

# Chilham, St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118665
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	358415
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	97
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roy Lincoln
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Williams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	School Hill Canterbury CT4 8DE
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<b>Email address</b>	office@st-marys-canterbury.kent.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons involving five teachers, and held meetings with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, representative staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, assessment information and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 45 parents and carers, and scrutinised others from staff and pupils.

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

- How effectively does pupils' achievement in Reception and Key Stage 1 prepare them for Key Stage 2 work?
- How well do pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress?
- What is the impact of the school's links with the community on pupils' personal development and achievement?

## Information about the school

This rural school is much smaller than most primary schools. Pupils are mainly from White British backgrounds. A range of other heritages are represented in very small numbers, including a small minority from Traveller backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Apart from in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children are taught in the Reception class, pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school after Reception is high.

The school has undergone a period of turbulence since the last inspection, with temporary teachers covering for staff on leave, including through serious illness. The headteacher took up his post in November 2010, a few weeks before the inspection, following a period of acting headship while the previous headteacher was on leave. The school works in an informal partnership with four other rural schools to share staff development and provide some joint events for pupils. The school has achieved Healthy School 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: how good is the school?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

Chilham, St Mary's has continued to provide a satisfactory quality of education through a turbulent period. It is a caring school which places itself at the very heart of village life. Pupils gain from and make a strong contribution to local events. While still in line with national averages, pupils' attainment by Year 6 has shown a slight improvement since the last inspection. Now that senior leadership appointments have been made and the headteacher has established purposeful leadership, the early signs of improvement are evident. The school's ethos is based firmly on its Christian values. Assemblies provide valuable opportunities for personal reflection and celebration of school life. Staff are sensitive to the needs and backgrounds of pupils and provide them with good levels of support and guidance. Consequently, parents and carers are very supportive of the school, confident that their children are known as individuals and that problems are dealt with quickly and effectively. As a result of this good care, pupils feel safe and behaviour is good.

Children get off to a good start in Reception where they develop an enthusiasm for learning. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their education, with many talking excitedly about the wide range of opportunities on offer, such as clubs, residential visits and the things they learn in lessons. Although they are keen to do well, they do not always present their work neatly because this has not been a school priority. During the interim leadership arrangements in the last academic year, improvements were made in pupils' achievement throughout the school, particularly in writing which is now stronger than reading. Progress in lessons is often good, but historically the lack of continuity caused by staff changes means that progress overall is only satisfactory. Some fragility in staffing remains in Key Stage 1. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable make satisfactory progress, in line with their peers. Pupils have some good opportunities to develop their understanding through practical, problem-based activities. However, they do not always consolidate these sufficiently through individual practice or by using their literacy and numeracy skills enough in other subjects.

The headteacher and governing body have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are moving quickly to plan for future development. The governing body has successfully developed the accommodation since the last inspection, but its members are aware that they have not been sufficiently analytical in reviewing pupils' achievement to ensure that resources are most effectively deployed. Time spent on day-to-day organisational issues has reduced opportunities for teachers to develop their roles of subject leadership. Now that staffing is becoming more stable, teachers are able to take advantage of opportunities offered through links with other schools locally. This is helping them to identify and share best practice and to address weaknesses, such as inconsistencies in marking and the teaching of reading. Many staff are new to their

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leadership roles, but have the appropriate skills and a strong determination to improve the school further. They are using assessment information to ensure that focused action is taken when a pupil does not make the expected progress. Taken together, this means that the school's current satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement is beginning to improve.

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

- Accelerate pupils' learning and progress and raise the quality of teaching to good or better by:
  - identifying and sharing the most effective approaches, particularly in the teaching of reading
  - ensuring that marking more consistently identifies for pupils how their work can be improved
  - giving pupils more extended opportunities to consolidate their learning by practising new literacy and numeracy skills for themselves, and by using their skills in other subjects
  - improving pupils' fluency in writing by developing and implementing a whole-school policy for handwriting and presentation.
- Develop leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the governing body is more proactive in monitoring the school's progress against its raising attainment plan
  - strengthening the role of all teachers in evaluating and promoting the subjects for which they have a responsibility.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. They get on well with one another which enables them to collaborate and work effectively in pairs or small groups. As a result, there is a strong atmosphere of learning in classrooms and pupils work well when required to work independently. They try hard and are confident and mature in the way they ask for help because of the good and trusting relationships they have with teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils particularly enjoy practical activities. For example as observed in Year 2, where pupils were developing their understanding of measurement by finding objects around the classroom approximately one metre in length.

Pupils' attainment when they join Year 1 varies from year to year, but is generally around the expectations for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school from their starting points, including those pupils who join the school part way through their primary education. This was not the case until recently when pupils began Year 3 with below average attainment, meaning that they have had to make up lost ground through Key Stage 2. Attainment seen in lessons and in pupils' books is broadly average, giving pupils a sound basis for their secondary education and future lives. Pupils make the necessary progress in developing spelling, punctuation, grammar and calculation because they regularly undertake exercises to help them to do this. However, they do not use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills well enough in other subjects. For example, by

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undertaking longer pieces of writing in history or religious education. A technical failure meant that the computer suite was not in use during the inspection. However, pupils generally have good access to computers and develop competent information and communication technology skills by Year 6.

Pupils are proud of their school and say that there is no bullying because the school's family atmosphere helps them to manage situations for themselves. However, they know that an adult will deal with any issues quickly and effectively if this is needed. Pupils are polite and considerate of one another, and thoroughly enjoy taking responsibility, for example asking to run their own playground club at lunchtime. Changes made to the school council are giving pupils more responsibility for running meetings, and help them to develop their understanding of democracy and citizenship. Pupils respond well to opportunities to develop their understanding of multicultural issues. This is often promoted through joint activities with other schools such as a Bollywood Day. During the inspection pupils tasted examples of a Mediterranean diet as part of their study of Greece. The school has good procedures in place to promote and reward good attendance. This has resulted in improved rates of attendance and a sharp reduction in the proportion of pupils persistently absent in the last six months. Poor rates of attendance had previously slowed the progress and attainment of some pupils.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<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

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## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and present lessons in a lively, interesting way which engages pupils well. They provide work which is matched closely to the needs of the different ages and abilities in each class. Sometimes the learning objectives for the lesson or for group tasks are not sufficiently precise for the end of lesson review to be fully effective in evaluating the learning which has taken place. Teachers and teaching assistants use probing questions, particularly in group work, which help pupils to articulate their thinking and develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations that they will work quickly, although there is still room for tasks to be even more challenging for all groups of pupils. Marking is regular and gives good feedback to pupils on what they have achieved, but is less helpful in raising expectations by explaining how pupils could improve their work further. In the best examples time is given for pupils to respond to the teacher's comments, but this is not consistent across the school.

The curriculum is broad and makes a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development. It has some good features, but it is not yet sufficiently focused to enable pupils to make faster progress, particularly in acquiring good basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils greatly appreciate activities such as 'Outdoor Tuesday' when pupils in Years 3 and 4 developed their understanding about different species of trees in the grounds of Chilham Castle. For example, they estimated their heights using surveying techniques. A strong feature of the curriculum is the good use made of the local area and links with other schools to provide opportunities which the school alone would not be able to provide. For example, pupils learn about many aspects of village life through visits to the church, fire station, post office, farm, shop and tea rooms. The school runs a very wide range of extra-curricular activities for a small school, effectively meeting and extending pupils' interests. Almost all pupils attend sports clubs, making a strong contribution to their understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and reflected in the Healthy School status.

