



Lady Joanna Thornhill Endowed Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118706
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280377
Inspection dates 8 June 2006 to 9 June 2006
Reporting inspector Marion Wallace AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bridge Street
School category	Community		Wye
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Ashford, Kent TN25 5EA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01233 812781
Number on roll	389	Fax number	01233 812781
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr J Spencer
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr K Grout

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large village school has experienced a period of rapid growth. The pupils come from Wye village and from a wider area when parents choose the school for their children. Approximately two thirds of the pupils are White British and the remaining third are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Children start Reception with widely varying levels of learning skills, but overall these are above average. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average and the proportion of pupils joining at other than the usual times during the school year is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives very good value for money. It judges its own effectiveness generally in line with inspection findings, but in some respects too modestly. Pupils achieve very well because their learning is carefully planned and most teaching is challenging and stimulating. The effective provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to make a good start to their education. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, though more able pupils require greater challenge in their writing. Progress accelerates in Years 3–6 and this is reflected in the exceptionally high standards achieved in test results in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those in the early stages of learning English, achieve equally well because of the quality of support.

The school is a safe, warm welcoming environment in which pupils flourish and make outstanding progress in their personal development and well-being. There are excellent levels of care and support for all pupils. Pupils know what they need to do to improve because there are excellent systems to check how well they are progressing.

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good, with some outstanding teaching in the older classes. The curriculum is good in literacy, numeracy and science and pupils benefit from French lessons but some say they would like more opportunity to use computers.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is fully supported in realising his vision for the school by his deputy and all other colleagues. He and the senior staff have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and, as a result, know what needs to be done to move it further forward.

What the school should do to improve further

Develop more resources for information and communication technology (ICT) to ensure more use in the classroom. Ensure more able children are fully challenged to extend their writing skills by the end of Year 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve very well and reach exceptionally high standards by the time they leave. When they enter the Reception, children's key skills are generally above those normally expected for their age, especially in speaking and language. The effective provision in the Foundation Stage, including good quality teaching and a well organised curriculum, enables children to make a good start to their education and to progress well. The pupils maintain their progress in Years 1 and 2. The latest Year 2 test results show that pupils do less well at the higher level in writing than in mathematics and reading, though inspection evidence suggests that this is improving. The pupils make rapid and consistent progress in Years 3 to 6 and attain exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science, as shown by the last published test results. Pupils

from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as their peers, and attain the expected levels in all core subjects. This is because of the well organised provision and good support from teaching and non-teaching staff. There has been a general upward trend in standards achieved in Year 6 over the last four years. The school sets challenging but achievable targets for all pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They say how much they enjoy school and this enthusiasm for learning is clearly evident in lessons, break times and activities outside the school day. It is also reflected in the very high levels of attendance. Pupils develop exceptionally good relationships with each other and with adults, and these promote their very good achievement and knowledge of safety. Behaviour is very good. They enjoy responsibilities and carry them out diligently, looking after each other cheerfully, and courteously helping younger pupils in the playground and as table monitors. Pupils feel that their views about the school are regularly sought and acted upon, for example, through circle time and the school council. They have a mature attitude and care about their school. Throughout the school, pupils make enthusiastic contributions to the wider community, participating in harvest festival and other celebrations. Pupils can discuss healthy food and understand the importance of a healthy life-style. Learners make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are extremely well prepared for life in a multicultural community and are also acquiring many basic skills that will help them achieve economic well-being in the future. Through this and initiatives like circle time, the citizenship award and effective opportunities for reflection, pupils are developing into citizens of whom the school and their parents can be proud.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and in some classes is exemplary so that pupils make rapid progress. They benefit from stimulating and imaginative learning activities which prompt them to concentrate well and work with sustained interest. Pupils are challenged to do their best, to think and to explain their ideas precisely. The teachers have good subject knowledge and enthusiasm combined with high expectation and challenge. This was evident in an excellent Year 4 numeracy lesson and ensured pupils made significant gains in their ability to mentally calculate angles. In a few lessons observed, the pace of learning was slower and more able pupils made less progress because the challenge was not as well matched to their needs.

Teaching in the Reception classes is good, with every effort being made to prepare the children for the next stage of their education. Staff are clearly passionate about their work and relate well to the children, who get off to a good start as a result.

Teachers know their pupils well and there are excellent systems to monitor how well pupils are learning. Teachers' marking encourages the pupils and also identifies what they have achieved, challenging them to improve the work still further. These strategies provide secure information to use when setting goals for individuals. Teachers are able to ensure pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those new to learning English are given work well matched to their needs, enabling them to make good progress. The teaching assistants are very well used throughout the school and offer a high level of support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets the needs of most pupils effectively, including those with learning needs and disabilities. Planning identifies extension work for most higher attaining pupils.

French is taught in every year group and music is also a very strong feature. The school has worked hard to develop the pupils' creative writing skills. The curriculum is enhanced through an extensive programme of enrichment opportunities. Many after school clubs, in the arts, sport and other areas, interest and challenge pupils, including the very talented. There is a good emphasis on developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT but computers are not always used enough in the teaching. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned.

Bright classrooms and excellent displays, including many examples of pupils' attractive artwork, enhance the learning environment. The school's programme of personal and social education is comprehensive and this is reflected in pupils' behaviour towards each other and their level of involvement within both the school and the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. The school keeps children safe and governors are active in ensuring risk assessments are carried out. Staff provide extra care for children whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Secure procedures for child protection are known to all staff. Pupils feel very safe in school, knowing that any concerns will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Pastoral support from all staff is excellent. Any pupils in need are monitored personally by senior staff. Pupils' academic progress is monitored regularly by teachers. The process of setting targets and marking ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing. Support for pupils with a very wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities is very well organised and effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by his deputy. Their vibrant enthusiasm is reflected throughout the school and together they manage the school very effectively. Parents and pupils appreciate their reassuring presence around the school. The headteacher shares his good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses with senior staff. All staff are committed and eager to contribute to a quality learning environment. The school is united with the common purpose to raise standards further, and focused on ensuring that all groups of pupils make significant progress. Subject managers lead their areas of responsibility well. They have high expectations, are knowledgeable, and committed to ensuring all groups of pupils achieve well. The management of the Foundation Stage is good and is one of the reasons why children make good progress. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities ensures these pupils achieve as well as they can and reach their targets. The new managers for Key Stages 1 and 2 have made good progress settling into their new role.

In its analysis of strengths and weaknesses, the school takes full account of the views of pupils, staff and parents, and focuses on meeting pupils' academic and personal needs. The school has excellent systems to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils by analysing data diligently to identify where support should be targeted.

The school improvement plan contains relevant priorities that are focused on continuous development. Governors are an important part of the team and rigorously challenge the school. They allocate financial resources effectively to implement priorities identified in the school's plans for improvement. This unity gives the school a very good capacity to improve further.

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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?	1	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	1	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	1	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

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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	2	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	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	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	1	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

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, coming to your assembly and listening to your beautiful singing. We think that your school is outstanding in many ways: . When you first come to the school in Reception, you make a good start to your education and do very well. You do very well in subjects such as English, mathematics and science because you have good teachers. Your headteacher runs the school extremely well and makes sure those of you who need extra help get it. You enjoy school and are enthusiastic when doing activities, including sporting activities and music that take place outside the school day. You are taught to realise the importance of eating healthily. You told us you feel safe and well supported.

But to make things even better we have suggested a few things we think will help:

We think you should have more computers so that you can use them more often in lessons. We think younger pupils should do more writing.

We wish you well for the future.