

Woodchurch Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118672
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358419
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2011
Reporting inspector	John Worgan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Godfrey
Headteacher	Patricia Hall
Date of previous school inspection	18 July 2008
School address	Woodchurch Ashford TN26 3QJ
Telephone number	01233 860232
Fax number	01233 860232
Email address	office@woodchurch.kent.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Six lessons or part lessons were observed taught by six teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school improvement planning, governors' evaluation and monitoring documentation, the headteacher's reports to governors and pupils' progress and attainment data. Sixty questionnaires were received from parents and carers and analysed, together with questionnaires from pupils and staff.

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

- The school's evidence that attainment, learning and overall achievement have improved in the past year.
- The effectiveness of the school's work to improve boys' progress, especially in literacy.
- The accuracy with which leaders and managers monitor teaching and learning and the effectiveness of initiatives in improving teaching and learning and in raising attainment.
- The impact of assessment and tracking on improving the performance of pupils, especially those that have underachieved in the past, including boys and the more able.
- The impact of changes in teaching and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Woodchurch is a smaller-than-average primary school where there are significantly more boys than girls. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has a low proportion of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities but a higher proportion than average has a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one Reception class and has recently undergone major staffing and management changes. The school has achieved Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

Woodchurch is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher receives strong support from the deputy headteacher who has led a number of key initiatives resulting in improving progress for pupils. A good start has been made in reorganising leadership responsibilities which is beginning to have a positive impact on the outcomes for pupils, especially boys' attainment, an area for concern in the past. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average and rising in key areas, but improvement is not yet sustained. A committed staff and governing body have also contributed to the recent improvements. Relationships and the care provided for pupils are good. Teachers support vulnerable pupils sympathetically, which helps them to be ready for learning. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as other pupils.

Pupils behave well and enjoy their learning which is contributing to their improving progress. They confirm that they feel safe and well looked after. They grow in confidence and gain self-esteem during their time at the school. Older pupils take on responsibilities willingly. Pupils are articulate, confident and well mannered. There is a strong sense of respect. As one pupil explained, 'The teachers are friendly; we know we are safe; it's like a family, really.'

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has been broadly average for the past three years. However, pupils in the current Year 6 have made good progress from a lower starting point than last year's group and there has been a significant closing of the gap between girls' and boys' attainment, especially in writing. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and recent changes in the staffing and management are beginning to have an impact. However, weaknesses in the use of assessment and tracking information previously held back progress. In Key Stage 1, active learning activities and group and pair work build pupils' confidence in speaking and listening and are providing a firmer platform for learning. In Key Stage 2, progress is also improving, and the gap between boys and girls in literacy has narrowed due to initiatives which have inspired boys to read more and to enjoy reading. The appointment of a mathematics specialist as deputy headteacher has started to have a significant impact on teaching and on pupils' progress.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and realistic and shows that school leaders are aware of the differences in the progress of different groups of pupils and have been effective in beginning to close the gaps. Following a review of the curriculum, activities and topics are more relevant and interesting to pupils and this is helping to accelerate progress. A wide range of clubs is well attended, extending the curriculum and providing opportunities for pupils of all ages to develop skills and artistic, sporting and cultural interests.

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There are examples of good and outstanding teaching which are effective in securing good progress in learning, especially in Key Stage 2. But this is not yet consistent enough across the school to secure uniformly good progress. For example, in some lessons, the pace of learning slows and work is not closely matched to the learning needs of different groups of pupils, especially the more able. Nonetheless, pupils always try hard and are keen to learn.

Middle and senior leaders share the headteacher's focus on raising achievement and have introduced a good range of initiatives to bring about improvement. However, their skills in monitoring and evaluation are not yet fully developed. Since the last inspection, there was a dip in the school's performance, which leaders have recognised and taken action to remedy. These changes are beginning to produce acceleration in progress but improvements are recent and not yet fully embedded. Nevertheless, together with the accurate self-evaluation and drive and determination of leaders, they show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

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?

