

# Horsmonden Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118276
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	358297
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gavin Jones

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Grant Leslie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Malcolm Hayes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Back Lane Tonbridge TN12 8JA
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@horsmonden.kent.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons. All class teachers were observed at least once. Inspectors met with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, including playtime, lunch and assembly. They looked at planning, monitoring, assessment data, a range of school policies, the minutes of governing body meetings and a range of pupils' work. They analysed 124 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 11 from staff and 71 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.

- The reasons for progress in writing, by the end of Year 2, not being better.
- Any variations in the quality of teaching which may relate to progress appearing not to be good everywhere.
- The quality of leadership and management at all levels in relation to monitoring and driving improvement.
- The extent to which pupils understand ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in British society and on a more global scale.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school which continues to grow and is currently oversubscribed. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which centre mainly on communication and language needs, is low. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one class. The school manages an after-school club, which is run by members of the non-teaching staff. The school has a range of awards which reflect its keen interest in sport and healthy living.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is an improving school that provides a good quality of education for its pupils. The full-time return of the headteacher, since the last inspection, has added stability and a more consistent vision for improvement to the leadership and management of the school. As a result, there has been an overall improvement since the last inspection. The school has not only sustained all of its good features but, more importantly, there has been an upward trend in pupils' academic performance, with attainment by the end of Year 6 being above average. Progress in writing in Years 1 and 2 lags a little behind other subjects and areas of learning. Pupils achieve well in their learning and there is consistently good teaching in the upper part of the school. However, in spite of teaching being good overall, there are elements of teachers' use of assessment during lessons that do not support progress enough. Aspects of pupils' personal development have remained good, with behaviour remaining outstanding. Attendance is high. These strengths have been due, in no small measure, to the school's excellent pastoral care and guidance it gives its pupils. In spite of this, pupils' understanding of multicultural issues is a weakness. Although they support the school and understand well the implications of their local community, their understanding of the community beyond the village is somewhat vague.

Part of the school's success is because of the well-established and broad curriculum, which is very well supported by enrichment activities. Parents and carers play a strong part in helping at school and at home with their children's learning and benefit from accessing information about their children's progress on line. They have an opportunity each year to spend time in the class with their children, seeing at first hand how they learn.

Staff have a strong commitment to ensuring every child has an equal chance to learn and succeed. Stakeholders at all levels, including the governing body, contribute well to further improvements. The good range of processes used by leaders and managers to evaluate performance has enabled the school to identify appropriate areas for improvement. It has already made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity to sustain this improvement further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in writing in Years 1 and 2 by:
  - ensuring that when pupils work independently they know what they are expected to learn and how they can judge their success
  - providing more-able pupils with challenging writing activities in a wider range of genres

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- ensuring that the proportion of pupils attaining at and above the expected levels are at least in line with national averages by July 2011.
- Establish greater consistency in the use of assessment during lessons and in marking by:
  - helping class teachers, through peer activities, to share good practice
  - using questioning more effectively in lessons to establish pupils' levels of understanding, so that they make sufficient progress.
- Enhance the promotion of community cohesion by:
  - adapting curriculum topics so that pupils experience aspects of multicultural education more regularly, and carefully evaluate its success
  - giving pupils a clearer understanding of what life is like in multicultural United Kingdom by speedily following up a proposed link with a city school
  - giving pupils a more developed understanding of their place in the global community.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Children enter the school in the Reception class with skills and understanding sometimes above those levels expected for their age. Throughout the school, pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning, with nearly all parents and carers agreeing with this. Pupils want to do well and are very adept at talking with their partners to establish and confirm their ideas. Year 2 pupils eagerly discussed their ideas for writing instructions for example. Pupils' excellent behaviour is a feature of the school and helps them in the progress they make in lessons as they are all extremely keen to do well. In some lessons, a number of younger and more-able pupils were not challenged enough and could have done even better in their writing. Nevertheless, in lessons, all pupils make satisfactory progress with a majority making good progress. For example, following good teaching in a Year 6 lesson, all pupils gained a good understanding of equivalent fractions. Again, in Year 4, a lesson on writing an explanatory letter highlighted pupils' good gains in understanding.

All pupils questioned said that they felt safe in school and knew who to turn to for help. This is underlined by the very positive views of parents and carers. Again, positive views of parents and carers support the opinion that pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle. The uptake of healthy school meals is high and a great many pupils take part in sporting club activities at lunchtime and after school. Equally positive is their contribution to their school and the local community. 'The school has a real community feel and children are proud of their school and have a genuine understanding of being kind to one another': a comment from a parent and echoed by many in the parents' and carers' questionnaires. Pupils have links with the parish, the local hospice, the village fete and the farmers' market. Not as strong are the links beyond the school. Attendance is high and reinforces that pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school. Pupils' social and moral development is good and is reflected in their excellent behaviour and attitudes. They appreciate the spiritual nature of music, art and poetry, although their cultural development is only satisfactory.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

This is an extremely caring school, where support for vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enables them to make the same good progress as other pupils. Links with the pre-school providers and further good links with secondary schools ensure that transition is as smooth as possible. The use of adult counsellors, provided by the school to support a small number of pupils who have social or emotional concerns, is again highly effective. The after-hours club, managed by the school and run very effectively by members of staff, caters for the needs of a growing group of pupils. Teaching was good during the inspection and accounts for the good progress that pupils make in their learning. Many teachers have good subject knowledge and use their interactive whiteboards well. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were looking closely at an on-screen story, from which they produced excellent descriptive writing, using a wide range of elaborate vocabulary. In some lessons, one or two teachers did not make enough opportunities to check on pupils' progress, so that they could be certain that all groups achieved well. In the same way, a small number of teachers did not relate their marking to how pupils might improve their work.

