



Sir Henry Fermor Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 114548
Local Authority East Sussex
Inspection number 289964
Inspection date 4 October 2006
Reporting inspector David Collard

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crowborough Hill
School category	Voluntary aided		Crowborough
Age range of pupils	4-11		TN6 2SD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01892 652405
Number on roll (school)	413	Fax number	01892 652874
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Jane Maton
		Headteacher	A Franklin
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2001		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 4 October 2006	Inspection number 289964
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average as is the number with statements of special educational need. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected for their age. Most pupils are White British with a few from other ethnic groups. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is also low and all these pupils can communicate fluently.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school providing a good quality education and with a good capacity to continue doing so. The above average standards have been maintained since the last inspection and all pupils achieve well. In the last 18 months, a close scrutiny of the school's provision has been undertaken and enabled a realistic self-evaluation to be made. Consequently, the right developments have improved the school's provision. The quality of teaching, leadership and management and personal development are all good, as are the care, welfare and guidance of pupils. The satisfactory curriculum still needs a more practical, investigative and exciting approach, but the first seeds of a vibrant learning environment can be seen in the development of subjects through themes, known by the pupils as their 'learning journey'. Rapid improvements in the provision have resulted in better achievement and higher standards. In the 2005 national tests, for instance, twice the number expected managed to achieve the higher level in English and mathematics.

The good quality provision in the Reception Year ensures children make good progress. By the end of the year almost all pupils are reaching the levels expected of them and some are already working on activities usually covered in Year 1. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are particularly high in reading where test scores are well in excess of the national average. From an early analysis, the new headteacher realised that the good standards in previous years were masking some underachievement, particularly amongst pupils of high ability. This is no longer the case. Pupils now make continuously good progress as they move through the school, a fact supported by both national and school data.

Because teachers' expectations have risen, they now plan far more challenging activities than was the case in previous years. This makes learning relevant for most pupils' individual needs but it is not yet as exciting as it could be. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and think for themselves. This restricts the rate of progress the higher attaining pupils make. Pupils remarked about how hard they have to work and that some of the teachers' questions are 'quite tricky to answer'. In contrast, they found difficulty in enthusing about any particularly exciting new skills they had learnt.

Pupils' personal development has also improved, by making each individual more responsible for their own success. This includes providing targets that are helping to develop pupils' life skills and prepare them for the future. The school is rightly continuing to refine this type of initiative so that all pupils, particularly those with higher ability, are able to work and think independently.

The enthusiastic leadership team benefits from substantial experience and this has ensured the necessary expertise to develop new initiatives such as the improved provision for mathematics. The team say they feel 'empowered to try new things' but know they will be held accountable for the outcomes. There is a direction and a pride in what is being achieved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enliven the curriculum, providing more practical and investigational activities that will increase pupils' independence and help them to think for themselves.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school's data clearly indicates that improvement measures are making a difference. Standards are above average and all pupils achieve well. For instance, the progress made by Year 6 pupils since they were in Year 2 was in the top 11% of the country. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good and a number manage to achieve the nationally expected levels for their age but from much lower starting points. Those in the middle ability range also progress well, with some reaching above average standards. While many higher ability pupils also make good progress, the school has rightly identified that there are even more pupils who have this potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good. Attendance is good and this is a reflection of pupils' positive attitudes and enjoyment of school. Both in the school's surveys and in discussion, significant numbers of pupils remark about how proud they are of the school. They know that any personal problems will be dealt with effectively. Pupils feel well prepared for what lies ahead and try hard to make a positive contribution to their own and the wider community such as by initiating fund raising activities. Opportunities have recently been offered that allow pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, older pupils are now much better informed about what they need to do to improve.

