

Capel Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118271
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358294
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Bartleman

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Sawyer
Headteacher	Janet Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited an assembly and 14 lessons, observing seven teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 77 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

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 quality of teaching in promoting learning and progress for all pupils.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum developed to raise attainment and to match pupils' interests and needs.
- The extent to which the school eliminates inequalities in achievement between different groups, taking into account pupils of different abilities and gender.
- The effectiveness of governance, leaders and managers at all levels in tackling areas for improvement and taking decisive action to improve provision.

Information about the school

Capel Primary School is a slightly-smaller-than-average primary school. Most pupils come from a White British heritage, and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school has achieved the Healthy School award and the Bronze Eco-School award.

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

Capel gives pupils a satisfactory standard of education. A noticeable strength is the commitment of the headteacher and staff to ensure that all pupils are made welcome and provided with a good level of care so that they are kept safe at all times. This enables them to settle quickly and enjoy school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show respect for each other, get on together and behave well. The large majority of parents and carers appreciate the work of the school. One wrote: 'The school provides a safe exciting place to learn with teachers who obviously care about the children.' This sentiment was echoed by others.

Children get off to a secure start in the Reception classes and make satisfactory progress. Some opportunities are missed to use assessment to secure an accurate picture of attainment on entry and to plan next steps in children's learning, and the outdoor learning environment is not used to its potential. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory, although there are some variations within this and the academic standards pupils reach by the end of Year 6 are broadly average, despite some fluctuations. Attainment in English is not as high as that in mathematics because provision for writing has only recently been improved. In neither subject are cross-curricular links sufficiently well established to extend pupils' learning. However, participation in a focused initiative to improve numeracy skills has resulted in impressive gains for some pupils this year. Overall, outcomes for all groups of pupils are satisfactory and this means Capel prepares pupils satisfactorily for the next stages of their lives.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and there is some good teaching on which the school can build. In the better lessons, pupils of all abilities are challenged and learning proceeds at a quick pace. As a result, pupils make good progress. Where lessons are not as effective teachers do not consistently make clear their expectations of individuals or groups of pupils and assessment information is not always used well enough to plan work that encourages pupils to aim higher, especially with regard to writing. Teachers routinely set literacy and numeracy targets but there is some variation in how effectively pupils are given sufficient guidance as to how these can be achieved.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school development plan is based on a sound self-evaluation of the school's needs and performance and clearly identifies the appropriate priorities for improvement. The governing body makes a satisfactory contribution to the development of the school. Given the systems and structures in place, the improving track record and the clear vision for the development of the school, the capacity to sustain further improvement is satisfactory.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, in order to accelerate pupils' progress, strengthen the overall quality of teaching by:
 - sharing more widely the good practice that exists within the school
 - addressing the inconsistencies, especially those linked to marking, the pace of lessons, the clarity of teachers' explanations and reaching a balance between teacher-talk and pupils having time to work independently.
- By July 2012, ensure that at least 75% of pupils throughout the school are reaching age appropriate standards in writing by:
 - ensuring staff take every opportunity to model writing well
 - ensuring marking of writing pinpoints pupils' mistakes, guides pupils towards improvement and encourages them to take action to address their mistakes
 - providing pupils with time to correct and refine their work
 - providing additional opportunities to write in other areas of the curriculum.
- Enhance the provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving the use of assessment information to accelerate children's progress and to provide a clearer overview of their attainment on entry
 - making better use of the outdoor area as a natural extension of the classroom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When children enter the school, their knowledge and skills are typically below what is expected for this age group, especially in the various aspects of communication and language, and in emotional development. In recent years, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has been broadly average, as it was in 2010, though attainment was higher in mathematics than in reading and writing. This remains the case but now there is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of good support and the gap between their attainment and the rest of their classmates is steadily closing.

