

Hurst Green Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114508
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	366532
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Patricia Metham HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Maynard
Headteacher	Neil McDonough
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2010
School address	Hurst Green Etchingham TN19 7PN
Telephone number	01580 860375
Fax number	01580 860838
Email address	headteacher@hurstgreen.e-sussex.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited eight lessons, observing five different teachers, and held meetings with staff, pupils, governors and parents and carers. She also met the substantive headteacher who will take up his appointment in September 2011. The inspector evaluated pupils attainment since the previous inspection, schemes of work, policies, the school development plan, minutes of governors meetings and reports from the local authority officer for standards and learning improvement and from local authority consultants.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the schools work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is assessment information accurate and being used effectively to raise attainment and accelerate the progress of all pupils, especially boys?
- Does the curriculum successfully reflect pupils interests and support independent learning?
- Do governors, leaders and managers have an accurate view of the schools strengths and areas for development, especially with regard to the effectiveness of teaching?

Information about the school

In October 2010 Hurst Green Primary School moved into new buildings on a site adjacent to the old school. The original site is being made into playing fields and recreation areas for the school. Independently governed nursery provision sits within the new buildings. This provision is subject to a separate inspection. Following the inspection in 2010 that put the school into special measures, an interim headteacher was appointed. In September 2011 a newly appointed substantive headteacher will take up the post.

Hurst Green is a smaller-than-average primary school. Currently children are taught in five mixed-age classes. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few have English as an acquired language. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Relatively few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The school has recently renewed its Healthy Schools 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

2

Main findings

In accordance with the section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The interim headteacher and senior teachers, with support from the local authority, are successfully leading improvement in this now satisfactory school. Practical and appropriate priorities have been set after an accurate evaluation of strengths and areas for development. Safeguarding procedures are thorough. Subject leaders have a lively and increasingly confident approach to the curriculum and to the management of teaching and learning. The impact of clearly defined roles and responsibilities is becoming evident in planning, classroom practice and pupils progress. Capacity for further improvement is good. The appointment of a substantive headteacher with relevant experience has justifiably reinforced the conviction of staff and parents that the school is steadily moving forward.

Pupils progress is improving in response to more accurate assessment that shapes support for individuals and different groups. Attainment is rising. It is broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2, and higher than average for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. Boys progress more slowly and attain less highly than girls, especially in their writing. There are, however, signs that the gender gap is closing slowly in response to changes in the curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress as well as their contemporaries; some are making better progress in writing.

Most teaching is well planned and engaging, with assessment that supports pupils progress, although marking does not always balance encouragement with guidance on how to improve and time is not regularly given during lessons for pupils to reflect and respond to corrections and advice. Pupils enjoy and most benefit from group work but, on occasion, the impact of one or two individuals inhibits the progress of others. Teaching strengths include well-informed enthusiasm, detailed skills and enterprising use of varied resources, including information and communication technology. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution. Pupils are keen to do what is expected and work most effectively when given appropriate tasks and clear guidance. More-able pupils are not always challenged to be critical, analytical and creative in their approach but, when given the incentive and opportunity to investigate and present material independently or collaboratively, they enjoy the challenge. The curriculum covers all statutory requirements and is steadily improving pupils progress. Cross-curricular approaches encourage pupils to make constructive links between subjects, to apply their knowledge in different contexts and to appreciate the importance of core skills such as literacy and numeracy.

As the exceptionally high attendance rate indicates, pupils are happy to come to school and their parents and carers are happy to have them there. Pupils feel very safe and are

