



# Birchington Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118693  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 280372  
**Inspection dates** 23 February 2006 to 24 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Sheila Browning AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Park Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Birchington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		Kent CT7 0AS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 841046
<b>Number on roll</b>	407	<b>Fax number</b>	01843 846034
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Jan Tebbett
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lesley Gallagher

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 23 February 2006 - 24 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280372
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Birchington School is much bigger than most other primary schools. A third of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities, which is well above average. Most pupils are from White British families and several minority ethnic groups are also represented in small numbers. Very few pupils are at early stages of learning English. Children start school with very limited skills and experience. There are high levels of pupil mobility in Years 3 to 5, and very high levels in Year 6. Staff turnover has been high until this very recently.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. This is the view of the school itself which is confirmed by the inspection. Good teaching and provision helps the children in the Reception classes to achieve well. They make very good gains in their personal skills though standards overall are below those expected at the end of the Reception year. In Years 1 to 2 pupils make good progress to reach average standards. However, in Years 3 to 6, progress has been more uneven and standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. More sharply focused training, monitoring and support are now strengthening teaching and improving pupils' progress. This is having a good impact in English but standards in mathematics and science are still too low at the end of Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and there is some good practice, but this is not shared enough to enable standards to rise as quickly as they should. Pupils are set targets to help them improve their work but they are not always clear about what these are. A significant strength of the school is its good pastoral care and very successful promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils are well supported and guided and as a result they behave well. A sound curriculum and good extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' development. Attendance is unsatisfactory though the school is working hard to tackle this. The headteacher and senior managers provide satisfactory leadership that is well focused on improvement. Governors are involved and informed about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The issues in the last report have been tackled well. The school gives satisfactory value for money and is in a secure position to make further improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 and involve pupils more in understanding their own targets for improvement.
- Build on the good teaching seen in some lessons to improve the quality of teaching across the school
- Continue to ensure that improving attendance is made a high priority.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Overall achievement is satisfactory but there is some variation in how well pupils are doing in different year groups and different subjects. There have been improvements in standards since the last inspection for pupils in Year 2 and in information and communication technology at the end of Year 6. There has been an improvement in English throughout the school. In the Reception classes, achievement is good in most areas of learning and especially in personal and social development. The majority of children are on course to meet the expected standards in knowledge and understanding, creative development and physical development by the end of the Reception year. However, communication and literacy skills and mathematical skills remain below average. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well to reach broadly average

standards. Pupils make the best progress in mathematics and standards in this subject are higher than in English and science.

By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national averages in English but are well below average in mathematics and science. In Years 3 to 6 progress varies too much and pupils have not achieved as well as they should in mathematics and science. The school is now tackling this well and there are clear signs that pupils are making better and more consistent progress than before. Standards are rising because of well-trained staff, better resources, and improving use of assessment information.

The school sets sufficiently challenging targets for pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls or that of pupils from different ethnic groups. Due to good intervention and support programmes, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve satisfactorily.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils really enjoy school. They listen avidly in lessons and tackle their work with enthusiasm. All feel safe and secure and say that if they have a problem, teachers will sort it out. Rare instances of intimidation are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. It is often excellent when large numbers meet such as in assembly and the dining hall. The number of exclusions has been reduced as every effort is made to support pupils with behavioural difficulties. Attendance levels are unsatisfactory. They are below national averages, in part because a large number of parents remove their children for holidays. The school is taking a more robust stance on this and has also brought in other methods to improve attendance through rewards and first day absence phone calls.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies give pupils the opportunity to reflect and pray. Lessons give the chance to think about different emotions and depict them through art. A consistent approach to good manners, thinking of others and working together has a positive impact on how well pupils relate to each other. Opportunities to celebrate and understand other cultures are good through, for example, reading about Afghani children, close links made with a French school and learning about different aspects of art, music and religious education. Pupils are encouraged well to adopt safe practices and healthy lifestyles through walking to school, keeping active and taking care in and out of school. They make a good contribution to the community, participating in local events and fundraising. Pupils develop satisfactory skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to help their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in the Reception classes because staff know the children well and assess their progress thoroughly. Children are provided with good individual support and a range of activities is carefully planned to meet their different needs. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall and there is some good teaching in Years 1 and 2, but in Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching is too varied particularly in mathematics and science. Sharply focused training, monitoring and support are now strengthening teaching, particularly in English. The good strategies in English are yet being transferred to mathematics and science. Information communication and technology is well taught and pupils develop their skills well in other subjects. In the best lessons planning is thorough, relationships are good, classroom management is effective and teachers use questioning well to extend learning. Teachers are now fully involved in assessing and tracking pupils' progress and setting targets. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Well-trained teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of learning. However a number of lessons are less exciting, the pace lacks urgency and pupils are unsure about ways to improve. Marking of pupils' work is detailed and, in most cases, helpful. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support and progress as well as others in the school.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Guidance from the national strategies for literacy and numeracy is used appropriately to ensure that learning is built upon year on year. The introduction of booster groups for pupils who have been identified as needing specific extra help is an example of effective action taken to raise standards. There has been a good impact in literacy and numeracy but there is still work to do in numeracy in Years 3 to 6. Science provision though satisfactory will benefit from the planned opportunities to increase investigative work. The curriculum for the Reception classes meets the needs of children well. The good range of after-school activities helps children to learn how to get on well with each other. Educational visits and visitors make the curriculum more interesting and successfully extend and enrich learning. Throughout the school, work for children with learning difficulties and disabilities is planned well, ensuring they make satisfactory progress. Provision for personal development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to use their information and communication technology skills in a range of lessons. Subjects such as science and physical education make an effective contribution to children's understanding of the importance of being healthy, staying safe and working together co-operatively.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Overall provision is satisfactory and there are some strong features in this area. Academic support is satisfactory. Recent improvements in assessment mean that targets are used more consistently but not all pupils are aware of their individual targets or are clear enough about what they need to do to improve further.

Child protection and health and safety are high priorities in the school. Staff are trained well and any vulnerable pupils are very well-supported, with their welfare monitored very well. Pupils with specific behavioural or social needs are supported very effectively through activities such as the work of the learning mentor and special targeted group work. This has a positive impact on how well these pupils behave and learn.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since September, the deputy headteacher has been leading the school as acting headteacher whilst the substantive headteacher is in the school for one day a week, this has provided much needed continuity and stability. Together with the governing body they have worked hard to set and maintain a clear educational direction after a period of turbulence. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning is resulting in clear signs of improvement in pupils' achievement. There is improvement at the lower end of the school but this has not yet filtered through to raise standards overall. Senior managers and subject leaders are well motivated to secure improvement and they manage their areas of responsibility satisfactorily. Good teamwork is a hallmark of the school, resulting in a positive and constructive learning atmosphere.

The school successfully promotes the well-being of all pupils, with due regard to ensuring that all have equal access to all that the school offers. The school works hard to engage parents in their children's learning and the great majority of parents are very supportive of the school and its work. Parents and pupils are consulted and are involved in reviewing the school's performance. Governors discharge their responsibilities satisfactorily. They have developed a good level of awareness and have undergone considerable training. School self-evaluation is thorough and successfully identifies strengths and areas for development. The results of national and school-based tests are analysed thoroughly. All teachers have termly information on the progress each child is making in English and mathematics. This and the information from the relatively new assessment weeks is not used consistently to inform the curriculum to better meet pupils' identified needs. The shared sense of purpose and commitment amongst staff and governors, and the improvements made by senior managers since the last inspection, are ensuring that the school is moving forward.

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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>	3	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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	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>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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**

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. We are pleased that you enjoy school. We found that it does a lot of things to help you.

These are the things that we are most pleased about.

How well you are getting on and that you enjoy your lessons and all that the school offers

You are well behaved, polite and kind to one another

Those of you with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and the adults in the school ensure that all of you are very well cared for.

There are also some things that we think your school could do to be even better and we think you can help too.

Those of you in Years 3 to 6 are working really hard in English and we think you can do even better in mathematics and science. We have asked your teachers to help you understand what it is you need to do to improve

Teachers need to share their ideas to make sure that all lessons are equally good

Although most of you are attending school when you should, some of you need to come to school more often.