

Doddinghurst Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115124
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	379011
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2012
Lead inspector	Tusha Chakraborti

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Smith
Headteacher	Margaret Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2008
School address	Church Lane Doddinghurst Brentwood CM15 0NJ
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Age group	7-11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti

Additional inspector

Peter Lacey-Hastings

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 12 lessons, observing eight teachers. They heard pupils reading, scrutinised pupils' work, visited an assembly and undertook other activities in order to observe pupils' learning. Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at school evaluation documents, safeguarding documentation, data on pupils' progress, development planning, and minutes of meetings held by the governing body. Responses from questionnaires completed by 98 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those from 104 pupils and 17 staff.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized junior school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and none are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is slightly above average. The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. It holds Healthy School status, the Silver award for Investors in people and the International Schools award. There is a breakfast and after-school club on the school site which is run by an external provider.

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. It promotes a strong sense of community. Its welcoming and inclusive ethos ensures that all pupils feel safe and secure. Although some good features are evident, the school has not been judged good because there is not enough good teaching to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and their attainment is average by the end of Year 6. Data shows that the rate of progress has accelerated over the past year and Year 6 pupils are now on track to meet challenging targets.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are courteous, cooperative and conduct themselves well as they move around the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The quality of teaching, while improving, is satisfactory overall. Teachers often have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. Nevertheless, the tasks that pupils are given do not consistently provide enough challenge for the more-able pupils. While marking of pupils' work is regular, teachers' comments do not always explain how to improve or set the next steps in learning.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leaders' vision for the school is clear and is driving improvement, as reflected in the recent introduction of several successful strategies to raise performance. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are satisfactory. The roles of middle leaders and their impact on raising achievement are not fully developed. The governing body is ambitious for the school to do well and is committed to using its expertise for the good of the school.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - ensuring that tasks set in lessons challenge all pupils fully, especially the more able, and that learning proceeds at a good pace
 - improving the quality of marking so that pupils understand what they must do to improve their work.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of middle leaders, including the subject co-ordinators, by:
 - ensuring that they have a detailed knowledge and understanding of learning and achievement in their areas
 - making sure that monitoring by subject leaders is rigorous and ensures sharper focus on pupils' learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and attainment is average by Year 6. Their standards of attainment and the rate of progress have fluctuated, with national assessments showing some decline in the past two years. Inspection evidence shows that progress has accelerated over the past year owing to the successful teamwork of the headteacher and staff in implementing a more rigorous system for monitoring pupils' achievement. Consequently, all groups of pupils across the school are now making satisfactory progress in both English and mathematics, and attainment is rising. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of the carefully targeted support they receive from all staff. Consequently, their achievement is similar to that of their peers. Most parents and carers are pleased with their children's education and rightly feel that the achievement is rising for pupils currently in the school. As one parent said, 'I am delighted with the changes that have been put in place. The school allows children to develop holistically and provides an inclusive approach to their education'.

Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading standards are average by Year 6. Pupils enjoy reading a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Many are fluent readers and are confident in reviewing the events and characters from the books they read. The school has placed strong focus on raising attainment in writing through cross-curricular topic work and this is having a positive impact on their progress. Pupils engage in 'talk for writing' activities and group work where they enthusiastically discuss their ideas before embarking on a continuous piece of writing. Many develop a clear understanding of different genres and write effectively for different purposes. This was seen in a literacy lesson where Year 6 pupils wrote an 'eyewitness' account of an accident, using a range of

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vocabularies. In mathematics, pupils in Year 6 gained a secure knowledge and understanding of how to use grid method to work out multiplication of three- and two-digit numbers. Pupils use their computer skills appropriately to support their learning in other subjects, such as conducting research work while learning about different countries.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory. There is clear evidence from pupils' better progress that teaching is improving. Typically, teaching develops good relationships between pupils and adults and promotes the effective use of the teaching assistants. Teaching assistants provide good support for all groups of pupils, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Most parents and carers rightly hold positive views about the improvements in the quality of teaching their children receive.

