

Culverstone Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118263
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291067
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2007
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dawn Bramer
Headteacher	Ruth Abbott
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2002
School address	Wrotham Road Meopham Gravesend DA13 0RF
Telephone number	01732 822568
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Culverstone Green Primary School is smaller than average and serves a village and rural area of North Kent which has some deprivation. It has an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are only a few pupils from minority ethnic groups and very few whose first language is not English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Culverstone Green School provides a satisfactory education. After a period of temporary leadership and management, the current headteacher and deputy found a great deal to do when they arrived in 2004. Behaviour was poor and there was little monitoring or assessment. It is to their and the staff's credit that these difficulties have largely been addressed. The school is now poised to move forward and achievement is starting to improve. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory following a decline. There remain areas for development: Year 2 boys underperformed compared to girls in the last two years and, while standards at the end of Year 2 are improving, the gap between boys and girls is still large. A bias of academic support and guidance towards literacy hampers the improvement of achievement in other curriculum areas.

Most pupils like school. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory but there remain pockets of bad behaviour that the school strives to eradicate. As one young pupil put it, 'Behaviour is not bad but Year 6 boys are too bossy and girls are not always kind.' Pupils' social and moral development is good but spiritual and cultural (especially multicultural) development is not well promoted. Pupils gain skills needed for their future economic well-being. They are aware of how to keep fit and healthy, encouraged by good opportunities for exercise.

Pupils are well cared for but do not receive consistent academic support, so care, support and guidance are satisfactory overall. Work is regularly marked but teachers' comments do not often give the precise advice needed. Teaching and learning are often good but some unexciting lessons and others where pupils disrupt learning mean the general picture is satisfactory. The curriculum is good and gives pupils interesting opportunities to study.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has striven to return to the high standards in the previous report but it has not been easy. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Careful monitoring has enabled the school to prioritise well and 'the green shoots of spring' can be seen in better behaviour and standards. Not all staff have the subject leadership skills needed to drive the school forwards but this is being addressed and governors' support is strong and well informed. Capacity for improvement in the future is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Extend the focus on raising achievement across the curriculum and especially to younger boys.
- Ensure that pupils receive more consistent and regular guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.
- Enhance pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils start and finish their time at the school with average standards. Their achievement across the school is satisfactory.

Children enter the Reception class with expected standards except in communication, language and literacy where their skills are below expectations. The good organisation of the Foundation Stage ensures that children make a sound start, they leave Reception well prepared for the main school and with the skills expected of them.

Pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 are average; they have improved in the last year due to improvements in teaching and learning. The achievement of these pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is satisfactory. The school has targeted groups of pupils who are struggling to progress and provided focused support to help individuals overcome their learning difficulties. However, boys' standards remain lower than those of girls.

Year 6 standards are also average. Pupils' achievement in the last two years, including for those with learning difficulties and disabilities, has been satisfactory. The school has worked energetically to overcome barriers to progress posed by some current pupils who are unwilling to learn. It is poised to benefit from the rigorous procedures now in place; for example, the achievement of pupils currently in Year 5 is good, particularly in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviour. Teachers and support staff are strongly committed to pupils' well-being so most enjoy school and are engaged in lessons. Attendance is above average and punctuality has improved since the last inspection.

Most pupils adopt safe practices, showing concern for others. The school is inclusive and uses a variety of strategies to manage challenging behaviour. Bullying is uncommon and rare outbreaks are effectively quashed. A few pupils can be disruptive, which reduces the enjoyment and achievement of others, despite strong interventions from the school.

Pupils contribute well to the school community. The school council discusses issues such as playground and behaviour rules. They set up a project to fund signs that affirm the rules.

Pupils gain strong, moral and social awareness through assemblies and classroom procedures. Spiritual and cultural awareness are not as well developed and, in particular, pupils have limited knowledge of different cultures, which would assist when they move on to multicultural secondary schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. A number of lessons seen during the inspection were good. Some pupils do not find learning easy and are unwilling to put themselves out unduly. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to coax this small group to work hard. Learning in the school is also satisfactory.

