

# Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114524
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	289950
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brenda Spencer

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Grinham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maggie Sharpe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2001
<b>School address</b>	Steellands Rise Ticehurst Wadhurst TN5 7DH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01580 200344
<b>Fax number</b>	01580 200144

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Ticehurst and Flimwell is a small primary school. Its facilities are used by Action in Rural Sussex and for adult learning, including for positive parenting. The health service provides family drop-in sessions. Most pupils are white British but a small number belong to six other ethnic groups. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including statements, is much higher than the national average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Ticehurst and Flimwell is a good school with many outstanding features. A parent summed it up well: 'Anyone who visits is seriously impressed by the children, the staff, the standards and the school itself.' Pupils thrive among caring adults in a beautiful building where their work is displayed respectfully and their days are filled with inspiring experiences. From low starting points, pupils achieve well and make good progress from Reception to Year 6. Leadership and management are outstanding. Assessment data is carefully analysed and provision kept under rigorous review by staff and governors. This leads to a well-targeted school improvement plan which focuses its success on improving standards. Consequently, the pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 has risen dramatically in three years.

The curriculum and teaching and learning are good, with many impressive aspects. As a result, pupils enjoy learning immensely. They are fired with enthusiasm by their stimulating lessons. They talk about their artwork with pride, and talk perceptively about how to improve their work. The care, guidance and support they are given are excellent. All this leads to outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils report that they feel safe and that there is always someone to turn to. The nurture group is a pearl in this provision.

Because of good provision, pupils build on low starting points in Reception to acquire good personal skills, but literacy skills are below average when children enter Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Pupils' progress is good in writing and mathematics, and satisfactory in reading. The reading curriculum in Years 1 and 2 does not benefit from the same support programmes as in Years 3 to 6, nor are reading books easily accessible to this age group. The school also believes it could do more to support parents in helping their children. The current Year 6 achieved very well. Building on well- below-average standards at the end of Year 2, they are reaching standards which are well above average in science and above average in mathematics. Standards are below average in English, although higher attainers do well in reading. Standards which were well below average in information and communication technology (ICT) are now approaching average because of detailed reform of the curriculum and work done to improve the skills of staff.

The progress the school has made since the last inspection is outstanding and its track record of improvement in the last three years shows that it is well placed to continue this journey to excellence. Staff and governors are highly skilled and eager for children to do well. The leadership of the school is extremely perceptive in identifying the strengths of provision and what needs to be improved. There is a strong programme for monitoring teaching and learning and staff work hard to improve any aspect which is less than excellent.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in reading in Years 1 and 2 by developing the curriculum at home and school and reorganising resources.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress from Reception to Year 6. Children enter school with a wide range of attainment but their communication skills are particularly low. By the end of the Reception Year, children's personal development is good and their

mathematical development meets expectations; however, standards are below expectations in literacy.

In Years 1 and 2, standards have risen sharply since 2004 in reading and writing and in mathematics since 2005. Pupils in the current Year 2 are reaching broadly average standards from well-below-expected starting points. Standards are slightly above average in writing. Capable children do well in reading but the proportion of children reaching expected standards remains below average. Progress in reading is satisfactory. Standards are now average in mathematics, having been below average since 2002.

Good progress is maintained in Years 3 to 6. Since 2004, the achievement of pupils has improved from significantly below average to significantly above average in 2006. Pupils in the current Year 6 have done equally well. Building on well-below-average standards at the end of Year 2, their standards are well above average in science, above average in mathematics and broadly average in writing. As in Years 1 and 2, capable pupils progress well in reading. The proportion of pupils reaching expected standards is below average, reflecting low starting points of some pupils.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enjoy enormously many aspects of school. They appreciate the outstanding efforts made so that lunchtime is full of different activities and special zones for everyone to do something they like. Pupils eat healthily and talk knowledgeably about the benefit of exercise. They say they feel safe because adults are helpful and trained friendship buddies are there for anyone feeling lonely. The vast majority of pupils behave well; the very few who find it difficult are supported so that no-one's learning suffers. Pupils' confidence and independence grow through provision such as road crossing and cycle safety lessons. The school council are justifiably proud of their constructive contribution to school life, for example, influencing the development of clubs for younger pupils. The pupils' positive effect is felt through their links locally with elderly folk and abroad with Malawi and Tanzania. Pupils participate in responsible lifestyles by composting and recycling. They are well prepared for future success. From an early age they are sociable and persistent and over time develop the necessary key skills to make the best of future learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, promoted very well by an inspiring arts provision.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

