



# High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114507  
**LEA** East Sussex  
**Inspection number** 279398  
**Inspection dates** 25 May 2006 to 25 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Kevin Hodge AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	High Hurstwood
<b>School category</b>	Community		Uckfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		East Sussex TN22 4AD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01825 733231
<b>Number on roll</b>	89	<b>Fax number</b>	01825 733231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Michael J Cooper
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C L Newell

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 25 May 2006 - 25 May 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 279398
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small primary school where the vast majority of pupils are White British. Although only a small number of pupils have learning difficulties, the proportion with severe difficulties is higher than average. The majority of pupils come from relatively favourable social and economic backgrounds. When they start school, most children's attainment slightly exceeds that expected for their age. The number of pupils who start at the school other than the normal times of the year is much higher than average. There has been significant disruption caused by the recent addition of new classrooms and outside play areas. All classes, except Reception, have pupils from two year groups.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

High Hurstwood is a good school, where children feel safe and love the family atmosphere. They achieve well, as they are eager to learn. The school evaluates its own performance accurately. Sound provision enables children to make broadly satisfactory progress in the Reception Year, despite having children with learning difficulties. When they start in Year 1, they reach the standards expected nationally in most areas of learning. Some exceed these in their social development and knowledge of number. However, the difficult location of new outdoor play facilities combined with some comparatively weaker aspects in teaching, hamper their creative and physical development. In other year groups, good teaching means the vast majority of pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave school. Those pupils with particular gifts and talents achieve well and those with learning difficulties make very good progress due to the close support they receive. Teaching is good overall in Years 1 to 6, but at times more able pupils are not challenged enough. Teaching in Reception is satisfactory, although children are given too much direction and this limits some aspects of their learning. The quality of the curriculum is good. It both develops pupils' basic skills and promotes a broad range of artistic skills in Years 1 to 6. Class work is further enriched by extra-curricular clubs and links with local schools. As a result of the good provision for their social, spiritual and moral development, children's behaviour is extremely good. Their awareness of world traditions and cultures is not promoted well enough, although their knowledge of British culture and other faiths is good. The links with the community are well established and pupils take an active part in local events and annual festivals. The headteacher, supported by a good staff team and governing body, has high expectations and leads the school well. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection, particularly with the provision of additional new classrooms. A clear view of what still needs to be tackled, supported by the enthusiastic approach of staff and governors, means the school is well placed to keep improving. It provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Give children in the Reception class more freedom to choose activities to explore, particularly when using the outside play areas.
- Improve teaching further by giving more able pupils challenging and open ended activities so they can do even better.
- Extend pupils' awareness of other cultures and customs so they have a greater understanding of our culturally diverse society.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good overall. Children generally make satisfactory progress in the Reception Year from their slightly above average starting point. By the time they begin Year 1, children reach the expected standards. They do not achieve as well as they

could in their creative and physical development, but they have a very good base of social and number skills. Pupils generally make good progress through the rest of the school, although some who are more able could do better still. The small number of pupils taking the national tests in 2005 reached above average standards overall. Pupils achieved well in gaining the higher levels in science, but they did not do as well in writing and mathematics. The school responded quickly and succeeded in improving pupils' achievement through the school in both areas, but particularly in writing. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' increased motivation to write has improved their achievement and they confidently use different methods to solve mathematical problems. Current assessments predict a rise in the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the higher levels in writing and Year 6 are on course to achieve well given their starting point. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' performance in national tests each year and is broadly successful in reaching these. While pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science, they also show good achievement in information and communication technology (ICT), art, history and music. Vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties achieve very well because staff provide close, well planned support.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' mature attitudes and extremely good behaviour are key indicators of their good personal development and well-being. The pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good. They cooperate willingly with teachers and each other. Older pupils act as 'buddies' to younger children and this link often promotes deeper friendships. Pupils' knowledge of cultural diversity is limited, although their knowledge of British culture is good. Attendance is good. Parents and pupils are very positive about the school. As one parent wrote in the preinspection questionnaire, 'my son oozes energy for school when he gets up'. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through their participation in local events and to wider charity appeals such as sponsoring children overseas. Activities such as learning to run mini-companies, combined with pupils having good basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT, help prepare them well for later life. Pupils know how to be safe and the benefits of regular exercise. They know that certain foods are good for them, but do not fully realise that a balanced diet can contain moderate amounts of all types. The school council is well thought of by pupils and its role taken seriously. It has recently been successful in persuading a change in parents' attitudes towards school uniform.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good use of technology, productive relationships and a desire to include all pupils in all activities are key reasons why teaching and learning are good. Teaching is engaging, well structured and often makes good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment of lessons. Teachers manage behaviour very well, which means

