

Eastry Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118685
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339277
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr David Sugden
Headteacher	Mr Tim Halling
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching, support and administrative staff, governors, parents and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs, minutes of governors' meetings and 56 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the level of achievement of the current pupils and if boys and girls achieve equally well
- the apparent strengths in pupils' personal development and the school's measures to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- the curriculum and extra-curricular activities and the development of community cohesion
- how effectively all leaders and managers are facilitating improvements for pupils' achievement

Information about the school

Eastry is an average-sized primary school where most pupils come from a White British background and all pupils are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average, but higher in some year groups than others. The majority of these pupils have early language or moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils who have joined the school in the last two years is above the national average. The school has many awards - the Gold FLAIR award for their teaching of modern foreign languages; Sports Mark; Healthy School Award; Silver Eco award; Platinum Travel Plan; Emerged Status for Extended Schools Services.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Eastry Church of England Primary School provides an outstanding education for all of its pupils. An 'ordinary looking building' as one parent described it, it may be, but inside it opens out into a beautifully maintained and welcoming environment. Pupils' work is everywhere to be seen. Staff take great pride in the displays that are around the school which praise and encourage pupils for their many achievements. Pupils in turn are proud of their school. They work very hard and progress outstandingly well. The overwhelming majority of parents are right in their judgement that this is an excellent school. One spoke on behalf of many by writing, 'I cannot imagine my children being any happier than they are at the school. The 'buddy system' is a fantastic way of helping children in Reception to quickly grow in confidence around the school. In my opinion the school has created the perfect environment for the development of children both pastorally and academically.'

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors provide highly effective leadership. They know the school's strengths very well and what needs to be refined further. The school's view of itself is accurate and their track record of consistently raising standards to high levels through their very effective monitoring systems shows that it has an excellent capacity to continue improving. There are very rewarding partnerships with the community, the local church and with other schools and organisations.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve extremely well and are inquisitive learners. They enter the school with skills and understanding that vary but are usually broadly in line with those expected for their age. Very effective organisation and careful assessments enable children to make good progress immediately in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good start is built upon well so that standards at the end of Year 2 are above average and the more able pupils do especially well. Much of the pupils' success in reading and writing is due to the school's strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. By the time they leave the school, standards are high because the teaching is never less than good, and often outstanding. In a very small number of lesson activities, some 'fine-tuning' to cater for some individual pupils would enhance teaching further. Individual improvement targets and outstanding support for pupils of all abilities consistently raise pupils' levels of achievement significantly. National test results in Year 6 this year exceeded the school's carefully formulated and challenging targets and results were very high.

Pupils' development and well-being are excellent which helps their all-round achievement, both academic and personal. They acquire a detailed understanding of safe and healthy choices and make an exceptional contribution to the school and wider community. The school council are justifiably proud of the input they have made to influence changes both inside and outside the school. Their input is mature and thoughtful, and much appreciated by all staff. Attendance is above average, as pupils enjoy all their time at school. Pupils'

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behaviour and their keen appetite for teamwork, together with their outstanding skills in English, mathematics and science, prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their learning.

The curriculum covers all subjects well and is enhanced by a good range of additional activities, visits and visitors. The school rightly has a priority to give pupils increasing opportunities to practise and further consolidate their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The school has accurately identified the need to augment links between subjects further to enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment, and make all lessons as relevant to pupils' interests as possible.