- Improve pupils' progress and raise attainment by the end of Year 6, especially for the more-able pupils by:
 - ensuring that teachers challenge and engage pupils, providing appropriate and stimulating work
 - encouraging higher order and independent learning
 - extending access to information and communication technology (ICT) facilities outside normal school hours to allow pupils to develop research skills.
- Improve the assessment and teaching in the Early Years and Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that the tracking and monitoring of it is accurate and based on an accurate analysis of children's attainment on entry
 - developing questioning so that more-able pupils are prompted to extend their learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing subject leaders' monitoring and analysis skills
 - improving coaching and mentoring so that the good and outstanding practice is shared and shows impact.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' enjoyment of learning was exemplified in a Year 5 lesson where they showed a deep understanding of descriptive writing, using technical language confidently and applying their knowledge to produce imaginative and well-structured writing themselves. Their learning was outstanding because pupils of all abilities were helped to think and work independently. In another lesson pupils were encouraged to speculate about ways in

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which apples could be prevented from browning, before conducting experiments to test their hypotheses. These examples illustrate why progress is improving. In mathematics the subject leader has encouraged staff to develop active learning and to move away from prescriptive published schemes of work. The impact of this was clearly seen in a lesson where pupils were working enthusiastically in groups on practical tasks. Where learning is satisfactory, pupils are not as enthused because activities do not engage them as much. Pupils enjoy using ICT to enhance their learning, but opportunities for using computers in lessons are limited and some commented on the lack of opportunities to use computers outside lesson times.

The school council is strong and helps pupils to make a good contribution to their community. Pupils are confident in putting their views forward and say that they are listened to sympathetically. Displays of art work showed pupils' understanding of the styles of different artists, enhancing their cultural development. The spiritual aspect of the school's work is strong and pupils participated enthusiastically in an assembly with a clear spiritual theme. Pupils have a good knowledge about different faiths. Awareness of other cultures is developed through themes in the creative curriculum, for example a project on the Aztecs was used to develop pupils' understanding of international development and the environmental impact of food trading. Pupils show a good understanding of how to stay healthy and said that there were good opportunities to take exercise and eat healthily at school. This is reflected in the school's national award.

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	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?

Teachers are encouraging pupils by providing interesting and active lessons, using a variety of strategies including pair and group work, which enables pupils to talk about their ideas confidently. Teachers plan lessons well to cater for pupils' wide-ranging needs, but sometimes these plans are not implemented effectively for the most-able pupils. As a result, the pace of learning slows and adults miss opportunities to demonstrate how pupils might extend their learning. Verbal feedback is used well, but marking is variable in quality. Some marking is thorough and gives pupils precise and detailed guidance on improving their work. However, poorer marking is confined to ticking correct work, with occasional congratulatory comments.

Following changes to the curriculum, the school is making writing more purposeful and interesting to pupils. The move away from published schemes of work in mathematics is producing imaginative planning which is improving the quality of lessons. The introduction of the 'creative curriculum' is helping pupils to develop an understanding of other cultures in a context which allows them to use imagination and to develop creative writing skills. The school has adjusted the curriculum to make it more suited to boys' learning styles. These changes are beginning to have a very positive impact on pupils' progress. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, some run by parents and outside bodies, is well attended and much appreciated by pupils. An increased emphasis on promoting reading as a stimulus to writing is helping all pupils to enjoy and understand their learning more. The library has been re-located to improve access and, although the space is small, it is well used and pupils and parents commented on the variety of books and the ways in which reading is encouraged.

The special educational needs coordinator has developed a thorough tracking process which is used to identify areas of weakness and to plan provision appropriately for pupils. The support given by teaching assistants is often good, fostering independent learning, but opportunities to support the teacher and particular pupils during lesson introductions are sometimes missed. Staff deal very sympathetically with pupils' emotional and social needs, and links with outside professionals considerably enhance this. Pupils learn to be independent and how to cope with their emotions, behaviour and worries, due to the good care and support given.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision and determination to raise attainment and eliminate underachievement. Initiatives undertaken are beginning to accelerate progress and close the significant gap in the attainment of boys and girls. The skills of middle leaders in supporting this work remain underdeveloped but a new training programme is helping to improve their skills and a positive impact on teaching and learning is already apparent. The deputy headteacher is leading improvements in mathematics and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities at a good pace and these initiatives are now having a positive impact on attainment. The school places a high priority on the training and professional development of staff and this is helping to lift the overall quality of teaching. For example, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of inadequate lessons and none were observed during the inspection.

The headteacher has introduced new systems and procedures for tracking pupils' progress throughout each year. Tracking is now robust and data are presented in a format which teachers understand and can use to inform planning and to target interventions. Tracking data have been used to monitor boys' performance and to make modifications to curriculum and teaching. These initiatives are at an early stage and although pupils' progress is accelerating impact is not yet reflected in improved attainment over a sustained period.

