

Cranbrook Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118600
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358397
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Jon Carter

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Tiffin
Headteacher	Peter Wibroe
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed eleven lessons taught by seven teachers. Inspectors held meetings with school leaders and managers, members of the governing body and two groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at assessment information, the school's analysis of pupils' progress, curriculum plans, minutes of governing body meetings and many other documents. They analysed the responses from the 53 questionnaires received from parents and carers, as well as those from 102 pupils and 12 staff.

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

- The extent to which the school is successful in identifying and addressing the needs of potentially vulnerable pupils so that they make progress at the same rate as their peers.
- How effectively the school has ensured that those pupils affected by weak teaching in the past have been able to make accelerated progress.
- How effectively the school has developed strategies to address how well pupils, especially boys, make progress in writing.
- The extent to which leaders and managers responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage plan successful interventions to improve outcomes in children's numeracy skills, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development.

Information about the school

Cranbrook Church of England School is an average sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British or Gypsy Roma heritages. The school has a smaller than average proportion of pupils from other minority ethnic heritages and many of these speak English as an additional language. Few pupils are at a very early stage of development in their English speaking skills. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the larger groups of whom have moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one Reception class. The school holds the Healthy Schools status and Quality Mark award. The on-site children's centre and the before- and after-school care run by a private provider were not included in this inspection.

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

Cranbrook Church of England Primary is a good school. Parents and carers are very positive about the school, and speak highly of the ways in which they are included in the life of the school and the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. One comment typical of the views expressed was, 'We have been very impressed by the open communication encouraged between parents and teachers.'

Pupils benefit from an outstanding curriculum which is supporting their basic skills development at a rapidly improving pace. The school's successes in this area are recognised by the Quality Mark. As a result, pupils' achievement is good and they make good progress in their learning. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average and rising fast. Progress in English is often better than in mathematics because pupils' reading skills are improving quickly due to effective whole-school strategies. A significant strength is that teachers make good use of information about what pupils know and can do as well as what they find more difficult. However, while most marking of work is regular and of good quality, the use of written feedback by pupils is inconsistent. Staff do not always ensure that pupils have enough time to respond to comments and develop their learning further. While good planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage often ensures learning activities match children's needs well, children are not always made aware of what they are learning and the next steps.

Pupils' good personal development is reflected in their outstanding contribution to the school and wider community through their active and effective school council, the highly valued support they give younger pupils and links with the elderly in their community. Pupils' attendance is average, but progress for a few pupils who do not attend regularly enough, particularly from minority ethnic heritages, is slower than that of their peers as a result. Strategies to improve attendance have been somewhat successful, but the rate of improvement is too slow.

Leaders have successfully improved the quality of education since the previous inspection, when the school was judged satisfactory. Good quality monitoring of teaching and learning has quickly identified and tackled any poor performance. Actions taken to ensure that pupils affected by poor teaching make accelerated progress have been successful, particularly in literacy. The governing body and leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. Self-evaluation procedures are rigorous and effective. School leaders, supported by a governing body which deploys its expertise very effectively, demonstrate a good capacity to secure further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency with which pupils reflect upon and make use of teachers' feedback about their work, so that it has a more positive impact on their future learning and progress, by:
 - sharing existing good practice more widely across the school
 - establishing a clear model of good practice in each key stage
 - monitoring the impact on pupils' learning and progress at classroom, leadership and governing body levels.
- Accelerate the rate of improvement of pupils' attendance by:
 - establishing a culture of individual and shared responsibility for improvement amongst parents and carers, pupils, staff and the governing body, which emphasises the positive impact of good attendance on pupils' learning and progress
 - setting attendance targets for all pupils which reflect high expectations
 - identifying and monitoring closely the minority of pupils at risk of falling below the threshold of average attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress in lessons and very much enjoy the variety of activities offered. While learning how to record data and draw graphs, one Year 3 pupil expressed clearly, 'Maths is my favourite subject in this class; it is very interesting.' Planning ensures all pupils, but especially boys, enjoy stimulating and engaging themes that have successfully secured their good progress in writing. The level of enthusiasm achieved has particularly helped accelerate the progress for pupils who have missed out on good quality teaching in the past. This was especially well illustrated in a Year 6 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, where meaningful links built on their earlier English lesson. The pupils were just as keen to complete their story as they were to use ICT to present it.