The school does much to promote their place in the local community and works effectively with many local nurseries, playgroups and local businesses. The contribution of the Parent Teacher Association is exceptional, as is the work of a range of local community helpers. The audit of community cohesion, undertaken by the headteacher and staff, is underpinned by a careful analysis of these factors in the school's context. While these links with the local community are excellent, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse Great Britain are not developed sufficiently well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help all pupils to embed their learning and skills by:
 - modifying the curriculum in all year groups to provide further exciting and relevant activities
 - adapting teachers' daily planning to cater precisely for individual pupils' interests.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse Great Britain and extend the school's provision for community cohesion by:
 - instigating the findings of their recent careful analysis
 - implementing their plans to link with schools in other localities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In all lessons observed, pupils made good progress. Often learning is excellent. On these occasions, the pupils are highly involved in learning and totally engrossed in the activities. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, for example, Year 6 pupils delighted in working with a partner to enable them both to make maximum progress. The classroom was filled with a buzz of purposeful conversation where the boys in particular were delighted to find the best possible ways to solve their problems. The pupils' enjoyment and thoughtful consideration of each other's opinions and good attempts to record their ideas were impressive.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties leads to these pupils making excellent progress. More boys than girls have literacy difficulties. Older boys have benefited from tailored individual or small group literacy sessions, which have successfully helped to plug the gaps in their writing skills. Activities that involve them using all of their senses to learn and identify letter sounds have aided their confidence in writing for different purposes. This has had a positive effect on their learning in other subjects.

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Another reason that pupils make outstanding progress overall and achieve so well is that pupils attend so regularly. The school successfully instils in the pupils a strong spiritual, social and moral understanding, which accounts for their excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to school. A striking feature that the pupils displayed at all times was the caring way they look after each other. The outstanding 'buddy system' was shown to particularly good effect in the shared worship, where pupils simply came into the hall and sat with their friends to enjoy the singing and time for reflection. Older pupils made sure the younger ones had their chance to speak; the way pupils treated each other and spoke to adults with such kindness and respect was a pleasure to witness. It was also a delight to see the pupils chatting genially together on arrival at the school in the morning, during lunch and at break times. The excellent supervision by the adults contributed significantly to the pleasant ambience of these occasions.

Throughout the school, inspectors were impressed by these consistently high standards of behaviour and social skills of all pupils. The school's Activemark and Healthy School awards reflect effective provision to promote pupils' good awareness of healthy lifestyles. As some of the pupils admitted, they are very aware of how to adopt a healthy diet, but often opt to eat less well. Pupils' knowledge of how to keep safe is outstanding. They are given an excellent grounding in good citizenship and in contributing to the community through, for example, appointments as Buddies or as members of the school council.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

The teachers consistently show excellent skills in managing their pupils and in providing clear explanations about new concepts. In lessons, pupils' impeccable behaviour and their excellent skills in working either independently or with their classmates help create the high-quality climate for learning that is evident in all classes. At the top end of the school, teachers cultivate pupils' excellent skills in reading and comprehension, so pupils understand tasks quickly. They also encourage high levels of speaking and listening so discussions in lessons are invariably of high quality. These teaching approaches ensure pupils' excellent attitudes towards their studies and desire to learn.

As well as opportunities to talk and exchange ideas, teachers make sure that pupils are given occasions to listen with care and learn to focus. This was very evident in a Year 2 lesson on the Grace Darling story that began with listening to 'Scheherazade Shipwreck' and recognising the 'crashing, smashing and splashing' dramatic parts of the music.

During the inspection, a particular note was made of whether there were any marked differences in the learning of boys and girls. The school's own comprehensive checks showed that progress was slightly slower for boys overall throughout the school. Senior leaders have acted well on this information and implemented a raft of initiatives designed to remedy the situation. These include the introduction of tasks designed to challenge all pupils through investigations. Inspection evidence shows that these measures are having a positive impact, particularly for the boys. The gender gap in learning is not significant.

The curriculum is used very well to speed up pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. There has been a very strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills in the last few years. As a result, pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics in particular have been consistently well above expectations for their age by the time they leave school. There are very well researched plans for further investment in ICT equipment. The school is now developing its curriculum to improve pupils' learning even further by adding extra relevance and enjoyment. They are in the process of developing a more creative curriculum through topics that provide opportunities for pupils to use and develop their different skills, such as their writing and computer skills, in interesting and more relevant contexts. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs and activities organised after school which add significantly to their development and appreciation of school.