Lessons are well planned and well prepared, with good resources easily to hand. In most lessons, relationships are very good and the atmosphere calm and positive. Combining subjects and covering topics through involving pupils in more practical and independent activities enliven many lessons.

Some lessons are too long and energy levels flag. The pace of some lessons is slow and learning would benefit from setting clear deadlines. In a very few classes, disruptive behaviour sometimes reduces progress. Teachers strive to manage awkward pupils to minimise interruptions and use the school's strategies wisely.

The school has good information from assessment and uses this to set targets and identify priorities. Teachers' use assessment to promote learning and this is leading to better progress. For example, identifying pupils who are lagging behind and giving them targeted support has begun to raise achievement. Marking is regular and thorough but, with the exception of written work in English, does not give enough clear advice how pupils could improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. All aspects of information and communication technology are now covered. Through its creative curriculum initiative, studies in foundation subjects are combined in practical and interesting ways and pupils enjoy these sessions. Opportunities for physical education are particularly good and the school makes the most of its swimming pool in summer. French is taught to Year 5 and 6 pupils and it is planned to extend this to other years. Children in the Foundation Stage are actively engaged in shaping their curriculum. For example, children began to make a car for the teddy bear but with the agreement of the teacher concluded by making a train and changing the planned garage into a station.

Pupils enjoy good opportunities to take part in extra activities in sport, the arts and academic areas and really enjoy participating in activities at lunchtimes and after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for. Staff are very committed to pupils' welfare and child protection procedures are well understood and are effective. Safeguarding measures are well established and robust. Pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility for becoming independent learners. The good induction programme for the youngest children is well established and parents report that by the time term begins they are very happy to come to school.

The school has a strong policy of including everybody. Vulnerable children are closely monitored and the school works effectively with other agencies to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are planned for and met.

Pupils have clear targets in literacy and know exactly what they have to do to improve their writing. This does not happen in other subjects, so that in most areas pupils are unclear of the next steps to make improvements. Marking in these subjects is too imprecise to contribute effectively to pupils' academic guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Careful monitoring has ensured that senior leaders are well informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Actions to address development areas are slowly starting to have an impact on achievement. One reason for the slowness is that the school is using assessment to promote literacy but does not provide such effective support in other curriculum areas. Developing teachers' management skills is under way, but this has not fully fed through into tangible improvements.

The school runs smoothly and resources are well used. The school has overcome major problems caused by the collapse of part of its flat roof. The Foundation Stage leader is working well to improve her area. The outside area has been greatly improved and good use is made of support staff to enhance learning.

Governance is good. Governors are well informed and support the school strongly. They have informative links with individual classes. Training with other governing bodies, they are effective critical friends and hold the school to account well. Good links exist with feeder pre-schools and local secondary schools.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

18 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Culverstone Green Primary School, Meopham, DA13 0RF

Thank you for being so helpful to the inspectors when we met you during the recent inspection of your school. It was a delightful meeting with you.

The school gives you a satisfactory education. Your standards are average and the way you achieve is satisfactory. Your personal development and the way you are cared for is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but some lessons are too slow and others are occasionally interrupted by bad behaviour. The range of subjects and topics available to study are good. The headteacher and her team provide satisfactory leadership and management and are helping the school to improve.

- The best parts of the school are:
- You have interesting subjects and topics to study and lots of good clubs and societies.
- Your attendance is good and you are more punctual than in the past.
- You know how to be healthy and how to stay safe.
- The governors help the staff to run the school well.
- Like all schools, there are some things that need improvements. The most important ones are:
- Raising further standards of work and achievement .
- The advice and guidance you receive to help you improve could be sharper.
- The school needs to do more to help you develop an understanding of other cultures and spiritual matters.

Some of you told us you were unhappy about behaviour and the few pupils who mess around too much should stop.

Once again, thank you very much for your help during the inspection.

With best wishes for the future

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector