

# Bodiam Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 114529            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | East Sussex       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 357564            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 2–3 February 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | David Marshall    |

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> | 75                                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Barbara Knapper                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Margaret Williams                 |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 16 June 2008                      |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Bodiam<br>East Sussex<br>TN32 5UH |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01580830342                       |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. During the inspection, ten lessons and six teachers were observed. Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, questionnaires from 36 parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies for assessment in raising pupils' progress, especially that of the more able.
- Pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of the school's measures to enhance their cultural development.
- The school's progress in achieving its aim of enhancing the curriculum to enable pupils to use their problem solving skills.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels are enabling continuity and development, in the light of the changes in the school leadership and the partnership with another local school.

## Information about the school

Bodiam is a much-smaller than-average school in a rural community in an area of outstanding natural beauty. There are four classes with mixed-age groups, with some year groups having very few children. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The vast majority of pupils come from White British heritage and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. A much higher number of pupils than average join and leave the school other than at the normal time. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class.

A new headteacher, who is the headteacher of both Bodiam and another local primary school, was appointed in September 2010. The two schools are in a partnership, with two separate governing bodies.

The school has the Artsmark Gold award and the Activemark. It is an extended school, with an after-school club, Bodiam Buddies.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

Bodiam is a satisfactory, but rapidly improving, school. It has a number of strengths. In the last few months, the newly appointed headteacher, with the governing body and staff, has initiated many changes to move the school forward more effectively. The wide range of systems and strategies put into place to address the school's well-identified priorities have begun to be successful, but it is too soon to see the true impact in terms of the pupils' attainment. The school's rigour in implementing change, already very evident in the improvements in the learning environment, enhanced curriculum opportunities and fully shared expectations, shows it is well placed to build on its strengths and has a good capacity to improve further. One parent summed up the views of many by writing, 'The school is progressing well with its new strong leadership. The head is very driven and I know that Bodiam Primary will benefit from this. My child is very happy and works hard at school thanks to the staff and the new leadership.'

When children start school, they immediately make good progress in the Reception class. However, as the school acknowledges, higher up the school there are occasional missed opportunities. The large number of pupils joining in Years 4, 5 and 6 has an adverse impact on the standards pupils reach in national tests by the time they leave the school. However, the consistently effective support provided, through the careful focus on the needs of these incoming pupils, enables them all to make sound progress. In the rest of the school, progress, while satisfactory, varies due to some inconsistencies in teaching.

Staff have created attractive classrooms with imaginative displays and therefore provide a positive learning environment. In many lessons, teachers provide appropriately challenging activities, move the lesson along at a good pace and have high expectations of all their pupils. As a result, progress made by pupils in these lessons is good. As yet, this is not consistent throughout the school as assessment is not always used effectively to ensure that work is always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more-able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support from teaching assistants and the carefully tailored activities provided for them. ♦

The curriculum is being revised, based on the staff's shared planning. Although all subjects are soundly covered, and there are a good range of additional activities, visits and visitors, there are inconsistencies in how the plans are used to enhance pupils' mathematical and language skills. As the school acknowledges, these initiatives have to become embedded so that they are not reliant on the quality of the individual staff members planning for their implementation.

Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated. Teachers know pupils and their families well and positive relationships contribute to pupils' wider personal development. Another reason that pupils are making improved progress and are achieving

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better is because attendance has improved and is now average. Almost all pupils now attend regularly and punctuality is good.

The school does much to promote its place in the local community. The parent-teacher association does much for the school and is greatly appreciated. The school's audit of community cohesion, undertaken by governors and staff, is underpinned by the partnership between the two schools. ♦ Pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom are well developed.

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

- Ensure that by January 2012, changes in the curriculum are embedded so that:
  - pupils are given the maximum opportunities to practise and reinforce their skills and learning in English and mathematics
  - exciting and relevant activities that are linked across subject areas are present in all lessons.
- Ensure the pace and demand of teaching are consistent across the school to meet the needs and enthusiasms of all pupils by:
  - embedding the changes in the use of assessment, so that pupils are offered the right challenge in all lessons
  - extending opportunities for staff to observe good practice in the school.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

|          |
|----------|
| <b>3</b> |
|----------|

Pupils generally join the school with the skills expected, but there are many variations in the small cohorts. All pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress, and in some classes, progress is good. ♦ Although the rate of progress of all groups of pupils has improved recently, the progress observed was not yet consistently good due to unevenness when work in lessons was not sufficiently challenging. Pupils' excellent behaviour and confidence lay a sound foundation for their learning.

In the lessons observed that were good or better, pupils were very attentive in class, worked together well and made good progress. In an outstanding lesson in the Year 5/6 class, pupils really considered their responses carefully when bearing in mind the work that they and others had done in a previous lesson. The teacher carefully and tactfully chose different pupils to respond, and the others all appreciated why. In mathematics, pupils' work within lessons illustrated their growing confidence in basic and more advanced number calculations and problem solving. The vibrant school displays and the award of Artsmark Gold are testament to how well pupils achieve in art, and the assembly, where every pupil knew the African song, shows pupils' musical development is good. Improved academic grounding, combined with their growing confidence, prepares pupils satisfactorily for their next school and beyond. ♦

♦ Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They respect others and socialise very well. They appreciate the good opportunities to participate in sporting activities that encourage their positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy, recognised by the Activemark award. The school successfully instills in the pupils a good spiritual, social

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and moral understanding, which accounts for their excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to school. Pupils say they feel very safe in the school, as they know that adults are very mindful of any concerns they might have. The school council is active in influencing provision of play equipment and fund-raising events.

*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                      | 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>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

## How effective is the provision?

In most lessons observed, pupils were well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and were very keen to please their teachers and other adults. In the last few weeks, due to the renewed focus on achievement, staff's higher expectations of pupils' progress have begun to be reflected in the more challenging targets being set for individuals. However, this is not yet embedded across the school and in some year groups, teachers do not yet take the opportunities to guide pupils in what they need to do to improve their skills. The most effective lessons are planned to be challenging and fun. This was clear in an English lesson in the Year 1/2 class on writing a conversation. The pupils were enthusiastic and sensible as they reflected on their use of speech bubbles. However, there are not yet adequate opportunities for this good practice to be observed and shared.

The school curriculum is planned in detail to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning. It is being revised to encourage creativity and practical learning experiences. These approaches are now being developed to ensure that pupils' precise needs in relation to their skills in English and mathematics are properly covered. Again, effective use of this

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planning, although not yet consistently applied, was seen in the language development work in the Year 3/4 class on their topic on India. The large alphabet sheets the pupils have produced on display across the classroom are testament to how much they have learned.

◆ Throughout the school, very positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the supportive ethos for study. Good use of praise encourages pupils' attentiveness and hard work. The care, patience and understanding shown by staff to vulnerable pupils result in them attending and coping well and are an inspiration to all others in the school. The impact of the school's good support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils' excellent standards of behaviour and social skills.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>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?

There is a common sense of purpose, clear drive and ambition to improve among leaders, staff and governors. The partnership that has developed recently with another local school through the excellent guidance of the headteacher and the very effective support of the governing body has begun to move the school forward at a much improved pace. There is a clearer understanding of strengths of the school and areas that need more development. The school's self-evaluation is well documented and is effective due to its rigour. This has resulted in a fully shared improvement plan with challenging targets and clear guidance for raising standards. Good teamwork is playing a valuable part in moving the school forward. The school administrator is a considerable asset to the school and helps to ensure the smooth running of the school from day to day. ◆

The governing body challenges decisions and requests explanations about the outcomes for pupils. The school makes strenuous efforts to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. Everyone is valued and supported to achieve their best, irrespective of their social, faith or ethnic group. As they are aware, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve better than others and the school is working hard to make sure that all pupils make consistently good progress.

◆ Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are thorough and members of staff are well trained. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are carried out regularly. The school does much to promote its place in the local community and works effectively with many local businesses. The contribution of the parent teacher association is good, as is the work of a range of local community helpers. The audit of community cohesion undertaken by the school is underpinned by a careful analysis of its



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context in partnership with another school. Clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding of national and global perspectives. The links with a school in an inner-London borough are especially effective in preparing pupils for living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom.

