



Fordcombe Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118719
LEA Kent
Inspection number 285348
Inspection dates 25 April 2006 to 25 April 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Hartland HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Fordcombe Green |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Tunbridge Wells |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 | | Kent TN3 0RY |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01892 740224 |
| Number on roll | 103 | Fax number | 01892 740224 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr Nick Weaver |
| Date of previous inspection | 26 February 2001 | Headteacher | Mr Robin Dungate |

| Age group | Inspection dates | Inspection number |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This voluntary aided church school is smaller than most primary schools. Standards on entry are broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage with special educational needs is average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic communities is well below average and none has a first language other than English. The school has increased in size considerably since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fordcombe is unquestionably a good school with outstanding features. It has many strengths and provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils make good progress in their learning. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they make progress in line with national expectations in the Reception year.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They very much enjoy being at school and their behaviour is excellent. They have very positive attitudes and feel safe and valued as individuals. All staff take very good care of them and know them well. Teaching is good. Teachers seek to make lessons interesting to ensure pupils learn. The curriculum overall is good with excellent provision for extra activities.

The leadership and management are good with outstanding features. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is held in very high regard by staff and parents. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are very happy with what it offers with many saying, that it is 'a happy family school'. The school is successful in seeking to improve. Inspection evidence indicates that the school has the capacity to become an outstanding school. In working towards this goal, it needs to: raise standards and achievement to even higher levels; ensure challenging work is provided for more able pupils across the curriculum and develop more consistent practice in marking.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement and standards are good. Children make at least satisfactory progress in the Reception year and last year entered Year 1 with average standards. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved steadily in recent years and overall were slightly above average in 2005, but well above in mathematics. The number of pupils gaining the higher grades in the 2005 tests is slightly above the national average. At the end of Year 6, overall results in the 2005 national tests were significantly above the national average. A greater-than-average number of pupils gained the higher levels of attainment than expected nationally. The particular strengths in mathematics were maintained with high standards achieved. The school exceeded its statutory targets in 2005. All pupils are making good progress, including those with special educational needs and learning difficulties and disabilities, although some higher achieving pupils are capable of more extended work in some subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school has a clear Christian ethos and identity. It provides an anonymous prayer box and a school prayer group. There are very well established links with the local parish church where significant numbers of pupils attend Sunday worship. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and many describe it as 'fantastic'. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and the many additional opportunities offered in after school clubs and a wide range of enrichment activities including cooking, gardening and an outdoor adventure activity to Carrot Wood. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around school. Older pupils help take good care of younger ones. Attendance is good. Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils have a genuine voice within the school and members of the Eco committee are enthusiastic about their responsibilities and know that they are able to make a difference to the school.

The school makes an outstanding contribution to both the local and the wider community. Pupils are involved in events in the village and the locality. The choir won an award in a local school choir competition. Pupils develop good social awareness through fundraising activities and support for the less fortunate. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is promoted very effectively through a stimulating range of first hand experiences including a visit from an African drummer and a themed event on India. The school effectively encourages pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle, good eating habits and participation in a wide range of outdoor and sporting activities. Neither pupils nor parents reported any incidents of bullying.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching by the experienced staff is confident, lively and purposeful and encourages learning well. The teachers provide clear explanations and instructions to the pupils and have very good relationships with them. Following appropriate training, the teachers are making good use of the newly installed interactive whiteboards to make learning more enjoyable for pupils. Planning is generally well matched to the needs of the learners in English and mathematics but does not cater effectively in all subjects for the more able pupils. A wide range of intervention programmes, recognised and much appreciated by parents, provide very successfully for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastic learners. They listen well and are very responsive to questions from the teachers.

Tracking systems are well developed and effective. Teachers use the information gained well to plan the next stage of learning and to set individual targets. However, the marking of pupils' work is of variable quality and does not consistently indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. It is broad and balanced, with an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. There are good opportunities for the development of personal, social and health education. The school provides an

excellent range of well attended clubs and extra activities which develop pupils' interests very well. Trips, visits and workshops enrich provision very significantly. Pupils report that these activities contribute much to their enjoyment of school life. The school is aware of the need for pupils to stay healthy and promotes this well. Children have access to water in classrooms. Pupils are very aware of ways in which the environment can be protected and improved and enthusiastic about recycling and collecting litter. There is a good outdoor learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Overall the school provides good care, guidance and support, but the quality of care is outstanding. The school rightly prides itself on its very caring ethos in which all pupils are known and valued as individuals and this is recognised by parents. One parent wrote that 'the staff are genuinely concerned with each individual child'. All staff are highly committed to the welfare of the pupils. Pupils appreciate the closeness with staff and each other which is possible in a small school.

Excellent communication and very positive partnerships with parents ensure that children in the Reception classes make a confident start to school. Parents are given good information to enable them to work more confidently with the school in supporting their children's learning.

Good use of inter-agency links ensure that vulnerable children are very well supported. Pupils are given clear guidance and support in their personal and social development. Pupils are aware of their targets and how the teachers help them to improve, although the marking of their work is not consistently of a high standard. The school's accommodation has improved significantly since the last inspection, resulting in a safer, considerably more attractive and effective learning environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good with outstanding features. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is correctly held in very high regard by both staff and parents. He provides a clear direction for improvement and works tirelessly to develop the work of the school. These efforts led one parent to remark of their child, 'We couldn't wish for a better start to their education'. The school is successful in seeking to improve and standards continue to rise. The head is well supported by the special educational needs coordinator, staff with responsibilities and teaching assistants. Teachers are given feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their lessons, with clear judgements about their overall quality. Self-evaluation is rigorous and takes into account the views of parents and pupils and acts well upon them. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are very happy with what it offers and the genuine care shown for their children.

Governors play an active and effective role in improving the work of the school and holding it to account. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and

of those areas that need to be improved. The school provides good value for money and has successfully addressed the areas for improvement in the last inspection report. The school believes, and the inspection findings confirm, that under the determined and energetic leadership of the headteacher, it has a good capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

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

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 | 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

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ 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

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| 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 | 1 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | 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? | 2 | 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 | 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 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 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

I am writing to you following my recent visit to your school to let you know what I think about the school. Thank you for your help in talking to me about the work you do and what you think about the school.

I think your school is a good school which has some outstanding features. I know how much you enjoy coming to school because you told me so and that the teachers make the lessons interesting so that you can learn more easily. I saw, and your parents told me, that everyone in your school takes very good care of you and you get on very well with each other. You told me that you feel safe and that there is always someone to talk to if you have a problem. Teachers listen to what you say and the Eco committee makes things happen. The school does an outstanding job in helping you to develop into mature young people.

I saw that you are enthusiastic in lessons and as a result you all do well, especially in the tests you take in Year 2 and Year 6. Your behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Your parents are very happy with the school and all that it provides for you in and out of lessons. Your headteacher is an exceptional leader and works hard to make the school even better for you.

The school could improve even more. It could help you to achieve even higher standards, for example, by helping you to improve your work with more ideas about how to do so in your books. It could provide more challenging work in all subjects for those of you who find learning easier than others.

May I wish you all the very best for the future.