Gifted and talented pupils benefit from being with older peers in mixed-age-group classes. Consequently, their progress is almost always good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress at rates similar to their peers due to the good support they receive from teaching assistants in class and in small groups. The progress of pupils from Gypsy Roma heritages is often affected by below average attendance. Boys and girls make similarly good progress because they are engaged by well-chosen learning activities.

Pupils demonstrate their good adoption of healthy lifestyles through their enthusiastic participation in physical education lessons and range of active sports during lunchtime and after school. The school is recognised for this and pupils' positive attitudes to healthy eating, through its Healthy Schools status. Pupils' strong spiritual and cultural development is supported through well-established connections with schools away from the local area and abroad. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of life outside their rural community.

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While pupils feel safe and well looked after and behaviour is good, they report that a small number of pupils occasionally engage in aggressive behaviour in the playground. However, they say any issues are acted upon quickly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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?

The outstanding curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of the school's mixed-age-group classes. Imaginative topics and memorable experiences engage and enthuse pupils, as seen in the Key Stage 1 pupils' models of the town experiencing the 'Great Fire of Cranbrook'. Excellent links between subjects ensure pupils apply their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well, preparing them effectively for the next stage of their education. Enrichment activities, from book week to school productions, are fully integrated, strongly promoting pupils' personal development and subject knowledge. Work on Dickens, in Year 6, exploits the school's cultural connection with a Gravesend school and leads to a summer production of 'Oliver'. The high levels of enthusiasm generated by the curriculum promote such engagement that many choose to continue their learning at home. A wide variety of clubs and activities enhance the curriculum further and are very well attended. There is a particular emphasis on music, often leading to performances to the wider community.

Pupils are cared for and looked after well, particularly potentially vulnerable pupils who receive highly personalised and effective help with their learning or emotional needs. The

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school works effectively with external agencies to ensure pupils are protected from harm. It provides additional support to individuals experiencing social, emotional or behavioural difficulties to maintain a fully inclusive ethos without needing to regularly resort to exclusion. Through the work of the parent and carer support adviser, pupils' attendance has risen slowly and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has fallen. However, responsibility for improving attendance is not widely shared. Pupils with below average attendance do not receive targets for improvement and their parents and carers are not routinely informed about how much their attendance differs from that considered acceptable by the school.

In most lessons, good teaching ensures learning activities are matched well to pupils' differing skills and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-focused support from adults. More-able pupils are stretched and challenged very effectively. Teachers routinely identify and make use of opportunities to engage pupils in writing where this would not otherwise be the focus of the lesson. They manage their classrooms and pupils' behaviour well, making good use of learning space, responding positively and calmly to bring pupils back on task where necessary. Pupils' work is regularly and comprehensively assessed. Marking usually identifies clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work. However, the impact this has on pupils' future learning is not consistent because teachers' expectations about how pupils will use and respond to this information vary across year groups in each key stage.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The cohesive staff team subscribe collectively to the common drive, ambition and vision of 'Developing every child, engaging parents and carers and the community and valuing every human being'. Collaborative working is well-established and all staff contribute to planning for future school improvement under the strong and focused leadership of the headteacher. Teaching quality is rigorously monitored and feedback to staff is extremely detailed and developmental.

