

Minster Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118696
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358423
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Box
Headteacher	Wendy Stone
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
School address	Molineux Road, Minster-in-Thanel Ramsgate CT12 4PS
Telephone number	01843 821384
Fax number	01843 821653
Email address	office@minster-thanel.kent.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 14 lessons with 13 teachers being seen. Meetings were held with parents and carers, members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 231 questionnaires from parents and carers, 43 from staff and 42 from pupils in Years 3 to 6.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Pupils' progress in mathematics across the school.
- Pupils' responsibility taking, their community involvement and their engagement in learning
- The effectiveness of teaching at providing the right level of challenge for all, especially in mathematics.
- The impact of leadership and management in raising attainment.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average sized primary school which takes most of its pupils from the local village, although some travel from outside Minster. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most, but not all, of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.

The school has a number of awards, including Healthy School accreditation and an International School award.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This satisfactory school is moving forward at a steady pace under the clear guidance of senior leaders. The school is particularly successful at supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils are happy at school, behave well and are very thoughtful about the needs of others. They keenly take on responsibility and make a good contribution to the community. They participate very enthusiastically in local events, such as the art festival and archaeological digs.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and this is then maintained in the rest of the school, with attainment remaining broadly average by the end of Year 6. Although there is some good teaching, much of it is satisfactory. Teachers are enthusiastic and hard-working but they do not always meet differing needs well enough, especially in mathematics where progress, while satisfactory, continues to be more uneven than in English. Teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to take responsibility so that they take an active part in lessons. In Year 6 in particular, the curriculum includes good links between subjects so that learning is made relevant and purposeful but this is not as strong in the rest of the school. Consequently, there are occasions in lessons when pupils are not engaged or motivated well enough.

Pupils benefit from good pastoral care, supported by the school's effective links with other agencies. These ensure that pupils' social and emotional needs are being met well. Consequently, pupils feel safe and they are confident that they can approach any member of staff if they have a concern and know that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken.

There are satisfactory systems for evaluating school effectiveness. This means that leaders are clear about what needs improving. A restructured management team has made a good start to improving attainment, and there have been many new initiatives that are beginning to ensure that progress is more even across the school. For example, new strategies for teaching spelling are already helping to improve skills. However, not all aspects of development planning have clear criteria for measuring success and this makes it difficult to check rigorously whether they are having the desired effect. Subject leaders play a good part in driving improvement but they do not have enough opportunities to visit lessons so that they can have a greater effect on improving teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the school has successfully demonstrated that it has a satisfactory capacity to improve in the way that it has improved attainment in English over the last two years and has reviewed and then strengthened provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they are learning more quickly.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. Leaders respond well to local needs and engage well with parents and carers to promote learning.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move satisfactory teaching and learning to good by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently plan work that is pitched at the right level for all pupils
 - giving pupils more responsibility so that they are less passive in lessons
 - giving pupils clear targets so that they know how to improve.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - setting clear success criteria for initiatives and monitoring them rigorously so that leaders can be sure that they are having the desired effect on pupils' learning and progress
 - giving subject leaders more opportunities to visit lessons so that they can contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve pupils' engagement and motivation by reviewing the curriculum to ensure that work is always interesting and relevant.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in above average rates of attendance. When pupils start school in the Reception Year, most are working at the expected levels for their age. From these starting points, pupils' satisfactory achievement means that they are prepared soundly for the next stage of their education and later life. In lessons, pupils make largely satisfactory progress. They do best in lessons when there is good challenge and opportunities to work independently. For example, in a good numeracy lesson, pupils tried hard and developed new skills quickly. This was because learning was purposeful and there were good opportunities for pupils to think like mathematicians as they quickly improved their problem solving skills. Where progress in lessons is satisfactory, it is because work is not matched well enough to differing needs. In a geography lesson where pupils learnt about climates, all pupils worked on the same task so that some were not challenged well enough. Pupils are not always motivated and engaged in lessons. For example, in a literacy lesson where pupils looked at poems, the task did not engage all pupils sufficiently and some lost interest and became noisy.

There is well-planned support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and this ensures that they do at least as well as others in lessons. Additional support outside lessons has a positive effect in Years 3 to 6 for these pupils, especially in English where they make good progress.

The pupils are a credit to the school. They write prayers for others and develop a strong sense of fairness. Pupils have a good understanding of cultures other than their own. They are respectful of each other's backgrounds and talk knowledgeably about life in different countries. They very keenly adopt healthy lifestyles and this is reflected in the Healthy School accreditation.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Members of staff work successfully to provide high-quality pastoral care. There are good links with outside agencies to secure extra help for pupils when it is needed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with increasingly good support. Additional adults are employed to support pupils who are having problems and they provide sensitive and effective help when it is needed.

