the pupils that marking and learning in lessons, while currently satisfactory, could be more effective in some classes.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils report that in most lessons behaviour is typically good and they can get on with their learning with little disruption. They agree that once any behaviour or type of bullying issue is reported, staff are quick to sort out the problem and make sure it does not affect their learning. Effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be seen in the various displays around the school and in classrooms from the Reception class to Year 6. For example, a display on how to 'say no to bullying' included the pupils' own ideas of what they would say if they were in that situation. Similarly, pupils feel able to share their personal experiences with others whether it is about moving school or what it is like to live with a particular medical condition. They explain it gives them the chance to help others to understand. Consequently, pupils feel safe in school and parents and carers heartily endorse this. During the inspection, pupils were polite and courteous to inspectors and keen to strike up conversations. Pupils value the many awards and badges awarded in celebration assemblies for qualities such as perseverance, teamwork and independence. Attendance is above average and incidents of persistent absence are low.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for how the school can move forward and has developed good links and partnerships with parents, carers and the local authority to help achieve this. There is a positive team spirit and a strong atmosphere of 'can do' among the staff. Subject leaders feel 'galvanised' by improvements over the past year as they have become increasingly involved in analysing performance data to see how well the school is doing and to plan actions for improvement. The consistently delivered phonics sessions for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are raising achievement in reading and are held up as good practice in the local authority. The focus on writing has proved effective in engaging boys and girls in lively literacy. These improvements show the school is able to sustain its current improvement.

The senior leadership team is now focused on raising achievement in mathematics. While there have been some successes, and in some classes progress has

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accelerated, this is not consistent across the school. The governing body is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and knows what needs to be improved. It has strengthened its involvement in carrying out checks to see how well the school is doing and increasingly uses this information to challenge and support the school.

Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced and generally meets pupils' needs. The Reception class provides a very wide and varied range of activities for Early Years Foundation Stage children. This is a key factor in their good and sometimes better achievement. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 enables pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills appropriately. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well; for example, providing them with opportunities to study a range of modern foreign languages, participate in a wide range of after-school activities and visits as well as the chance to take pride in representing their peers as members of the school council.

The governing body, with leaders at all levels, ensures that appropriate arrangements for safeguarding are in place and pupils are safe and secure while in the school's care. All parents and carers agreed in their questionnaires that their children are safe. The school liaises effectively with families to improve pupils' above average attendance. Good relationships between the school and nearby army barracks ensured almost all service personnel, returning from a recent tour in Afghanistan, took part of their leave during a school holiday to minimise any effect on their children's learning. The school tackles any discrimination effectively and ensures all pupils, including those newly arrived at the school and those known to be eligible for free school meals, have an equal opportunity to achieve similarly.

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 Littlebourne Church of England Primary School, Canterbury, CT3 1XS

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear from talking to you, and from your responses in the questionnaires you answered, that you like school. We agree that you get along well and look out for one another. We think your school gives you the right help so that you know how to behave well and keep safe. Your attendance is above average – well done!

We found that Littlebourne is a satisfactory school. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs as it should and teachers do what is expected to help you make satisfactory progress in your work. The leaders in the school know what needs to be done to make your school better. In order to help you to make faster progress, we have asked the staff to do three things.

- Make sure that in mathematics their marking is as good as it is in your literacy books and you have lots of opportunities to solve problems using the skills you have learnt.
- Have high expectations that you will achieve as well as you can and make sure the tasks you have match your needs.
- Keep all of you actively involved in your learning, particularly at the start of lessons.

You can all help by continuing to respect others' values and always using the advice teachers give you on how to improve your work. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall
Lead inspector

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