*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:<br>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>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>3</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their schooling in the Reception class and achieve well. They settle happily into school because of good links with parents and carers and because of the strong nurturing environment. Staff make every effort to make all children feel welcome. As one parent observed, summing up the comments of many, 'We are happy and my child is happy since starting school, not having known anyone. He was made very welcome and settled in very well.' The good parental relationships are maintained on a daily basis and through meetings, so parents and carers understand how their children learn. ♦

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well and clear priorities are set for improvement. There are very detailed plans in place that will be brought to fruition soon to enhance provision and make a much greater space available. ♦ Planning is generally good because careful account is taken of the regular ongoing assessments of children's progress. Effective teamwork provides good routines, high expectations of behaviour and achievement, and excellent relationships. Consequently, children develop well personally and engage well with their learning.

Stimulating and interesting activities are provided and there is a suitable mix of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Children's language skills are being

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developed well, with a clear focus on vocabulary. The classroom is very small, and inhibits children's activities currently. However, the detailed plans for additions to the building are soon to be completed and this will afford them much greater space. The outdoor area is excellent and used very effectively to support learning. Children thoroughly enjoy learning in the outside area, where activities are carefully enhanced by the use of richer language, such as signs and questions, and by linking the tasks carefully to those taking place indoors.

*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

The majority of parents or carers who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team were happy with the school. They consider that the school has benefited from the recent partnership with another school, and has a dedicated team of staff and a warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere. The majority feel their children make adequate progress. Inspection evidence shows that all pupils are now making improved progress and that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Parents and carers are particularly impressed with the pastoral support their children receive. Inspectors fully endorse these views. The small number of constructive parental criticisms, particularly with regard to the school helping their child to have a healthy lifestyle and dealing with unacceptable behaviour from pupils, were shared and discussed with the headteacher. Evidence shows the school works hard to make sure pupils have a good understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors judge that pupils' behaviour is excellent thanks to the school's careful guidance.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bodiam 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 75 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 27             | 75 | 9     | 25 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 25             | 69 | 11    | 31 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress  | 21             | 58 | 13    | 36 | 2        | 6  | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 19             | 53 | 16    | 44 | 1        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 20             | 56 | 16    | 44 | 1        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 20             | 56 | 16    | 44 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 18             | 50 | 18    | 50 | 0        | 0  | 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) | 17             | 47 | 16    | 44 | 3        | 8  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 21             | 58 | 15    | 42 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 22             | 61 | 9     | 25 | 4        | 11 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 19             | 53 | 15    | 42 | 2        | 6  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 23             | 64 | 10    | 28 | 2        | 6  | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 21             | 58 | 15    | 42 | 0        | 0  | 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      | 59  | 35   | 3            | 3          |
| Primary schools      | 9   | 44   | 39           | 7          |
| Secondary schools    | 13  | 36   | 41           | 11         |
| Sixth forms          | 15  | 39   | 43           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 35  | 43   | 17           | 5          |
| Pupil referral units | 21  | 42   | 29           | 9          |
| All schools          | 13  | 43   | 37           | 8          |

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Bodiam Church of England Primary School, Robertsbridge, TN32 5UH**

I am writing to thank you for your help when we inspected your school and to let you know what we found out. We spent time in some of your lessons and talked to some of you. We also looked at the work of the school and talked to many of the staff and some of the school governors. The work of your school is satisfactory, but there are many things that are getting better; these are some of the things it does particularly well.

- The way your school works with parents is good.
- The way you behave is excellent and you work and play well together.
- You feel safe at school and you know how to be healthy.
- You help your school to be a happy and better place to play and learn.
- You have a very good understanding of right and wrong and look after each other well.

We have agreed with the staff that there are a number of things that can be improved.

- We have asked them to make sure that you are all given the best opportunities to learn no matter which class you are in. We know your teachers are all working hard to be the best they can be and we want them to learn from each other as well. ♦
- We have asked the teachers to speed up the changes in their lesson planning to give you even more opportunities to learn.

You must continue to listen carefully and take note of what they say so that you can be helped to make good progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall Lead inspector

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