In a successful and well-paced lesson, pupils in Years 6 made good progress in learning to write a text containing emotions, in part because the teacher provided success criteria which helped them to judge the quality of their own work. In an engaging lesson in mathematics in Years 2, pupils made good progress in deciding on appropriate strategies and calculations to solve word problems. They first had opportunities to explain to others their strategies to answer the problems, and this further developed their understanding that more than one method could result in a correct solution. They then worked, often collaboratively, to apply their understanding to new problems. Such strengths are there to be built upon but some lessons are not so stimulating which is why achievement, although satisfactory overall, is variable.

Most parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school and feel safe. The secure building, absence of bullying and adults' good care provide a strong sense of safety for

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pupils. The good relationships between staff and pupils lead to good behaviour around the school, and in classrooms. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in the positive cooperation between pupils in lessons, and in their interest in the life of the school, and good participation in the broad range of extra-curricular activities. The school council has good opportunities to make decisions, for example about the purchase of new playground equipment and about which charities to support. Older pupils act responsibly as buddies to younger pupils. Roles such as monitors, play leaders and peer mediators offer opportunities to take on responsibilities. The Eco Schools award attests to the good impact of pupils' activities in developing their understanding of sustainability through recycling and schemes to save energy.

Pupils show that they have a good awareness about eating healthily and about the value of physical activities in keeping fit. Their practice of healthy lifestyles is well supported by the school's Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. Pupils' satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy indicate that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. Their good punctuality and satisfactory workplace skills developed through activities in lessons such as 'talk partners' also serve to enhance their personal development and future economic well-being.

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	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	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	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching has a number of good features, including good relationships, the use of praise, sharing ideas with a talk partner and the deployment of teaching assistants. Nevertheless, it is satisfactory overall and an increasing proportion is good. Lesson planning is generally detailed but tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to the different abilities within each class, and they sometimes lack sufficient challenge. Occasionally, explanations are too lengthy, with pupils spending too long sitting on the carpet listening to adults. In these lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas. Although most teachers use questioning well, a few miss opportunities to challenge pupils sufficiently by enabling them to fully explain their answers. Marking does not consistently provide pupils with sufficient guidance. However, new assessment procedures have been introduced that are helping teachers to acquire a sharper understanding of each pupil's level of attainment. Teachers are beginning to use this assessment information more effectively to set targets and gauge progress.

The curriculum is appropriately broad, and designed to be relevant and interesting to pupils. The strong emphasis in the school's improvement planning on the development of writing skills is beginning to lead to more rapid progress, although there are still too few opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length across a range of subjects. In mathematics, the opportunities for pupils to apply their understanding in problem-solving contexts are not consistent across the school.

Lessons in personal, social and health education contribute well to pupils' understanding of issues of safety and healthy lifestyles. Curriculum enhancement is good, for instance in terms of themed events such as the Economic Well-being and Countries Weeks and in the use of the school grounds to promote active learning. The school is at an early stage of developing its curriculum to include a thematic approach in which pupils' learning in different subjects is linked but there are positive signs in pupils' increased enjoyment and improving progress. The 'Building Learning Power' process is beginning to give the pupils a better understanding of what they are learning and why. Good quality displays throughout the school reflect the commitment of staff to celebrating pupils' work and promoting their artistic skills. Visits, visitors and after-school activities enhance learning and promote pupils' personal development well. Links with secondary schools include a sports partnership and good support for provision in modern foreign languages, information and communication technology and music. There is a broad range of extra-curricular clubs offering an interesting variety of cultural, recreational and sporting activities.

The strong commitment to the care for pupils is effective in supporting good personal development. Support is good, especially for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and the school makes appropriate use of additional support and advice from external agencies. This reflects the school's inclusive ethos. Good arrangements smooth pupils' transitions within the school, and to secondary education.

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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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides effective leadership, especially in pastoral matters, and a clear vision for the school's future. The school development plan contains appropriately identified and prioritised areas for improvement. An honest and determined attempt has been made to address weaknesses and to improve provision. Teaching and learning are being improved as a result of the headteacher's monitoring and the way she offers significant support and guidance on the development of skills. Currently, much monitoring depends on the headteacher and a few management roles are underdeveloped. Targets for pupils' progress are moderately challenging. Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body contribute well to the regular review of school policies, the school's good arrangements for safeguarding and draw on their financial expertise effectively. But, the governing body does not regularly and critically evaluate the school's performance against external measures. As a result, senior leaders are not always challenged sufficiently on pupils' attainment and progress and the school has yet to ensure that all pupils consistently reach their potential.

