



Cecil Road Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118258
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280278
Inspection dates 18 January 2006 to 19 January 2006
Reporting inspector Robert Lovett HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cecil Road
School category	Community		Gravesend
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Kent DA11 7BT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01474 534544
Number on roll	435	Fax number	01474 357667
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Grant Reeves
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Andrew Sparks

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. It opened in 1909 to serve what is now an established residential area. It is a popular school and most pupils live close by. As a result the school population is stable, with relatively few pupils leaving other than at the end of Year 6. While this is one of the less affluent areas of Kent, it is about average when compared with others nationally. A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak a first language other than English, mainly Punjabi and Bengali.

The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN) is about average but the proportion with a statement of SEN is higher than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges itself as outstanding while inspectors judge it to be a good school with a number of outstanding features. The school is inclusive and every child is valued as an individual. Parents and pupils recognise the high quality of care the school provides. The personal development of pupils is outstanding. They get on very well with each other and with adults and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent.

Overall, leadership and management are good and the headteacher provides very effective leadership. The leadership of SEN is outstanding so that pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. The school's partnership with others, such as the Gravesham Excellence Cluster, faith communities and local secondary schools is also outstanding.

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum and a very wide range of learning experiences beyond the normal school day.

Overall, standards are average by the end of Year 6 and they are above average in mathematics. Pupils enter the Nursery with levels of attainment that are well below average, particularly in their communication skills. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage. While all groups of pupils make good progress, those speaking a first language other than English make very good progress. This is because they are well supported and the quality of teaching and learning is good. However, pupils are not always sure about what they need to do to improve their work or how they will know when they have achieved their targets. Although the school tracks the progress of individuals very well it is less effective in tracking the progress of groups of pupils, such as those from different backgrounds.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and demonstrates good capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve target setting so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work and know when targets have been achieved
- make more effective use of data to monitor and evaluate how well groups of pupils are doing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the Nursery with standards that are well below average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in speaking and listening, but attainment overall remains below average by the time they leave the Reception class.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 although standards are higher in reading than in writing. This is because strategies used successfully to raise standards in speaking and listening, particularly for those pupils speaking a first language other

than English, have not had time to raise standards in writing. By the end of Year 6 progress is good so that standards rise to average overall and above average in mathematics.

Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are very well supported by teaching assistants, the special educational needs co-ordinator and learning mentor. Pupils who speak a first language other than English are also well supported and make very good progress because learning is well matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and respond very well to other pupils and adults. They settle quickly to their work and maintain high levels of concentration. Their behaviour in both lessons and the playground is outstanding. Because pupils enjoy coming to school attendance is good.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are polite and well behaved, and quickly learn school routines. Throughout the school, pupils adopt good, safe practices and healthy lifestyles because these are well promoted by teachers and teaching assistants. For example many pupils take advantage of the organised physical activities, which are provided at lunchtime in the playgrounds. The school has a healthy eating policy, which has resulted in more pupils choosing healthy options at lunchtime. Pupils demonstrate responsibility through an effective school council, which is well regarded by other pupils and represents their views to the staff and, through the election of "junior governors", the governing body. Pupils join in the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities enthusiastically, with large numbers taking part. The school choir regularly performs at the Bluewater Shopping Centre and at events within the community. Pupils play a full part in making the school a harmonious multicultural community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good because teachers and Nursery nurses have good questioning skills and are sensitive to the individual needs of pupils. As a result, pupils learn to work together and to take turns and share. This collaborative working helps develop speaking and listening skills and new vocabulary. Pupils enjoy learning to count and to write their names, although some more able pupils would benefit from a wider range of writing experiences.

Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is consistently good. This good teaching is characterised by learning that is well planned to meet the needs of all learners so that pupils are appropriately challenged. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults

are positive. In many lessons there is a real sense of fun and of the enjoyment of learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, as seen in a successful exploration of Jewish and Sikh religious symbols. In this lesson, skilled questioning led to a profound discussion of the theme of God and conscience.

Work is very well displayed in classrooms and other areas of the school to celebrate success and exemplify high standards. These displays are regularly changed and are well cared for, indicating that pupils take a real pride in their work and that of others.

While marking is generally good, not all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. They are also unclear about how targets are monitored and how they will know when they have achieved them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a rich curriculum. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers the full range of skills for pupils under the age of 5 and provides for parents to be kept regularly informed of progress. The English curriculum is well structured and steps have been taken to improve the quality of writing across all subjects. In mathematics practical activities are used effectively to promote understanding. The curriculum develops pupils' personal skills and provides good opportunities for links between subjects. Good use is made of visits to places such as Leeds Castle, to enhance the learning of pupils. Those in Years 3, 4 and 6 have opportunities to experience residential visits. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is playing an increasingly important part in the curriculum but there is scope for further development of both the teaching of ICT skills and the use of ICT to raise standards across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care and support for pupils is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of parents are quick to praise the school in this respect and pupils also say they are well cared for.

The school is welcoming and has a harmonious atmosphere. Health and safety routines and risk assessment are in place. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood. As a result pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils express confidence that they have an adult to talk with should they feel the need to discuss personal matters.

The provision of care, guidance and support of pupils with SEN is outstanding. The school has good procedures for the early identification of vulnerable pupils. The classroom support and withdrawal systems ensure that these pupils achieve at the same rate as other groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, with some outstanding features. Following the promotion of a number of senior managers, the headteacher leads a new team in sustaining a welcoming and friendly learning environment very effectively. Relationships are very good, and all pupils participate fully in lessons and in the life of the school. Outstanding management in the Foundation Stage significantly influences pupils' achievement in the Nursery and Reception classes. The management team has good capacity to lead further improvement in the school.

The school's self-evaluation correctly identifies standards of teaching and learning as improving and good overall. It also identifies some areas for continuing development, particularly raising standards in English in Years 1 and 2. While the progress of individual pupils is very well monitored, systems for tracking the progress of groups of pupils are not fully in place so that subject leaders and others are unclear about the achievement of groups of pupils over time. There are developing strategies for raising standards in science but targets are not yet in place and assessment is restricted to the end of key stage tests.

Subject co-ordinators and team leaders support teachers by observing lessons and monitoring teaching plans, and their evaluations and advice are a significant factor in the overall improvement in teaching.

Governors are prominent in the life and work of the school. They know the school well and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

The views of parents and pupils are overwhelmingly supportive and the school is justifiably held in high regard by the community.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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 Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and telling us about it. Your views were very helpful and helped ensure we got to know your school well.

We agree with your view that your school cares for and looks after you very well. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour in and around the school and with how well you get on with one another. The school is a very calm and hard working place but there is still a good sense of the fun of learning. You said you enjoy coming to school very much and you enjoy the many clubs and activities the school offers.

The headteacher and all the staff work hard to make the school a better place. One of the things this inspection will do is to give them a clear picture of what is good in the school and what you all need to work harder at. One of the jobs ahead is to improve the way targets are set for you, so that you know how to improve your work. The school has a very clear picture of how each of you is doing, but we are asking the school to look more closely at how well groups of you, such those from different backgrounds, are doing. This is so that teachers can be sure they are planning work that best meets the needs of all of you.

You and your parents told us you think yours is a good school and we agree with you. It is now up to you and your teachers to make it even better. We wish you success in making this happen and hope you enjoy the year ahead.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools (on behalf of all the inspectors)