lessons go smoothly. Activities, such as using drama to stimulate pupils' thinking, skilfully develop their creative writing skills. Active short breaks in lessons re-energise pupils' learning effectively. However, teaching is not always successful at meeting all pupils' needs. In some lessons, more able pupils are not challenged enough to use or apply their skills, but those with exceptional talents are provided for effectively. In the Reception class, children's creative skills and abilities to make decisions about their activities are limited because they are over-directed. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and effectively, which leads to noticeable improvement in their work. Teachers' comments encourage and point to the next steps in learning. Teaching assistants are used well to provide good support to pupils in all age groups and abilities. Those pupils with learning difficulties are supported particularly well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is broad, stimulating and well balanced in Years 1 to 6. A wide variety of enrichment opportunities is a key strength. Pupils enjoy the special theme weeks, visitors, trips and residential visits because these make learning fun. The good range and quality of displays reflects the richness of provision. However, the range of activities planned to raise pupils' awareness of a multicultural society is too narrow. The high quality ICT suite helps pupils improve their technology skills effectively. The high number and good variety of extra-curricular activities are well attended and contribute to the pupils' health and well-being. There are good links developed with local colleges which help provide additional sporting activities and advice from specialist teachers. Gifted or talented pupils have a good range of activities which extend their skills in sport, music and drama work. Planning for the Reception children, although generally satisfactory, is hampered by their play area being some distance from the classroom. In Years 1 to 6, clear plans support systematic learning in basic skills and cater well for mixed age groups.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' care, guidance and support are good. Pupils know that they are respected, valued and safe. They feel very secure in discussing any problems with adults in the school. Child protection procedures are effective and there are good arrangements for securing pupils' health and safety. The systems to identify, support and monitor pupils with learning difficulties are thorough and comprehensive. Specific, well focused targets are set for these pupils and are reviewed regularly with parents and pupils. The school works effectively with many outside agencies, such as school nurses and social services, to support pupils who need specific help. The school takes great care to support pupils who suffer family or personal trauma. The high level of individual support, combined with keeping an eye on pupils' academic progress, helps to minimise their difficulties in these situations. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are set targets to improve, generally in mathematics and English. Although pupils know they have targets, they are not always clear what these are. Teaching assistants are well trained in a range of

activities to support pupils and are given the opportunity to improve their expertise to enhance the guidance they give.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The clear vision of the headteacher, supported effectively by the governing body and staff team, is the key reason why leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets high standards for pupils and those that care for them. The school's self-evaluation is well thought through and largely accurate in identifying areas of weakness. Although some weaknesses remain, the school has improved aspects of teaching in the Reception class and recognises the work needed to improve multicultural provision. The well established teamwork between all staff is an important factor in the school's success. It helps foster a very good ethos that encourages both pupils and adults to learn, and good achievement is celebrated for all. Governors know the school well and give good levels of support. They regularly visit to see how the school operates and guide plans of action. Governors and staff respond quickly to parental concerns or views. For example, some proposed changes to the home-school agreement were dropped after parents voiced concern. Despite weaknesses in the Reception class provision, resources are generally used effectively to promote pupils' learning. For example, a good number of well trained support staff help all pupils to enjoy and take part in activities, particularly those with additional learning needs or who have special gifts or talents.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Children I really enjoyed my visit to your school and the way you made sure I knew how to get around it. Here are some of the things I found out. What I liked most about your school

- You make visitors feel very welcome and you really like school.
- You reach good standards in your work, and enjoy your sporting, artistic and musical activities.
- The teachers make learning fun and interesting.
- You behave really well in class and around the school.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work well together.
- You help your community by taking part in events and local festivals.
- You feel safe and able to ask for help when you need it and the school notices when you feel sad or have had a really bad day.
- Your parents and carers think it is a good school that helps you learn well.

What I have asked the school to do now

- Give the Reception children more chance to choose activities on their own so they learn how to investigate and try things out for themselves.
- Help you to know and understand more about people with different customs and ways of living.
- Although they usually teach well, we have asked the teachers to make sure that they really push your thinking in lessons, especially those of you who are quite clever but could do more.

I hope that you continue to enjoy school and make the best of your new buildings. Yours sincerely Kevin Hodge Lead inspector