

Catsfield Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114494
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	378867
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Robin Hammerton HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carol Feltwell
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Clark
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Robin Hammerton

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The HMI observed eight class lessons, involving five teachers, one jointly with the headteacher. He interviewed staff, pupils, parents and carers and the chair of governors; observed teaching groups for phonics (linking letters and sounds); and two assemblies. He took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. He observed the school's work, and looked at documents including planning, self-evaluations, records, pupils' work and assessment data. He took close account of the 61 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 67 from Key Stage 2 pupils and 16 from members of staff.

Information about the school

This is a small village primary school, with close working links to nearby St Laurence Church. Most pupils are from White British families. Fewer pupils than average are assessed as being disabled, or who have special educational needs. There are some pupils in older year groups with autistic spectrum disorder. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school meets government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The headteacher was appointed after the last inspection, in January 2011, and there have been several other recent staffing changes, including the appointment of a deputy headteacher. The school has various awards including those for Eco Schools, Fairtrade and Healthy Schools.

Inspection judgements

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

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory and fast improving school. Parents and carers are pleased that it is now 'really ambitious for the children', with 'so many improvements now in hand'. Staff are highly committed and the school is very well placed to continue its strong improvement.
- Immediately after the last inspection, pupils' attainment fell considerably and became much too low. Boys' attainment was notably lower than that of girls, especially in English.
- On her appointment, the visionary headteacher saw these problems. Working creatively with staff and a shrewd governing body, she has successfully led a very rapid recovery, while sustaining the school's friendly atmosphere.
- Pupils' attainment is now broadly average and achievement satisfactory. Their progress, attitudes to learning and behaviour are satisfactory and notably improving. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment is closing, especially amongst older pupils. However, girls are sometimes involved more by teachers and show more motivation than some boys. Some pupils realise that not putting their hands up stops them being asked questions by staff.
- The new deputy headteacher contributes very well, along with other senior staff, to the improving picture of teaching. He is an exemplary teacher. However, his future whole-school leadership role is not yet clearly defined. He and the headteacher are rightly keen to further develop the curriculum and out-of-school-hours activities, to ensure these motivate all pupils equally well.
- Teaching is satisfactory and at its best in Key Stage 2. Teachers give clear explanations. They ask questions of pupils regularly but with varying quality. Pupils who are disabled, or who have special educational needs, including those with autism, learn as well as their classmates. However, teachers' expectations of pupils are not consistently high enough. Assessment data are not always precisely used so that work challenges all pupils. Some parents and carers, reasonably, would welcome more information about, and opportunities to discuss, their children's progress.

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 spring 2013, further strengthen teaching and pupils' progress so that these are at least good by:
 - raising the expectations of what pupils can achieve further, especially for pupils in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2
 - using the school's improving assessment data more precisely to match work closely in lessons to the needs of each pupil, so that all are challenged
 - providing information about assessment and progress more frequently to parents and carers and allowing parents and carers of children in the Reception class to contribute more formally to assessments made of their children
 - improving the questioning of pupils in lessons and avoiding the use of 'hands up' in a way that excludes particular pupils.
- Continue to improve all pupils' engagement with their learning and lessons by:
 - developing further an exciting, progressive and challenging curriculum in all subjects, including through the school's existing commitment to learning outside the classroom
 - monitoring the participation rates of different groups of pupils in school clubs and taking account of any patterns that may exist in any future developments
 - seeking pupils' views about what will best motivate pupils in their learning
 - ensuring that the identified needs of all groups of pupils, including boys and girls, are equally represented in planning and delivery of lessons.
- Determine quickly the key whole-school areas for which the deputy headteacher will be responsible and accountable.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the school with skills in line with those expected for their age. They join as confident, engaged learners. They enjoy their time in the Reception class and are happy to take part in, and talk about, a range of interesting activities. These activities are not all fully linked, however, to assessments made of them and their progress is satisfactory. Parents and carers can contribute informally to assessments but are not fully involved in sharing their own knowledge of their children's progress with staff.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils also make satisfactory progress and their work and recent test results are at a broadly average level. Their reading is also at an average level, although pupils show much increased confidence and interest in reading. Sometimes, their learning in lessons is constrained because their learning activities are too tightly controlled by staff, with not enough opportunities for pupils to show independence and use their own ideas. Girls generally attain more highly than boys and sometimes show more engagement in the lessons.

At Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is rapidly improving and previous deficits in their

learning are being recovered. Their attainment in English, including reading, and mathematics is broadly average, which shows improvement from the below average standards pupils currently in Years 4, 5 and 6 reached when they were aged seven. Handwriting standards, for example, are notably better, although there remain some variation in pupils' formation of letters and tidiness. Some pupils, usually boys, have been reluctant writers for some time and are becoming more engaged. Most pupils are increasingly willing to share their ideas. In some lessons, including many in mathematics, their learning is very rapid.

Pupils who are disabled, or those with special educational needs, including those with autism, are well supported and motivated; they progress as well as their peers. Their parents and carers, in common with parents and carers more widely, are pleased to note this. One parent, for example, pointed out how well staff now understand autism and consequently provide well for pupils' needs.

In all year groups, pupils' spelling has improved recently, as has their confidence in writing and reading. Pupils show real enjoyment of school. They demonstrate this, for example, through the good interest they show in assembly topics and their worshipful singing. Assemblies, which are led with sensitivity and humour and have a Christian focus, develop their moral and spiritual understanding well.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in Reception and Years 1 and 2 is of mixed quality. It is satisfactory overall, and improving, but further improvements are needed to accelerate all pupils' progress. Staff care deeply for the pupils. Relationships are positive and constructive. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils, in accordance with school policy, so pupils know what to do and how they can succeed. They explain key learning points well. Reception children enjoyed the teaching about rainforests, weather and animals around the world. Staff helpfully ask many questions of pupils. However, too many of these questions are closed, requiring short answers, which limits the amount of thinking required by pupils. In the lessons observed, teachers asked girls more questions than boys. Work set for pupils is not always challenging enough and is not linked well to assessments. In one lesson, all pupils were asked to draw a mind map about an author. Although they had useful knowledge of the author from previous lessons, for most pupils this task was not closely enough suited to their abilities and opportunities to accelerate their learning were lost.

In Key Stage 2, teaching is better with much being good. Teachers have increasingly high expectations of the pupils. Often, they provide clear explanations and give pupils active and challenging tasks. These tasks are well organised but, as in the younger classes, not always closely enough related to assessments made of individual pupils. Pupils enjoy demonstrating and explaining what they can do and helping each other to learn by discussing their ideas together. This helps their good social development. In a highly effective mathematics lesson in Years 5 and 6, well-focused questioning by the teacher, along with the challenging tasks set, led to pupils working confidently and reflectively as they developed their understanding and use of graphs. In a Years 3 and 4 lesson, a very efficient, pithy comment by the teacher to the whole class about a problem some were experiencing led immediately to improvement in their work. Across Key Stage 2, staff have made some worthwhile

improvements to the planned curriculum, specifically to draw boys in as much as girls and make sets of lessons more challenging and coherent for all pupils by changing the texts used, for example. This has also had the effect of improving the pupils' moral, social and cultural learning. The staff have had good initial success but are aware that there is more to do and that this needs extension into the younger year groups and to gauging pupils' perceptions as to how pupils think they learn best. Parental responses to the questionnaire recognise and welcome improvements in teaching and the maintaining of good practice for many Key Stage 2 pupils.

Across the whole school, the new highly systematic and efficient approach to teaching phonics has raised attainment. Much of this teaching is provided very successfully by teaching assistants, working with small groups. They show clear understanding of, and sensitivity to, the pupils' needs. The teaching assistants, many of whom have specialist training, also contribute well to pupils' learning in many class lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils feel safe and well looked after. They use the internet showing good understanding of how to keep safe. They enjoy working and playing together and are respectful of each other. Parents and carers note this and show much confidence in the school. There is very little unkind behaviour and virtually no bullying. If any does occur, pupils say staff respond quickly. One pupil said, 'It's always sorted out.' Pupils talk with enthusiasm about charitable work to which they have contributed. They show a clear understanding of Fairtrade. The school council makes valuable contributions to some decisions, including those about behaviour and its improvement. Pupils' attendance is consistently above average.