The governing body has recently become more involved in school self-evaluation and governors are beginning to ask challenging questions about how well pupils are doing. They have developed clear and well-focused monitoring procedures, with groups of governors focusing on different aspects of self-evaluation. Safeguarding procedures are good and everybody at the school gives a high priority to ensuring that pupils are safe and well protected. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, although the international aspect is stronger than links with other British communities. The school promotes aspects of global awareness well. The school is a harmonious community and parents and pupils expressed the view that the school 'feels like a family'. The school ensures that there are no pupils who are subject to discrimination. The small number of pupils speaking English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The recent staffing and management changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have begun to have a significant impact. Recent improvements have been rapid although not yet sustained over time.

Children enjoy a welcoming and happy experience because staff are caring and highly sensitive to their individual needs. Teachers ensure that there are close links with the wide range of pre-school settings as well as with parents and carers, who spoke highly of their children's learning experience, enjoyment and social confidence. One, for example, said, 'The school made a lot of effort for the parents to get to know each other and for the children to feel easy about coming here.' There are effective support and inclusion for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff assess children's skills regularly and keep suitable records of their development. Accurate tracking of children's progress is made difficult, however, by the lack of accurate data on children's starting points. Children make satisfactory progress leading to broadly average levels of attainment by the end of their Reception Year.

Effective teaching is a key factor in improving the children's progress. Children enjoy the opportunity to select activities for themselves. There is a strong emphasis on writing opportunities and there is a range of activities to stimulate children's imagination. Children are not always challenged sufficiently by questioning, however, and feedback on what they have done well is not always given.

Outside provision, although limited in space, is interesting and inviting. Children play cooperatively and sensibly. Resources have been provided to stimulate a variety of interests and skills. Teaching assistants support children well, but sometimes miss opportunities to develop independent learning. Behaviour is good and children are concerned for others and know how to keep themselves safe. The deputy headteacher has

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recently taken on responsibility for the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Her mentoring and organisation of outside support for the teacher in this area have been a significant factor in the recent improvement in children's progress.

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 response to the questionnaire was average for a school of this kind. A large majority parents and carers are pleased with the school and speak highly of the care given to their children and how the school helps them to adopt healthy lifestyles. They feel that their children learn well and make the progress expected to enable them to be ready for their next schools. Several parents mentioned the school's promotion of reading and the positive impact on their children's progress. All say that their children enjoy attending. One parent said, 'It is a very caring environment; the older children welcome the younger ones.' Several parents of younger children noted things such as, 'We have never had a day when they don't want to go in.' Parents of new pupils who took part in the induction programme which coincided with the inspection were appreciative of the way in which the school had welcomed them and their children.

A very small minority of parents were critical of the leadership of the school, commenting on lack of communication and failure to respond to the needs of their children. Inspectors found that these views were held mainly by the parents and carers of older pupils. Parents of younger pupils were complimentary about the leadership of the school. Inspectors found that leadership is improving and that communication with parents and carers is adequate. Some parents and carers expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the way in which poor behaviour is dealt with. Inspectors observed good behaviour in lessons and around the school and found that procedures for dealing with behaviour were good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodchurch 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 144 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	48	31	52	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	60	22	37	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	33	31	52	6	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	33	35	58	3	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	24	40	36	60	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	37	34	57	2	3	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	35	38	63	1	2	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)	19	32	33	55	1	2	3	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	35	33	55	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	27	36	60	7	12	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	42	28	47	5	8	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	17	28	28	47	9	15	6	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	38	34	57	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



7 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodchurch Church of England Primary School, Ashford, TN26 9QJ

You may remember that two inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we spoke to you. Your school is satisfactory and improving because the adults are working hard to make it a special place for you. We agree with you that you go to a safe and happy school. The staff are very caring and help you when you have problems, making sure you can do your best. We were delighted to see you having fun and enjoying most of your lessons. We especially liked seeing you helping each other learn and speaking and listening to each other so well. Well done for behaving well in lessons, and being respectful and kind to others. Your teachers help you to learn new and interesting things and talk about your ideas. As a result, you make steady progress.

We have asked the adults to make the school even better for you by:

- challenging you to do even better and to work independently, especially those of you who find some of your work easy
- ensuring that teachers and leaders work together to share their ideas and make teaching and assessment even better
- making sure that the youngest children are assessed carefully when they come into the school so that teachers can help them make good progress.

We enjoyed meeting you, hearing your views and listening to your impressive singing. We wish you great success in the future. Keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

John Worgan Lead inspector

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