The governing body has a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and uses its expertise to ensure leaders are well supported and challenged. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and risk assessment systems are mostly well developed. Constructive links with outside agencies ensure timely assistance is given to pupils and families in need. The school routinely tracks and monitors the progress of potentially vulnerable children. Staff's good knowledge of pupils' individual needs ensures that those, for example, who are known to be eligible for

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free school meals, receive good support and learn and develop at similar rates to their peers. The school promotes equality and seeks to eliminate any discrimination effectively, resulting in few racist incidents.

The school has a good understanding of the social, ethnic and religious diversity of the area it serves. Pupils' development of tolerance and understanding of life in communities other than their own is good. Consequently, the school's contribution to the promotion of community cohesion is good. The school provides parents and carers with a good range of information and signposts other resources appropriately. The good relationships built up with many were illustrated well by parents' and carers' good attendance at an assembly during the inspection.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in most areas of learning and the majority work within the goals they are expected to achieve by the start of Year 1. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers and any differences in achievement between girls and boys are very small. Effective monitoring and self-evaluation have enabled leaders to quickly identify and address the relatively slower progress seen last year in children's knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. However, problem solving and numeracy skills are still developing less quickly than other aspects of learning which are accelerating. Enjoyable practical activities, such as a treasure hunt in the sandpit, have the potential to move children's learning on quickly. Nevertheless, progress is sometimes limited because whole-class teaching does not always focus sufficiently on preparing children by building their numeracy skills. There are few visual resources to support the recognition and use of number in the outdoor area.

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Children show a well developed ability to cooperate and work together; relationships are strong. Children keenly engage in learning and show concentration and persistence. They demonstrate good levels of independence and responsibility for planning their own learning, for example by identifying questions they would like to find the answers to during 'topic' work. Leadership and management are effective. Adults have a good knowledge of the abilities and progress of each child because they make good use of observation and questioning for assessment. Tracking systems are comprehensive and robust. Good planning is securely based on information about children's current skills and knowledge; learning activities are purposeful and structured well. Good links with local pre-school providers are helping to develop common assessment practices to further enhance already good transition arrangements for children transferring into school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires was below average. Additional written comments were mainly positive and regularly indicated satisfaction with the progress their children were making, the good relationships between pupils, staff, parents and carers, and the provision made for both less-able and more-able pupils. Inspection evidence supports these views. A few indicated they felt the school did not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found little evidence to suggest this is a common view held by parents and carers. A very small minority felt that the school did not always deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. School leaders recognise the diversity of opinion amongst parents and carers about the inclusion of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Inspection evidence suggests that these pupils are well-supported and develop better social skills as a result. Inspectors discussed these aspects with the headteacher and he recognises the capacity for continued improvement in relationships with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cranbrook 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	60	18	34	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	64	19	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	55	21	40	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	57	18	34	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	60	19	36	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	64	17	32	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	68	13	25	1	2	1	2
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)	24	45	24	45	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	57	20	38	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	36	25	47	6	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	47	16	30	8	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	70	13	25	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	68	13	25	2	4	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).

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">■ 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.



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cranbrook Church of England Primary School, Cranbrook TN17 3JZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We were very pleased to see you all enjoying your learning and we think that the way you get involved in the school and local community is outstanding ♦ well done!

I am writing to tell you that you go to a good school. Overall, you make good progress and your behaviour in class is usually good. You are now making better progress in writing because your teachers often make your lessons interesting and exciting for you and let you know how well you are getting on. Those of you who are more able are doing well and making very good progress in some lessons. Pupils who find some learning difficult are looked after well and get good support so that they make as much progress as everyone else.

Your attendance at school is average. You told us that, while sometimes individual pupils are not always well-behaved in the playground, you feel safe at school.

Your teachers, led by your headteacher, want to make your school even better, so we have asked them to:

- make sure pupils in all classes get to reflect on, and use, their teacher's feedback so that they make better progress
- improve pupils' attendance more quickly, especially for the minority of pupils whose attendance is below average.

You can all help by making sure you come to school every day unless you are unwell.

Yours sincerely

Jon Carter

Lead inspector

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