

Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 118714 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 375359 |
| Inspection dates | 16–17 November 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Sheena MacDonald 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.

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| 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 | 166 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andrew Cunningham |
| Headteacher | Rachel Green |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3–4 March 2010 |
| School address | Market Heath Brenchley Tonbridge TN12 7NY |
| Telephone number | 01892 722929 |
| Fax number | 01892 724847 |
| Email address | headteacher@brenchley.kent.sch.uk |

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Introduction

When the school was inspected in March 2010 it was judged to require special measures. This inspection was the fourth monitoring visit since then and was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons, and carried out a further series of short drop-in sessions. All teachers were observed. They held discussions with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, governors, a representative from the local authority and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, monitoring and assessment information, the minutes of the governing body's meetings, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and pupils' books. They also took into account recent pupil and parent and carer responses to questionnaires organised by the school.

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

- The progress the school had made in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection, March 2010.
- The progress that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make in lessons and over time.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning and how consistent this is across the school.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels, and their use of self-evaluation and monitoring to identify needs, set challenging targets and drive improvement.
- The capacity the school has to sustain further improvements.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils are White British and there is a much smaller than average number of pupils from various ethnic groups including Roma/Gypsy. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than average as is the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also lower than average and the proportion supported at school action plus and with statements of special educational needs is just below average. These pupils have a range of needs but the majority have speech, language and communication difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with 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.

Effective action has been taken to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The pace of improvement has speeded up significantly in recent months, so that the school is now providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. Staff, pupils, parents and governors are pulling together so that a strong sense of purpose and a positive ethos now pervade the school, both of which were lacking in the past. The school is satisfactory rather than good because recent improvements need time to become fully established.

The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher, has brought drive and vision to the school and also a sense of calm following a long period of uncertainty. Senior leaders, in close collaboration with the local authority, have celebrated existing strengths and addressed weaknesses with alacrity and sensitivity. They have raised expectations, implemented an effective monitoring and coaching programme, renewed confidence and sharpened the focus on pupils' achievements. As a result, important aspects such as the quality of teaching and the care, guidance and support provided for each individual pupil are now good. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their behaviour and positive attitudes to learning and to each other. The recent pupil and parent and carer surveys show a marked increase in the positive responses across all aspects. In particular, almost all parents and carers said in the recent survey that they are happy with the education provided by the school.

Pupils come into school with skills and knowledge which are generally above those expected for their age and attainment by the end of Year 6, which had been broadly average, rose in the summer to above the national average in English and well above average in mathematics. Pupils make good progress in the Reception class and their progress in the rest of the school is now satisfactory. The rate of learning in lessons is accelerating so that most pupils have made up previous lost ground. Accurate assessment information is well used to target individual pupils for support and also to inform day-to-day learning. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are increasingly well catered for both in class and through additional support activities. Opportunities for pupils to work independently, use their own ideas and develop their problem solving and thinking skills are improving but remain an area for further development. Similarly, there is scope for greater opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and make a stronger contribution to the school and the community.

Teaching is good and there are glimmers of outstanding practice. Teachers plan lessons and series of lessons with clear objectives and they make very good use of steps for learning, well-focused questioning and effective marking so that pupils know how well they are learning and what they need to do to improve further. The recently established curriculum is satisfactory. It is coherently planned to enable the development of skills and knowledge from year to year and there are good links across the learning in different subjects.

Senior leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have set challenging but realistic targets for further improvement. They fully understand the importance of building the capacity to improve further. To this end, subject leaders are increasingly involved and influential in shaping future improvement. The quality and pace of improvements are evidence that the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment so that it is well above average and increase the rate of progress across all subjects, particularly in English, by:
 - sharing the most effective practice in the school so that more of the teaching is outstanding
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to work independently, use their initiative and develop their problem-solving and thinking skills.

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.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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Levels of attainment are rising across the school to where they should be given the pupils' starting points and the rate of progress is increasing. In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to do well. Attainment in English has been lower than in mathematics. The evidence in books and around the school is testament to the success of action taken to tackle this. There are many examples of writing for a range of purposes, for example Year 6 pupils have written very persuasive letters applying for the role of bank clerks. The school has identified that there is a similar need to target higher level comprehension skills in reading. There is a good match of activities to pupils' differing abilities but even more could be done to raise the levels of challenge still further.

Strong church links and a high priority on ensuring that there is time for reflection and discussion of social, moral and cultural issues mean that pupils' development in these important areas is now good. Pupils are thoughtful, helpful and keen to celebrate the achievements of others. During the inspection, a working together time

was observed and the relationship between Year 6 pupils and their Reception partners, as they decorated gingerbread men, was delightful. The older pupils have some responsibilities and opportunities to make a positive contribution, for example through school council activities and taking part in fund raising for charities. Opportunities for them to influence decisions and take the initiative are at an early stage and they would relish more of this type of opportunity. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Good basic skills and personal attributes linked to high attendance mean that they are well prepared to take the next steps in their education.

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 | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| Pupils’ behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have a good understanding of different subjects and of pupils’ learning. They are making increasingly effective use of assessment during lessons, for example, through good use of questioning. This is linked to consistently good lesson planning in terms of content, organisation and structure. Expectations as to the amount and quality of work pupils should be achieving have risen significantly. The effectiveness of support is also much improved as teaching assistants are now well briefed and activities are well matched to cater for pupils’ different abilities. Some teaching is on the cusp of outstanding with practical and enjoyable lessons which have an added spice of challenge. Most teaching is not quite at this level and there is scope to move, as the school monitoring reports say, from safe to inspiring. There is still a small minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory. In these lessons there is less clarity and purpose in the activities and in their organisation, which slows the

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

pace of learning and occasionally results in some low-level inattentive behaviour. All of the marking of pupils’ work is helpful in showing pupils how well they are learning and the next steps. Some is excellent and gives pupils additional challenge and opportunities to respond and reflect more deeply on their own learning.