Guidance for learning is extremely good. Assessment information collected about pupils is used particularly well to ensure that the least able and the most vulnerable pupils make outstanding progress. This is achieved by providing excellent support from the very experienced teaching assistants wherever it is needed. Pupils are very familiar with their learning targets and develop skills of self-assessment. They are proud to discuss 'class points' earned for either good work or effort and are able to explain how teachers' comments in their books have helped them further improve their work.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides quietly inspirational leadership. This, in partnership with the very effective deputy headteacher, ensures that complacency is not tolerated. Teamwork is excellent and the administrative team and support staff are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned. Staff are focused relentlessly on further improvement and work brilliantly together. The school knows itself very well and sets the right targets to become even better. All subject leaders and governors are closely involved in monitoring the school's work, which they do rigorously and with tremendous enthusiasm. Documentation is impressive and the evaluation of the school's work is honest and accurate. The outstanding governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. They hold the school to account in a challenging but supportive manner.

Excellent attention is paid by managers at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safety and care for the pupils. There are, for example, good procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils through the checks made on all adults who work in the school. The senior managers, supported well by all staff, are also effective in promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils across all aspects of the school's work, demonstrated by their action to reduce any gender differences in attainment.

The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very well. The need to expand its links to provide a national perspective, which is currently underdeveloped, is well understood by the school.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start when they join the Reception class, due to the outstanding welfare provision that ensures they settle well. As one parent wrote, 'The procedures in place for a smooth transition from nursery to school are a shining example to all ' particularly the nursery and home visits and especially the wonderful buddy system.' It is not only the staff, but also pupils in their own class and beyond, who contribute to the children's feeling of safety and happiness when they start. This allocation of a 'buddy' from the Year 5 class is a good example of this.

The effective teaching and excellent support of children's welfare show that this Early Years area is clearly near to achieving the outstanding provision in the rest of the school. Children make good progress and do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. The adults are skilled at helping pupils to learn when they work with them directly in the class. Excellent relationships and clear planning underpin children's learning and enjoyment. There is a good balance between such directed activities and opportunities for pupils to choose activities for themselves. Assessments of children's progress in adult-directed activities are good, and used well to plan further work. Children thoroughly enjoy learning in the excellent outside area, but some activities there could be better organised and monitored to ensure that children are able to use their individual skills and interest to make maximum progress, and the excellent equipment is used to the best effect.

Very good partnership between all adults promotes the extremely effective welfare and good day-to-day assessment. The leadership and management is good and has facilitated significant improvements since the last inspection. Rigorous systems for planning, recording and moderating children's achievement promotes learning very well and ensures continuity to Year 1 across the areas of learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and the headteacher leads and manages the school very well. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and that their children make good progress. They were particularly impressed with the 'buddy system' and the pastoral support their children receive. Inspectors fully endorse these views. A small number of parental criticisms were offered constructively. There were no particular trends in the very few negative comments received by inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eastry Church of England 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 197 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	65	17	32	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	72	13	24	2	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	39	27	50	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	44	25	46	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	52	24	44	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	39	28	52	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	52	24	44	2	4	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)	29	54	20	37	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	44	23	43	6	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	48	22	40	3	6	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	50	20	37	5	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	56	22	41	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	61	19	35	1	2	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eastry C of E Primary School, Sandwich CT13 0LR

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would now like to tell you what we found out about your school. We agree with what you told us ' Eastry is an excellent school. These are the main reasons why we thought the school was so good:

- You make outstanding progress and really try hard at all times. We were very impressed that you knew what to do to make your work even better.
- We saw that you know you are especially lucky to have so many different activities both during and after school.
- Your headteacher and staff do a super job in organising the school.
- You all really enjoy being in school. Many of you try very hard to help others. For instance, the school council and buddies do a super job.
- You behave exceptionally well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers ' all of this helps you to succeed.
- All the adults in the school look after you very carefully. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.

We agree with the governors and staff of your school, and we have asked them to make sure that all their planning for all lessons makes things as interesting as possible for you and you get all the opportunities you need to use what you learn in English and mathematics in other subjects. We also think that there are ways in which the staff could help you to find out even more about how other people live in Great Britain.

Finally, we would like to thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours faithfully

David Marshall
Lead Inspector

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