One parent, speaking for many, accurately observed that 'the team is so strong that no one teacher or teaching assistant stands out.' The warmth of relationships between adults and pupils and the calm atmosphere in all classes enable all pupils to thrive and learn. The school endeavours to 'develop understanding through enquiry, creativity and problem solving'. Staff achieve this partly through raising thought-provoking questions. Their success is marked by the well-above-average standards pupils reach in science. Pupils' work is marked in a constructive way, which helps them see why their work is good and how to improve. The impact on standards in writing in particular has been very impressive. By age seven, pupils can evaluate their work in terms of the punctuation, vocabulary and the construction of sentences they have used. Monitoring of teaching correctly identifies that the match of planning is occasionally imprecise

in addressing the learning needs of all pupils. Opportunities are missed to help pupils become independent learners, for example, weaning them from their support assistants or organising resources to allow more choices to be made.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, with many outstanding features. It is highly creative so pupils eagerly anticipate their lessons, for example, building air raid shelters in the study of the World War Two. The opportunity to learn outside is taken frequently. The youngest children planted, grew, counted, sorted and weighed potatoes before making and eating potato salad. The enrichment of the curriculum is outstanding, with visitors, ranging from musicians to sheep and hedgehogs, and visits locally and further afield. There is a rich range of clubs and the school is thoughtful about the needs of different pupils. For example, the relatively small number of girls have a special computer club.

Provision has been improved in writing and calculating. The school has only partially achieved its ambition to raise standards in reading. The siting of reading books does not make them easily accessible to Years 1 and 2. There are extra programmes to help pupils learn letters and sounds in Years 3 to 6, which are not available in Years 1 and 2.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school declares, 'We welcome all children... whatever their need.' This is evident in the excellent care they receive. All necessary action is taken to ensure pupils are safe and protected by appropriate adults. As a result, pupils say they feel safe, remarking appreciatively on arrangements to keep the site secure and on how well adults deal with their problems. Excellent use is made of outside agencies to support pupils with a range of difficulties and disabilities. The nurture group is outstanding in promoting good behaviour, developing pupils' confidence and providing a safe place to resolve conflicts and worries.

Academic guidance is very strong and, as a result, pupils make good progress. The strategies pupils are taught to self-assess their work provide an independence in learning which will set them up well for life. Pupils know the steps each must take to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The school accurately judges the progress made in the last three years to be outstanding. Standards and achievement have risen dramatically and the school is going from strength to strength. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive.

Leadership and management strategies have been overhauled. Thorough monitoring, evaluation and planning for school improvement have been key to recent success. Analysis of assessment data is strong. Initiatives to improve calculating and writing have been very successful. The ongoing impact is evident in improving teaching and learning, some of which is already excellent. Former weaknesses are now strengths in the provision, for example, the support for pupils with behavioural difficulties. The school's work in this field is attracting national interest.

Consequently, the achievement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good and rapidly getting better. Achievement in science has been outstanding. However, the school recognises that some pupils in Years 1 and 2 are capable of reaching higher standards in reading. Plans are already in place to help pupils who struggle with learning letters and sounds to rearrange the reading books and to support parents in helping their children at home. The headteacher and deputy have a deep understanding of how to make the next few steps to give their pupils an outstanding educational experience.

The governors have played an important role in the school's continuing journey to excellence. They admit that they have not been sufficiently challenging in the past. This is no longer the case. Their monitoring of provision is rigorous and supportive. They have a realistic ambition of making this school 'the first-choice village school' where children 'learn to do well'.





## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

**Annex A****Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 July 2007

Dear Pupils,

Ticehurst and Flimwell C of E Primary School, Ticehurst, East Sussex TN5 7DH

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I came to your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you. A particular thank you must go to those of you from the School Council who gave up your lunch break to tell me your views.

What a beautiful school you have. The buildings and grounds are lovely and your work displayed everywhere makes it even better. I think your school is giving you a good education with many very special features. The way staff look after you and help you learn is outstanding. Because of that, the progress you are making is good and you are developing into delightful people who are really responsible. You are learning the things you should and in the most exciting ways. No wonder you look forward to your lessons so eagerly. Playtimes are great fun too because of all things you can do. The curriculum and teaching are good. The places you visit and the visitors who come to school really add a sparkle to what you do. The way different subjects are linked together makes your learning really interesting, whether you are in Reception or any other class.

Please congratulate the leaders of your school, the headteacher, deputy and governors and all the other staff. They think carefully how to improve things so you learn really well. Your school has been going from strength to strength in the last three years. The staff are going to help some of you in Years 1 and 2 to be better at reading. I hope you will take their good advice and enjoy all the books you will be using.

Please thank your parents for kindly sending in the questionnaires and letters. These helped me to understand how well the school is doing.

Yours faithfully,

Brenda Spencer Lead inspector