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justifiably confident that they will always be given prompt, sensitive and effective care, guidance and support. Liaison with external agencies is well managed to support the schools provision. Pupils evident understanding of why and how to keep healthy and their keen participation in sports and activities justify Hurst Greens Healthy Schools status. Multi-skills, an athletics-based activity, is especially popular; as an older pupil remarked, Everyone does it, so you help the little ones. The comment prompted much nodding from other pupils and illustrates the willingness with which they accept responsibility for each other. Pupils wholeheartedly endorse the schools ethos of mutual respect and support. They make a positive contribution to the wider community, through links with the parish church, fund-raising and productive involvement in the neighbourhoods allotments scheme. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, well supported through the mainstream and extended curriculum and the schools values.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress, particularly for boys by:
 - having consistently high expectations, giving pupils challenging targets and ensuring that they understand the steps needed to achieve them
 - closely monitoring and encouraging boys participation in lessons, especially when writing tasks are involved
 - presenting able pupils with more opportunities and incentives to be independent, analytical and creative in their approach.
- Build on recent improvements in teaching to promote consistently independent and effective learning, by ensuring that:
 - when working in groups, all pupils actively contribute to the process of enquiry, discussion and decision-making
 - assessment of pupils work in class and the marking of work always balance encouragement with clear guidance on how to improve
 - pupils are given time to reflect on and respond to teachers comments on their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Externally moderated assessment indicates that attainment in the 2011 Key Stage 2 national tests will be higher than in the previous year, with a marked increase in the proportion of girls attaining at higher levels. Progress has been slower in science than in other subjects but a greater emphasis on practical investigation and enquiry is having a positive impact. Pupils feel they learn best when encouraged to be active: You learn more if you think its fun. Much fun was clearly had, for example, by Year 5 and Year 6 pupils who were investigating plants methods of seed dispersal. Working in small groups, they selected examples of each method, debating vigorously whether a particular plant was a shaker or an exploder, or whether the seeds were wind-blown or processed through an

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animals digestive tract. Microscopes and magnifying glasses were confidently used to test theories, and findings were shared and evaluated by the whole class.

The school is a welcoming and cohesive community, where pupils feel safe and are happy to attend extremely regularly. They understand the schools emphasis on health and safety and most take care to keep fit. They treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect, cheerfully accommodating differences in others backgrounds and personal attributes. They take on responsibilities enthusiastically; for example, Year 6 and Year 5 pupils act as buddies for children in Reception and Year 1. The school council is well respected and effective. While they clearly develop useful skills and personal qualities, their preparation for the future is limited by current literacy and numeracy levels. They are interested in their environment, asking, for example, that the school pond be made more attractive to wildlife, so that we can learn more about nature.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Although improvement in pupils attainment and progress is steady rather than quick, support from local authority consultants, exploration of good practice in other schools and sharing of ideas and strategies among the staff are having a positive impact. On occasion, explanations or introductions to topics are too long or too much time is given to a single activity but teaching is most often informative and engaging. Lesson planning is well structured, underpinned by accurate information about pupils levels and progress. Diverse

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learning styles and abilities are generally well catered for, with lessons involving group and individual activities, writing, discussion and practical investigation. Teachers have productive questioning skills and use a variety of assessment methods during lessons to check and reinforce pupils grasp of work covered. The quality of marking is uneven, however, and its impact not always evident.

Learning journeys bring together content and skills from a variety of subjects to encourage pupils to apply their knowledge in different contexts and to appreciate the importance of core skills in all areas of learning. They provide opportunities for group work and activities such as drama and art, practical problem-solving and presentation. The end point for each journey is established at the start, for example, a portfolio of work, a PowerPoint presentation or a performance, and this successfully engages and sustains the interest of boys as well as girls. In a learning journey about the challenges and potential of life on an imagined but credible tropical island, pupils collaboratively tackled issues as complex and diverse as whether or not rare turtles could be protected and how, and whether or not, a power station should be built.