In most lessons, teachers display good subject knowledge. Where teaching is good, pupils are engaged well in their learning through effective questioning and successfully build on their prior learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson in year 3, appropriately targeted questioning enabled most pupils to gain a clear understanding of fractions of shapes and numbers. Teachers make good use of technology and use the interactive whiteboards effectively to share the purpose of lessons. They explain success criteria to ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and are able to evaluate their learning. However, the marking of pupils' work, although regular, does not always guide pupils effectively enough about how to improve it. Teachers do not always give pupils time to respond to their guidance. Planning is detailed, usually matching work to the learning needs of all groups of pupils. However, opportunities are missed to extend the skills and understanding of the more-able pupils through sufficiently challenging tasks. As a result, they do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable.

The planned curriculum makes a satisfactory impact on pupils' progress. Current planning for topic work ensures an appropriate range of activities across different subject areas and this is now enabling pupils to make steady progress in developing reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills across the curriculum. This is evident, for example, in the topic work on China. Pupils in Year 6 conduct on-line research work to explore the physical, historical and cultural features of China and engage in writing their findings as factual accounts. This also enhances their ability to research and independent learning skills.

Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well through group discussions and topic work. Pupils are given opportunities to read stories from different cultures and they learn to value different cultural traditions.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes to learning are positive. They are

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courteous, cooperative and engage well in their learning. They enjoy challenges and know what actions to take for promoting positive behaviour throughout the school, and to help prevent bullying. They listen to adults and to each other and respect the views of others. Most parents and carers correctly say that a good standard of behaviour is the norm, and that their children feel safe at school at all times. Pupils confirm this view. Concentration does, however, dip on a few occasions when the quality of teaching is weaker and fails to engage pupils in their learning.

Pupils report that bullying of any kind is rare and add that, when it does happen, the school responds very quickly and successfully, ensuring that they feel safe and secure. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand the risks they face in their every-day lives; for example, they are well aware of cyber-bullying and know what to do if they should encounter it. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. They have a clear understanding of what is right or wrong which has a positive impact on the strong moral and social ethos of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is consistently above average. There have been no exclusions over the past five years. Pupils willingly take on roles of responsibility within the class, through their school council work and when arranging fundraising activities to support national and international charities. Older pupils take the responsibility of supporting pupils from Year 3 throughout the school day and in the playground.

Leadership and management

The senior leaders have a clear vision for improvement and have introduced several strategies recently to raise pupils' achievement. These are starting to take effect and demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The headteacher, supported by staff, has overhauled the assessment procedures to track pupils' progress more effectively and to promote a more rigorous self- and peer-assessment system. Leaders have developed a more rigorous programme for the monitoring of teaching and linking this to staff development to develop the expertise of teachers. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils' progress has accelerated as a consequence. However, the monitoring roles of middle leaders, including the subject co-ordinators, are not sufficiently developed as some of them are new to their roles. They do not have a complete picture of the quality of teaching in their areas and so are not yet able to drive progress as uniformly as possible. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's performance and provides appropriate support and challenge.

The satisfactory curriculum is broad and balanced, enabling pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. It has recently been reviewed to provide more cross-curricular links between literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Although, this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning, it is too early yet to judge its full effect on pupils' achievement. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues are promoted well through the curriculum. Assemblies and religious studies support pupils in reflecting on the connections

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between spirituality and action in their own lives. For example, in an assembly, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the values of fairness and issues regarding Fair Trade around the world. Pupils gain deeper understanding of religious and cultural diversity through their study of French and German languages and the links with their partner school in Germany.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination satisfactorily, particularly through ensuring equity in the performance of different groups of pupils. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and are monitored regularly. Risk assessment procedures are secure and careful checks are made of the suitability of adults to work with children.

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.



7 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Doddinghurst Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School, Brentwood, CM15 0NJ

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school. This is clearly reflected in your above-average rate of attendance and punctuality. We think your behaviour is good and are pleased to see how considerate you are to each other in lessons and around the school. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. You carry out your duties, including your jobs as prefects and school council representatives, responsibly. Thank you also for the questionnaires that you filled in for the inspection, and for sharing your views with us.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory and improving quality of education. Your headteacher, staff and governors ensure that you are well cared for and want you to achieve the best you can. Your progress is satisfactory and you reach standards that are average in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6.

To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- make sure that the work provided for you is just a bit harder to move your learning forward as rapidly as possible, especially those of you who learn quickly
- ensure that teachers help you to understand how you can improve your work
- make sure that teachers with responsibility develop more expertise to help you learn more effectively and take on greater responsibility for helping to improve your school.

All of you can contribute to these improvements by continuing to work hard and responding well to all that the teachers ask you to do.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti
Lead inspector

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