Teachers put the good curriculum into effect well. There is good application of links between subjects, for example the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in science lessons. Again, in Year 1, a theme of toys encompasses history, design, science and personal experiences. However, the application and use of ICT is

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underdeveloped in other topic areas. In support of pupils' workplace skills, older pupils work at 'What money means' lessons and a range of activities support their personal development. 'Freddy Fitness' has been a help to pupils in Years 1 to 6 clarifying choices about healthy lifestyles. The curriculum is enriched with residential visits, other visits and visitors and special days and weeks devoted to areas of learning. Virtually all pupils attend at least one of the many after-school clubs.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Challenging targets have helped the school to raise pupils' attainment over the recent past. Staff are committed and enthusiastic and take actions that support the school's vision for further success. This is driven by the well-structured school development plan, based firmly on the school's good self-evaluation activities. However, it does not always focus explicitly on improving rates of progress. Recent improvements in mathematics, although not fully embedded across the school, are beginning to have further positive effects on progress. The management of teaching and learning is good and is reflected in improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. However, insufficient focus is given to the learning and progress of different groups during lesson observations by leaders. The school is well served by its range of positive partnerships, which promote learning and well-being. It has, for example been supported in introducing money-management lessons to support pupils' life skills. It has introduced a counselling programme to support vulnerable pupils and the 'Friends of the School' have made significant contributions to the school's educational resources. Equally successful is the good engagement with parents and carers. This has some excellent aspects including the setting up of a virtual learning environment which allows parents and carers to access assessments and information about their children's progress. Parents and carers are universally pleased with the care shown to their children. The school's safeguarding procedures are good and regularly checked. Child-protection training is up to date and risk assessments are made for all visits and visitors. One or two minor clerical issues were noted and the school has made simple changes to its processes in this respect.

The school is a strong cohesive community and its work has a very good impact on the local community. Recently, for example, a large group of Women's Institute members came to the school each week to listen to children read. Pupils have had opportunities, in the past, to engage with communities beyond the locality, but this has not been planned for the current school year. The work of the governing body is good with some excellent features. It is well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses, with the self-evaluation committee now particularly effective in being increasingly able to hold the

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school to account, such as in requesting changes to the school's tracking information. Tracking progress is now carried out effectively, so that all groups achieve well by the end of Year 6. The performance of groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is tracked effectively which ensures that all pupils are treated fairly and have equality of opportunity.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is successful in laying down secure foundations for future learning. Children's skills and understanding fluctuate year on year, as they enter from the adjacent nursery. They make good and sometimes outstanding progress in both their learning and their personal development, so that they are prepared well for the move to Year 1. At this point, their attainment is well above that seen nationally, in many aspects, for children of this age. Their communication, language and literacy skills are weaker aspects. The experienced team are familiar with and embrace early years philosophy. They ensure that children have opportunities to make choices in their learning as well as opportunities to be taught directly. The team are at pains to generate successful links with parents and carers. While planning is carried out carefully, there are sometimes missed opportunities to plan more effectively for the use of the outside area. Here, opportunities are missed to link with different areas of learning. Equally, some of the resources here are tired looking and somewhat unappealing.

In spite of this, this part of the school's provision is well managed. Self-evaluation is accurate and the action plan is relevant and based on sound information. Volunteers are used effectively and many visits and visitors enhance provision. Safeguarding is good and all children are very well cared for and safe. Children are known well by staff and incidental observations ensure that their learning and progress are tracked well.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Most of the comments on questionnaires were positive and reflected the good levels of satisfaction in the school's work across a number of areas. All but one parent and carer felt that their children enjoyed school and were safe. Most said that the school helped their children gain a healthy lifestyle and that they were kept informed about progress. A few did not feel that their children were well prepared for the future or that their own suggestions and concerns were not taken into account. Discussions with pupils, reference to their attainment levels in basic subjects being above the national average, their high levels of attendance and the range of work related to real life activities, indicated that pupils were prepared well for their next stage of education. Evidence of parents and carers receiving a text message if their children are ill at school and assessment data being placed on an internet platform accessible to parents and carers are just two examples of the school responding to the suggestions of parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Horsmonden 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 inspection team received 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	65	43	35	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	59	46	37	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	35	72	58	7	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	44	53	43	8	6	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	60	48	51	41	8	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	61	49	51	41	8	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	56	48	39	2	2	0	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)	57	46	48	39	6	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	43	57	46	7	6	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	46	53	43	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	43	53	43	9	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	82	66	36	29	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	68	33	27	6	5	0	0

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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



18 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Horsmonden Primary School, Horsmonden Kent TN12 8JA**

You may remember that three inspectors came to visit your school very recently. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and I am writing to tell you what we found out. You go to a school that takes particularly good care of you and provides you with a good education.

- You make good progress in your work and by the end of Year 6 your attainment is above average.
- Everybody in the school looks after you extremely well and this makes you feel very safe.
- Your behaviour and your attendance are both excellent.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and your parents and carers agree.
- You know a good deal about staying healthy and fit.

We have asked the school to do three things to help it improve even further.

- Improve the progress you make in writing when you are in Years 1 and 2.
- Help teachers to check your progress in lessons and tell you more often how to improve when they mark your books.
- Help you understand what life is like in other parts of the country and the world.

All of you can help by continuing to behave and attend at the highest level.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones

Lead inspector

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