Care, guidance and support are very well managed. Liaison with external agencies successfully complements in-school provision. Vulnerable pupils are sensitively and successfully nurtured, so that they cope effectively with school life. The deployment of additionally trained teaching assistants to work closely with less able, less confident or vulnerable pupils makes a major contribution to their well-being. Teachers are given guidance on how to support the vulnerable in their class and work in close collaboration with the special needs coordinator.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

An ambitious and widely shared vision for the school underpins planning, professional development, teaching and learning. It is being embedded through sharing of best practice and regular monitoring by the interim headteacher and senior teachers. The impact on attainment and progress is becoming evident but challenges remain, such as underachievement by a significant proportion of boys. Governors present a useful range of expertise, which, complemented by appropriate training, is enabling them to hold the school to account more effectively. They recognise the need to improve regular reporting to parents and carers about issues such as the schools promotion of equal opportunities and community cohesion. Pupils benefit from a widening network of partnerships that provide memorable experiences, such as a Safety in Action event at Hasting Community Fire Station. For staff, participation in a local cluster of schools brings valuable

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opportunities to share knowledge and skills and to moderate the assessment of work. Current outcomes for pupils show that the school achieves satisfactory value for money.

Through its inclusive curriculum and ethos, the school promotes equality of respect and pre-empts discrimination. It is putting in place strategies to close the gender gap and monitoring their slow but positive impact. In the new building all aspects of school life are easily accessible to any with physical disabilities. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous, including security of the site. Governors and staff have appropriate child protection training and careful risk assessments are undertaken for off-site activities. Pupils feel at home in the school and build up a clear picture of their place in the local community. Particularly through links with a school in Malawi including exchanges of staff and correspondence between pupils they develop a vivid understanding of different cultures. Their first-hand experience of multicultural Britain is limited but plans are in place to link with an Inner London school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Reception children are taught alongside a small number of Year I pupils. Many join the school from the adjacent nursery and benefit from the continuity this provides. Most have good social and communication skills and are keen to learn. They respond with evident enjoyment to the balance between teacher-directed learning and freedom to choose how they extend their learning through play. They make good progress, supported by confident and generally effective teaching. In a phonics session, for example, they showed a secure grasp of the sounds recently learnt and happily applied that knowledge when asked to combine the letter cards that each had been given to make up words suggested by the teacher. The teacher and teaching assistants have a productive rapport with the children and assess individual progress carefully and accurately, especially when children

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are working in the classroom. Opportunities to extend and reinforce learning through questions and suggestions are not always fully exploited when children are engaged in the outdoor activities they have chosen, as for example, when they were exploring the building properties of sand.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader shows an imaginative and practical approach to curriculum planning. She successfully combines the different assessment structures for Reception and Year 1 with topics that offer scope for independent learning and levels of challenge well matched to childrens abilities and interests. For example, when learning about plants, Reception and Year 1 pupils visit a nearby arboretum, and plant and care for their own vegetable garden. Reception children extend this first-hand experience into role play as managers and customers in a garden centre and storytelling based on Jack and the Beanstalk. Communication between school and home is clear and reliable.

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

Evidence gathered during this inspection supports parents and carers confidence in the schools ability to promote their childrens learning and personal development. Many play an active part in school life as volunteers and as parent-governors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



23 June, 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hurst Green Church of England Primary School, Etchingham, TN19 7PN

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I visited your school. I am glad to have this chance to tell you what I found. Your school has improved a great deal since the last full inspection and is now providing you with a satisfactory education.

The fact that you come to school very regularly and so cheerfully shows not only that you feel safe but also that you enjoy your learning and are rightly confident that you are making progress. Recent changes in the curriculum and in the way you are taught are giving you the chance to learn in ways that suit you best and to develop the learning powers you use to measure how well you are doing. As several of you explained to me, one advantage of being at a relatively small school is that you know and treat each other with respect and kindness. It was good to see how willing you are to take on responsibilities and to make a very positive contribution to your local community.

So that your school goes from strength to strength, we have asked your headteacher to ensure that:

- you are all given targets that really challenge you and you are shown clearly how to achieve them
- those of you who find the work relatively easy are pushed to be more independent and creative in your approach
- you are regularly given time to look carefully at and respond to the advice given when your work is marked
- close attention is paid to the ways in which boys work and the progress they make, and help is given to ensure that they do as well as the girls
- your teachers consistently put into practice the skills and approaches that they have been developing to help you to progress more quickly.

You can help by having ambitious targets and working hard to achieve them.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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