Teachers make good use of resources, such as interactive whiteboards to introduce new skills. Teachers assess learning carefully and, where teaching is good, they use this information to plan what to teach next and to ensure that there is a good pace to learning. Such good practice is not evident in all lessons, especially in mathematics, and this is the main reason why much of the teaching is satisfactory. Marking often gives clear guidance to pupils about what they have done well and what they need to do better. However, target setting is not embedded across the school and this means that many pupils are unclear about the next steps in their learning.

The curriculum soundly promotes basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, but work does not always take account of pupils' interests or the different ways that they learn so that it is relevant and purposeful. This is an important factor in the lack of motivation and engagement seen in some lessons.

Clubs and visits enrich the curriculum and successfully promote pupils' personal development and enjoyment. Good partnerships with other schools have a good effect on

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learning. For example, more-able mathematicians have been able to go to workshops in a nearby secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have ensured that their ambitions and drive for improvement are satisfactorily shared by staff and the governing body. There is a good understanding of priorities and a start has been made to tackling them. However, written development planning does not set clearly measurable targets to help with checking progress. Consequently, monitoring is not rigorous enough to check that improvements have a sustained impact over time. Subject leaders are enthusiastic but are not sufficiently involved in visiting lessons so that they can help to iron out inconsistencies in teaching and learning. The governing body is supportive and is beginning to provide more challenge to the school. Governors know that they need to be more rigorous in monitoring safeguarding procedures to ensure that best practice is followed. These are satisfactory with minor discrepancies in paperwork having been resolved by the end of the inspection.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. Leaders are rigorous in dealing with discrimination and are making increasingly sharp use of data to check the progress of different groups so that any underachievement can be tackled more quickly.

Links with schools in other parts of the United Kingdom and beyond mean that pupils gain a good knowledge of their place in the wider world. This good aspect of the school's work is reflected in its well deserved International School Award.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were all in school together for the first time at the start of the inspection. Parents and carers are very pleased with the way that children have settled so quickly, with one commenting that, 'This is due to the positive attitude of staff.' Satisfactory teaching ensures that children make steady progress and their attainment is broadly average by the end of the Reception Year. Children learn to work together well and they quickly develop positive attitudes towards learning. This is because adults provide good-quality care and sensitive support to individuals. Teachers plan many interesting activities and, when learning is good, they use questioning well to extend learning. However, work is not always pitched at the right level for all children, and this slows the speed at which skills improve.

New leaders have a clear understanding of what needs improving. For example, there are clear plans to improve the outdoor area which is not used well enough to support learning. There has been some good work done over the last two years to ensure that assessments are more accurate than they were in the past. Leaders are beginning to use these assessments more sharply so that any areas of strength or weakness can be identified more quickly and action taken more promptly.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

There was a high return of questionnaires. Most parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school. Positive comments included, 'Staff have always been very approachable' and, 'My child is very happy and excited about going to school each day.' Some parents and carers are concerned about their children's progress and how the school tackles unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors saw no unacceptable behaviour and found that the school has satisfactory systems for tackling it on those occasions when it does occur. The inspection team found that progress, while satisfactory overall, is still uneven across the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Minster CE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspectors received 231 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 411 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	128	55	92	40	8	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	137	59	88	38	3	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	78	34	122	53	16	7	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	32	111	48	22	10	6	3
The teaching is good at this school	94	41	110	48	11	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	91	39	107	46	17	7	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	112	48	102	44	4	2	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	93	40	100	43	9	4	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	81	35	112	48	17	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	73	32	103	45	22	10	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	77	33	110	48	18	8	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	84	36	114	49	10	4	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	115	50	88	38	8	3	5	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



30 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Minster CE Primary School, Minster-on-Thanet CT12 4PS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work and completing the questionnaire. You were very polite and friendly. At the moment, your school provides a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving.

Some of the things we found out about your school.

- Children in the Reception classes have settled quickly and are looked after well.
- Satisfactory teaching means that you make steady progress as you move through the school.
- Your behaviour is good and you get on well together.
- All adults in school are kind and caring and they give you suitable help when you find work difficult.
- You happily take responsibility for many things. The eco-warriors do a great job in helping you to look after the environment. Well done!
- Most of your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.
- The headteacher and other leaders know what needs improving and are taking the right steps to move things forward more quickly.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure that work is pitched at the right level for all of you, and give you targets to help you to know how to improve.
- Make sure that leaders are checking that all the things they are doing to help you do better are having the desired effect and also to give those in charge of subjects more opportunities to visit lessons.
- Make sure that teachers always plan work that is interesting and gives you more opportunities to take responsibility for your own learning.

We wish you all well for the future. We hope you will help your teachers by working hard and trying to take a more active part in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead inspector

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