A recent pupil survey raised concerns about the activities during break and lunchtimes. Consequently, the new arrangements, led by a teaching assistant, were praised by the pupils as being a 'great step forward'. Observations of the activities suggests that pupils better understand each others' needs and the recently appointed pupil play leaders are on hand to help the younger pupils learn different games. This has been a good way for everybody to learn about healthy lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's introduction of a range of different teaching methods has brought about improvements. Teachers plan interesting activities, use a range of resources such as the interactive whiteboards well and consequently this enables pupils to see a purpose for what they are asked to do. Until recently planning, although comprehensively

completed in individual year groups, was done somewhat in isolation from other year groups. As a result, pupils' individual subject skills were not always moved on from one year to the next. This is now changing with the more open approach and an understanding that everybody, not only the Year 6 teachers, are responsible for pupils' standards when they leave the school. Lessons start at a good pace and teachers use the much improved assessment systems well to direct what will be learnt next. This enables challenging questions to be asked in discussions. However, this knowledge of the pupils is not used quite as well when deciding on the different practical activities that each ability group will be given. As a result, while most make good progress a few find the work too easy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is working hard to create more interest and excitement within the curriculum. It is meeting with some success and the majority of pupils enjoy what they do. However, there are not enough challenging and demanding activities to really stretch those pupils of high capabilities. A start has been made in some subjects such as art and science.

Provision for music and physical education is particularly good through the use of specialists, joint working with other schools and instrumental tuition. The school uses its own swimming pool well and has received the prestigious Activemark Gold award. Other strengths include various enrichment weeks, which are not only aimed at specific subjects such as poetry and art but also to help keep pupils safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and secure because of the school's rigorous systems to ensure their well-being. The personal progress of each pupil is carefully tracked and as a result pupils' personal needs are addressed in this safe and supportive environment. The school works well with parents. For instance, where pupil and parent surveys have highlighted concerns these are acted upon quickly and effectively.

Both formal and informal observations from the well established links with outside agencies ensure that pupils' emotional needs are carefully monitored.

Academic assessments have always been gathered but only recently have they been used to plan work and make an impact on teaching. For instance, the school is currently piloting new materials to support pupils with learning difficulties which will enable the pupils themselves to take a more active part in their own progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led. As one person said, 'The headteacher leads from the front and has galvanised the staff into raising their game.' This is evident in the rising standards and in the views of parents and pupils. Initiatives such as redecoration and renovating some of the tired buildings have all helped induce a new sense of direction and present a more attractive place for children to learn. Consequently, pupils have better attitudes to learning.

The correct priorities for school improvement have been identified because the school knows itself well and the senior managers have embarked on the correct initiatives. There are already some initial successes such as the rise in pupils' performance, more purposeful lunchtime activity and a growing maturity within the older pupils. This success indicates the school's capacity to improve.

The governing body fulfils its tasks satisfactorily. There are currently a number of vacancies but this is not unduly affecting governors' ability to do their job. They are however actively seeking to recruit new members so that they are able to sustain the support and challenge they provide to the school.

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Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for looking after me so well during my recent visit. I very much enjoyed talking to you all and seeing you at work. I think your school is a good one. As I promised, here are some of the aspects of the inspection that I talked through with your headteacher.

- You told me how much you enjoy school and how pleased you are to attend. I can see why. Clearly you all enjoy what you are asked to do and try hard to get involved in as many activities as possible.
- Many of you reach good standards not only in the national tests but also in other subjects.
- You said that you thought the teaching was good and I agree. Your teachers work hard to make sure you all do your best. They are trying to plan even more exciting activities for you over the coming months. I have asked them to make sure that the work they set you is at the right level, particularly for those who find it too easy.
- I think everybody makes sure you are kept safe and secure. Some Year 6 children agreed and explained that they always knew who to see if anything goes wrong.
- Quite a number of you told me how much the lunchtimes have improved with all the new activities. I think this is a great idea and certainly none of you looked bored when I was with you.
- Your headteacher, along with all the other staff, have worked hard to make the right improvements so that you will have an even better time at school. From the letters I received from your parents, it would seem that they agree with me that the school is continuing to improve.

Finally, can I wish you all the best for the rest of your time at the school and in the future.