Behaviour is satisfactory. Lessons are very rarely disrupted or slowed down by poor behaviour. However, the residue of recent underachievement has left some pupils lacking confidence and, occasionally, self-motivation. This shows more often in the weaker lessons, where pupils sometimes lose concentration, become a little too noisy, or do not participate actively for periods of time. In better taught lessons, this is far less prevalent. Teachers are aware, however, that they have to work hard to re-engage some pupils and sustain their enthusiasm so that they can learn more quickly.

Leadership and management

In the autumn of 2010, governors selected a new headteacher. They astutely assessed that the school needed increased rigour in its work, while keeping the school's pleasant, welcoming atmosphere. This was made explicit in the selection process. The new headteacher is certainly delivering what was asked of her. In doing this, she receives good support from the well organised and led governing body, who is itself increasingly rigorous in asking challenging questions.

The headteacher is a resourceful and ambitious leader. Her approach brings well-paced improvement. School self-evaluation is accurate. The school development plan is very ambitious and focused on correct areas. It is a working document which is being put steadily, but relentlessly, into practice and is bringing about sustained and

embedded improvements in key areas such as teaching and achievement. Limited finances are carefully targeted towards where they can have maximum impact. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Parents and carers are very pleased with the changes that are improving the school's performance. Some, however, express disappointment about no longer being able to stay in classrooms at the start of the day or the barrier of new security fences. The headteacher is convinced that these changes are necessary. The fences are part of the school's careful, well organised and effective safeguarding arrangements for pupils. However, the headteacher is open and sensitive to parents' and carers' views and is developing new approaches to hearing and valuing them. Parents and carers are pleased that they can approach the school readily. One said, 'I feel more listened to – and not such an interfering parent!'

The headteacher draws well upon the expertise of others. She is actively involved in useful networks with other schools. Staff, in all capacities, feel empowered, valued, and take real responsibility. For example, the special educational needs coordinator manages the support provided to pupils from inside and outside the school well. Office and premises staff provide a welcoming and efficient service. One teacher provided highly effective training for teaching assistants to prepare them for their phonics teaching, of which the impact is significant. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is aware of what improvements are needed.

Appointments of new staff are carefully made and there is a shared commitment among school leaders and staff to tackling any form of discrimination. The new deputy headteacher makes a very considerable contribution, modelling and sharing good practice in many areas. He has helped much in raising aspirations and supporting the headteacher's strong drive for equality in boys' achievement with girls. He is an encouraging presence for pupils, staff and parents and carers. Both he and the headteacher are aware that they need to determine more precisely what his responsibilities should be in the longer term. He has, nevertheless, begun work on improving the curriculum for older pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory because it provides adequately for pupils' main learning needs and promotes their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding suitably. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are rightly keen to improve this across the school, so that it is more demanding and motivating for all groups of pupils, using the inspiring surroundings, including a recently built outdoor classroom.

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.



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Catsfield Church of England Primary School, Battle TN33 9DP

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave me when I came to inspect your school. By the time I left the school after two days I felt I was getting to know some of you quite well. After the last assembly, it was lovely when some of you waved and smiled to me as you walked out. Although your welcome was warm, the weather was not. Do you remember the snow and ice that were around then? I'm sure you do. I certainly remember the excellent snowmen you had built!

I found that your school is improving very quickly. Your headteacher leads the school very well indeed. She gets lots of good help from the other adults and from you. Well done to everyone who helps out in some way, by being a school councillor or peer mediator, for example. The school provides you all with a satisfactory education. Lessons are enjoyable and getting better for you all the time. The staff really care for you and are determined to give you the best they can. The phonics teaching that started this school year is a great success and you rightly told me how much it helps. The school is a strong and friendly community. I could see that clearly too.

I have made some suggestions to help the school become better still. These are:

- to improve some of the teaching so that more is expected of you and the work you are set is just right for you, not too hard or too easy
- to make sure the lessons and curriculum are even more interesting, demanding and exciting for all of you, with staff and governors checking carefully that you are all getting all the opportunities you need
- to ensure your new deputy headteacher, who is doing a good job, discusses and agrees what his main management responsibilities will be in the future.

You can help by making sure you always join in fully in all lessons.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector

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