Pupils are well known by adults, and are open and confident to talk through any issues which concern them. Consequently, prompt action is taken when additional support or care is needed. The school works well with a range of external agencies, such as the Traveller Support Service or counselling services, when expertise is required beyond that available in the school. This ensures that all groups of pupils make the expected progress. The school successfully integrates new pupils into the school, providing a calm basis for their learning and progress. The breakfast club is popular and gives those pupils attending a good social start to the day by taking breakfast and playing games together.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

All staff share a commitment to improving provision and opportunities for pupils. Staff morale is high and they are enthusiastic about the future. Under the strong guidance of the headteacher, teachers are using assessment data to quickly identify when a pupil is not making sufficient progress. As a result, they provide short, focused interventions which are proving valuable in accelerating pupils' progress. Senior leaders and the governing body have an accurate understanding of the quality of the school's work, and now that leadership has been secured, staff and members of the governing body have begun to replace interim development plans and to plan more explicitly for the future, in order to make governance more effective. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and all relevant training has been undertaken. Parents and carers are regularly invited to assemblies to celebrate pupils' achievements, helping them to keep in touch with their children's experiences in school. The productive links with parents and carers, the village community and the parish make a strong contribution to community cohesion locally. Pupils have been introduced to life abroad through links with schools in Uganda and Germany, but their understanding of life in different parts of the United Kingdom is less strong. Chilham, St Mary's is an inclusive and cohesive school and actively promotes equality of opportunity so that there is no significant difference in the performance of different groups of pupils.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's attainment overall when they join the school varies considerably from year to year, but is generally below age-expected levels. Children make good progress and usually start Year 1 with broadly average attainment. Children and their needs are known well by the staff, helping children to be settled and happy in their learning. Teaching is good, with an appropriate balance of activities led by an adult and those chosen by children themselves. Adults regularly encourage children to talk about what they are doing, developing their language and communication skills. They expertly use children's interests to develop learning. For example, the enthusiasm of a few children for football was used very well to develop their skills in recognising and writing numbers. While children sustain interest in their chosen activities well, on occasion adults miss opportunities to ensure that children are clear about what they are trying to do and to prompt further discovery. Good leadership and management are seen in the use of regular assessments to guide the next steps for children's learning and to keep parents and carers involved in activities undertaken in school. The home-school diaries are used very well to ensure that the teacher keeps in touch with activities out of school which are impacting on pupils' development.

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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:	
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

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and their child's experience. There is common agreement that children enjoy school, feel safe and that the school is led well. There is some concern about the levels of progress that children make and how well the school meets individual needs. Inspection evidence finds that pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving, and that individual needs are well known and catered for.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chilham St Mary's Church of England 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 97 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	78	9	20	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	76	10	22	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	44	21	47	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	42	20	44	4	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	21	47	22	49	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	53	19	42	0	0	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	47	20	44	3	7	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)	23	51	17	38	4	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	56	16	36	3	7	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	47	20	44	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	40	24	53	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	60	15	33	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	64	15	33	0	0	1	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](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.**



29 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Chilham, St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Canterbury CT4 8DE**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and found the information you gave us very valuable. This letter is to explain to you what we found out.

You enjoy school and get on well, and this makes the school a happy place for you to work and play together. You behave well and help new pupils to settle in quickly. You help one another around the school and play a full part in village life. You know how to look after yourselves and to stay safe, fit and healthy. Teachers take good care of you and plan topics and practical activities which really help you to enjoy your learning, such as on 'Outdoor Tuesday'. Your teachers and teaching assistants help you to make the expected progress, particularly in your writing. You have a very wide range of clubs to choose from so that there is something of interest to everyone.

We have judged that yours is a satisfactory school under the leadership of the new headteacher. Your attainment is average and we have made some suggestions for teachers to help you to do even better. We have asked them to share the ways which help you to learn best, particularly in reading, and to give you more ideas about how you could improve your work further. We also think that you should have the opportunity to do more work for yourselves and practise your writing skills in other subjects. Sometimes your work is not as neat as it could be and teachers will be developing a whole-school approach to presentation and handwriting. You can help by telling teachers which activities you find most useful, and remember to ask if there is anything you do not understand.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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