

Lympne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	118680
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	379658
Inspection dates	14–15 March 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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachael Gainsford
Headteacher	Joyce Rhodes
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	14–15 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins

Additional inspector

Ron Elam

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 16 lessons involving nine teachers which totalled approximately eight hours of observation time. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, pupils and the chair 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 a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, pupils' progress records and the safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires from 80 parents and carers were received and analysed, along with those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Lympne is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. A daily breakfast club is provided that is managed by the governing body. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has gained several awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy Schools Status.

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	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils are great ambassadors for their school. They are confident, friendly and polite, work hard and have good attitudes to learning. The school is not outstanding because there are a few inconsistencies in some aspects of teaching and learning.
- Pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- Teaching inspires and motivates pupils. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of learners effectively, promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are some excellent examples of marking and feedback that help pupils know how to improve, but the quality is not consistent across the school. On occasion, pupils are not clear about what they are to do when they start independent work and this can slow the pace of the progress they make.
- The school provides a safe, secure environment for learning. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy school. This is reflected in their attendance, which is above average. They are polite, friendly, considerate and caring, and good behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning and a well-ordered happy school community.
- Leaders, including members of the governing body, share high aspirations and ambition for the school's future. Targets for the performance of all staff are well linked to school priorities and monitoring of teaching is clearly focused on learning; where weaknesses are identified, effective support is given. The school has correctly identified the need to work with parents and carers to find the best ways to enhance communication with them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure feedback during lessons and through marking, together with opportunities for pupils to assess their own progress, is consistently effective in helping pupils see how they can improve.

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- Make sure that, before starting work independently, pupils are clear about the tasks and the criteria for success.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills at the expected level for their age. All groups of pupils make similar good progress through the school and achieve well from their starting points. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English and mathematics. Most parents and carers feel their children make good progress and that the school meets children's particular needs well. Inspection evidence confirms these positive views.

In the Reception Year, children make good progress and reach the expected goals for learning by the time they move into Year 1. A strong focus on developing children's communication, language and number skills, as well as their personal development, permeates activities in the Reception class. As a result, children gain independence and are confident to express themselves. Children develop a good sense of story and can retell their favourites. The featured story, Cinderella, provided good opportunities for children to apply their early writing skills. They wrote 'invitations to the ball' and menus, using capital letters and full stops, and their secure phonic (letters and sounds) skills. Children accurately counted the 12 chimes of the clock, named the shapes they used to decorate Cinderella's carriage and could add, subtract and record simple number problems.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 is above average. By Year 2, competent fluent readers are clearly reading to make sense as well as using phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. By Year 6, pupils read confidently and with enjoyment. They develop good comprehension skills and are able to read between the lines to infer and deduce meaning and empathise with characters. They have a good knowledge of a wide range of authors and can express preferences for different styles of writing. They make good use of their reading skills for research in a range of subjects.

The recent focus on writing has enabled pupils to enjoy writing in a range of genres, in tandem with regular opportunities to develop and practise basic skills. The impact on the quality of writing is evident in the increasing number of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. Descriptive writing makes good use of ambitious vocabulary and alliteration such as, 'The devastating waves crashed down on the dark, dangerous destroyer'.

Reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills are used well across the curriculum. As part of their topic work on Italy, pupils were able to use their good writing skills to create Haiku poems (poems of three lines with a precise number of

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syllables) such as: `Mighty Volcano,
 Erupting into the sky,
 Lava crashing down.'

In a geography lesson, pupils made good use of mathematical skills to extract and interpret information from tables and charts and showed their good writing skills when recording their findings in a report. Pupils enjoy collaborative practical activities and work together well, such as when conducting investigations into lung capacity in science. Their determination and negotiating skills supported their learning very well. Teaching assistants provide good support for the groups and individuals they work with. They are effective in ensuring that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to others through well-targeted support.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers feel that their children are taught well, and pupils are also positive about the quality of teaching. These views were confirmed by the inspection. Pupils describe their lessons as fun and interesting. Good relationships exist between all staff and pupils, which encourage pupils to work hard and try their best. Work is generally pitched at the right level to provide appropriate challenges for pupils of all abilities so that they learn at a good pace. This was evident, for example when pupils tackled challenging work on division in Year 6.