The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, as reflected in satisfactory outcomes for all groups of pupils and a lack of any discrimination. Effective contributions from all staff enable the school to build productive relationships with parents and carers. The school is responsive to the needs of the local community and promotes community cohesion, within the local area, well. However, the global and national aspects are not as well developed.

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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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's starting points vary from year to year but are usually below expectations for their age, particularly in communication, literacy and language. Children make steady progress, with good gains in their social development and in their disposition and attitudes towards learning. However, initial assessments are not completed with sufficient rigour. As a result, there is not a secure baseline to judge the children's progress. Staff have implemented a letters and sounds programme; this has reduced, but not eliminated, the gap which exists between girls and boys in literacy by the end of the Reception Year.

Children's relationships with adults are positive and trusting. Consequently, children are happy, behave well and settle well into the routines of the day. Parents and carers appreciate the support given for a smooth transition into school. Children understand the need to keep themselves safe and healthy and know why they wash their hands before eating. One child said, 'We need to get rid of the germs or we might get sick.' Children enjoy opportunities to make their own choices throughout the day. But, the daily routine involves too much time when children follow instructions in whole-class lessons or in groups, which sometimes limits their exploration, problem-solving and independent learning skills.

Children have access to a safe and secure outdoor area. However, this is not fully utilised to best effect. Teachers' observations of children's activities to plan next steps in their learning are not conducted consistently or fully involving all adults present. This limits the ability of the coordinator to develop a secure knowledge of trends, strengths and needs and to plan accordingly to develop the provision. Nevertheless, leadership and management are satisfactory, with children happy, safe and well cared for.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of responses to the questionnaire is around average for a primary school of this size. A large majority of parents and carers are happy with the provision for their children. They speak highly of the teaching and curriculum that help their children do well at school. They feel their children are safe and prepared well for the future. They say the school is well led, and that the headteacher makes an important contribution to the school's effectiveness. These positive comments reflect the inspection findings.

A few parents felt that their child's needs are not being met, that their child was not making sufficient progress and that their own views were not listened to, issues which were raised with the headteacher. A small minority feel that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. During the inspection, inspectors found that behaviour was good, with appropriate strategies in place to secure good behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Capel 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 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	43	36	47	7	9	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	36	47	37	48	3	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	36	41	53	4	5	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	40	35	45	10	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	42	38	49	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	38	44	57	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	39	31	40	4	5	5	6
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)	32	42	31	40	10	13	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	30	33	43	12	16	7	9
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	30	33	43	12	16	7	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	21	44	57	7	9	5	6
The school is led and managed effectively	26	34	34	44	5	6	5	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	40	37	48	6	8	1	1

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	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.



20 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Capel Primary School, Tonbridge TN12 6RP

We would like to thank all of you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. We especially thank those of you who filled in the pupils' questionnaire. Inspectors judge that you go to a school that gives you a satisfactory education.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

- Your school is welcoming and sets a positive climate for your learning.
- You enjoy school, and your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- You have good relationships with the adults who take good care of you.
- You feel very safe in school and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- You make good contributions to your school and community.
- Most of your parents and carers are pleased with your experience at school.
- Your attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is broadly average, and your progress across the school is satisfactory.

We have also asked your school to make some further improvements:

- Make sure that more of you make faster progress. We have directed that more of the lessons should be good or better. As part of this, we have asked the school to make sure that every teacher sets a consistently good pace in lessons, and that marking gives you more feedback about improving the quality of your work.
- Raise the standards you reach in writing and give you more opportunities to use your literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- Make more accurate assessments when you start school in the Reception class and use assessments to plan interesting and challenging work.

You can help too by working hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your school will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Bartleman

Lead inspector

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