The curriculum is relatively new and needs time to develop but there are already positive signs that the quality of pupils’ work is improving across subjects such as religious education as well as in English and mathematics. There are valuable links made across the learning in different subjects and these, together with visits and visitors, increase the relevance, enjoyment and quality of learning. These links are further developed through the new homework policy which enables pupils to choose between different options. Parents, carers and pupils are enthusiastic about this new approach and participation in homework has increased. The curriculum also provides increased opportunities to explore different cultures including some good work to help children understand the customs and traditions of the Traveller community.

The care, guidance and support provided are firmly based on Christian values. There are secure systems and procedures to track every child individually, both academically and socially, and ensure that none falls through the net. There are good arrangements to help pupils settle quickly into the school, whether into Reception or at other times during the year, and onwards to secondary school. The school has developed very productive links with a range of external agencies to enhance specialist support for pupils and families with particular needs. Children feel safe and well cared for as a result. Attendance is high and monitored carefully. A current and ongoing training programme to enhance the understanding and skills of all staff in providing care, managing behaviour and ensuring pupils’ safety is enhancing provision further.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have established consistency in routines and systems so that confidence is rising. Self-evaluation is based on rigorous monitoring and accurate assessment and priorities for improvement are sharply focused on pupils’ achievement. Monitoring has been followed up by an exceptionally effective coaching programme which has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The pace of this improvement is accelerating due to a greatly improved open and collegiate ethos, which enables staff to evaluate their work honestly and to work together more effectively. Subject leaders are developing good leadership skills,

which, along with their enthusiasm, have had a positive impact in a relatively short time. The governing body has taken stock, reorganised its systems and procedures and is now using its impressive skills coherently for the benefit of the school. It quite rightly judges governance as satisfactory but it is improving fast.

Other aspects of leadership are also satisfactory and they need to be established longer to fully enhance provision and raise achievement. The school is now a cohesive community and this has been such a major improvement in itself, that it would be easy to assume that it is better than satisfactory but there is also more to do to deepen pupils’ understanding of different communities across the United Kingdom and the world. The positive response of parents and carers to the school’s questionnaire is evidence that there has been an upsurge in parents’ and carers’ confidence in the school. Innovations such as the new homework policy are resulting in greater parental involvement. Positive links have been re-established with the local churches and other schools and these, allied to effective partnerships with external agencies, are beginning to make a strong contribution, particularly to the good care and support. The procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are thorough and carried out rigorously so that pupils quite rightly feel safe in school. Equality of opportunity is established in the individualised approach to ensuring that all pupils achieve and participate in all school activities. The school is proactive in countering discrimination, for example by ensuring that groups in school such as the Traveller community are better understood. Pupil assessment and tracking information has not been accurate until recently so it has been difficult until now to identify any trends or underperformance between different groups. The school is now providing satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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 enjoy school. Good relationships with parents, carers and pre-schools are established early and mean that, by the time they start school, children know the staff and the routines very well. They settle quickly and develop high levels of independence and confidence. When they arrive children generally have higher than expected levels of skills and knowledge although the achievement of the present cohort is similar to most children of their age. Over time, there is an improving trend in children’s achievements, especially in the number of pupils achieving at the highest levels. There are good systems for assessing pupils when they arrive, and throughout their time in Reception, and this is then linked to the planned activities so that there is a close match of task to meet children’s needs.

The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes better. Adults make the learning as engaging as possible by building on children’s interests and providing imaginatively planned opportunities for investigation both inside and outdoors. There is a high focus placed on developing communication skills and children’s ability to make independent choices. For example, during the inspection a child made himself a pirate hat in the creative area so that he could wear it in the pirate ship outside. All adults encourage learning through a good range of questions and prompts. The use of resources is generally good so that all areas of learning are well covered. Occasionally, there is a shortage due to unexpected demand and there is further work needed to fine tune activities to support phonics. The experienced Reception teacher provides good leadership and management and has established good teamwork to capitalise on the strengths of other adults.

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

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 this.

The school carried out a survey of parents’ and carers’ views in October 2011 using the Ofsted questions, and there were significant increases in the proportion of parents and carers who responded positively about all aspects.

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 | 43 | 47 | 10 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 46 | 42 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 36 | 41 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 30 | 48 | 19 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 50 | 31 | 5 |
| All schools | 10 | 44 | 39 | 6 |

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 08 April 2011 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

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| 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.



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Brenchley TN12 7NY

Thank you for the warm welcome and help you have given me and other inspectors when we have visited your school over the last year. When your school was inspected in March 2010, there were some important things that needed improving quickly. This has happened and your school is now giving you a satisfactory education. This will be my last visit as your school no longer needs special measures. Well done everyone! The school is a much happier place now.

The school is improving quickly and some important things are now good.

- You get off to a cracking start in the Reception class.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning and to each other are good.
- Teaching is good so you are learning quickly now.
- The adults in school look after you very well and make sure that those of you who need extra help get the right sort of support.
- The senior leaders are making sure that everyone improves and they keep a very close eye on how well you are learning.

Mrs Green and the other adults in your school are keen to make sure that Brenchley and Matfield carries on getting better so I have asked them to raise your achievement even more, especially in English, by:

- sharing their good ideas so that some of the teaching becomes outstanding
- giving you more chances to improve your problem-solving and thinking skills
- planning activities when you can use your own ideas, take on more responsibilities and have a greater say in moving the school forward.

Well done to everyone for improving Brenchley and Matfield and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

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