Teaching and the curriculum effectively motivate and inspire pupils. They promote a good work ethic, support pupils' independent learning skills and successfully encourage their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to gauge pupils' understanding and extend their thinking and learning. Phonics teaching is skilled and fun and ensures that pupils learn well, and at a brisk pace. A notable feature of teaching across the school are the opportunities pupils have to develop their speaking and listening skills through sharing their ideas with 'talk partners' and adults. In a mathematics lesson, on using calculations to solve problems, one boy said, 'I had one way of doing it, but then we talked about it and now I know two ways of doing it.' On occasion, however, teachers' explanations of tasks for independent learning are not clear enough and so time is wasted and the pace of learning slows.

Regular marking and feedback generally give pupils clear pointers on how to improve their work. There are also excellent examples where pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress towards meeting their targets and to evaluate, in a constructively critical way, the work of others, which they do sensibly and with great maturity. This good practice is not consistent across the school, however, which means some pupils are not sure how they might improve their work.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a good balance of activities that are directed by adults and those where children make their own choices. Staff provide a stimulating learning environment and the excellent outdoor area provides motivating and exciting learning opportunities in all areas of learning, which was an issue for

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improvement identified by the previous inspection.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost all parents and carers agree that the school keeps children safe and that behaviour in the school is good. These views are in line with the inspection findings. Most pupils, in their questionnaire, also said they feel safe in school and that behaviour is good in lessons. A few felt that behaviour in the school was good only sometimes, but several said in discussions that this was because they were aware that there are a few pupils who find it hard to behave as well as others. They show acceptance of the needs of these pupils and say that teachers never let any inappropriate behaviour stop others learning.

Behaviour around the school, in lessons and in the playground during the inspection was good, with pupils showing care, respect and kindness towards each other and adults. School records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. Most pupils manage their own behaviour well with little intervention from adults. Good relationships and the atmosphere and ethos of the school make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand what constitutes bullying in all its forms, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They said they are confident that there is no bullying in school and that if there is the occasional falling out, they usually sort it out themselves. Pupils are equally confident that if anything more serious were to occur, the headteacher and teachers would act quickly and effectively.

Leadership and management

All leaders, including members of the governing body, take a key role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. There is a shared drive, led exceptionally well by the headteacher, to provide the best possible learning experiences for each pupil. As a consequence, equality of opportunity is promoted well and pupils learn in a safe, secure and supportive environment without fear of discrimination.

Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Most parents rightly feel that the school takes good care of their children. Accurate and thorough self-assessment informs priorities for development and effective action is taken, including a strong focus on professional development, resulting in, for example improved outcomes in writing. The school has successfully improved the aspects identified for improvement at the last inspection and consolidated previous overall good performance, demonstrating a good capacity for further improvement.

The well-planned curriculum is effective because there is a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills as well as the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A good range of extra activities, including trips and visitors to school as well as after-school activities and a well attended breakfast club enriches pupils' learning and broadens their experience. Parents,

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carers and pupils appreciate the breakfast club which provides a healthy, social start to the day. Parents and carers are mostly very positive about all aspects of the school's work. One summed up the views of many with the comment, 'Lympe is a happy school that focuses on the well-being of children to enable them to reach their learning potential both academically and socially.' The main area that a very small minority expressed concerns about was how well the school keeps them informed. Inspectors agree and the school has already correctly identified, ways to enhance its communication with parents to keep them better informed, for example through further developing the school website.

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.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lympe Church of England Primary School, Lympe CT21 4JG

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking to you and your teachers and looking at the work you have been doing. You are very polite, friendly and interesting to talk to and we appreciated the way you helped us find out about your school. You are right to enjoy coming to Lympe because we agree with you that it is a good school. These are the things that your school does particularly well.

- You are doing well in mathematics and English and you are making better progress in your writing than you were previously.
- The very positive attitudes you have to learning and your determination to succeed are two of the main reasons why you are doing well, including those of you who find learning harder than others.
- Although in your questionnaires you were not very sure about this, your behaviour is good. You learn together well and support and care for each other.
- You think teaching is good in your school and we agree. Teachers plan interesting lessons to help you learn well and motivate you, and give you work that is just right for each one of you.
- Your headteacher and the other teachers with special responsibilities do a good job in running the school and keeping you safe.

Although the school is doing well, there are still things it can improve. We have asked your teachers to make sure that in every class, the marking and feedback you receive are of the same high quality we saw in many classes, and that you all have opportunities to evaluate your own progress and that of your classmates. We also want them to make sure that, before you start your independent work in lessons, you are all clear about what you have to do.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins
Lead inspector

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