



# Pembury School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 118280  
**Local Authority** Kent  
**Inspection number** 291073  
**Inspection dates** 27–28 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Helen Hutchings

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 address</b>	Lower Green Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Pembury
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Tunbridge Wells TN2 4EB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01892 822259
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	408	<b>Fax number</b>	01892 825414
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Norman Dodd
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Cath Thewlis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The school predominantly serves an area of social advantage but pupils join the school from a wide range of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average. Most children are from White British backgrounds. An increasing proportion of pupils enter or leave the school after the normal time of entry. The school has had significant staffing difficulties in recent years, mainly due to long term illnesses, but this has now been stabilised.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, with some good features. The school has a positive ethos so pupils enjoy their education and the school's work is valued by parents. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because of the school's good care, support and guidance. This means that pupils feel safe and cared for and they develop confidence in their learning. Pupils have good relationships with one another and develop effective teamwork skills. Their understanding of how to work together successfully supports group work in lessons and gives pupils sound skills for their future economic well-being. Incidents of inconsiderate behaviour are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and effectively.

The good provision in the Reception classes helps children to develop good attitudes from the time they join the school, giving them a good base for their further development. Sound teaching through the rest of the school enables pupils to reach standards broadly in line with national averages, which prepares them satisfactorily for their future education. Following a period when pupils did not achieve as well as they could, pupils now make satisfactory progress. The school recognises that teaching and learning need to be improved further to raise standards and recent developments are already bringing about increased rates of progress. Teachers' planning does not always clearly identify what it is that pupils should be learning and these learning objectives are not always made explicit to the pupils. Some lessons are not sufficiently brisk, which results in pupils losing interest. Pupils have a sound understanding of the quality of their work, helped by the targets set for them. However, some pupils are not sufficiently clear about precisely what they have to do next because marking does not always identify clearly enough what they have to do to make their work better. The curriculum is satisfactory and some links are made between subjects to make learning interesting, but the school has identified that this requires further development.

Governors meet their responsibilities and give appropriate support and challenge for the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior leaders develop teamwork across the school well and understand what the school has to do to raise standards further. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory, although difficulties in staff recruitment have slowed the pace of change. The school is now confident in setting increasingly challenging targets, and tracking data indicates that they are likely to be achieved.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that learning objectives are more clearly identified and shared consistently with pupils and that the pace of lessons is more brisk.
- Improve the quality of marking so that it identifies precisely what pupils have to do to improve their work.
- Make the curriculum more interesting by making better links between subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children join the school from a wide range of pre-school provision and attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, but is generally below that expected for their age. Standards at the end of the Reception year are broadly in line with those expected nationally, but slightly lower in writing skills and in children's understanding of the world around them. Standards in the tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly in line with national averages, though with some variation from year to year, reflecting the different abilities and experiences of each cohort; for example, in 2006, the Year 6 results were significantly below the national average. The school had recognised that girls were not progressing as well as boys and introduced an initiative to develop girls' confidence, which was partially successful. In recent years, frequent changes of staffing meant that some pupils did not make enough progress, but this situation has now improved and progress is more even. From the good start in the Reception classes, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory through the school and many pupils make higher-than-average rates of progress so that they have caught up following earlier underperformance. Changes in approaches to teaching literacy have resulted in significant gains in pupils' writing skills.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning, although some struggle to sustain concentration in lessons when the teaching is less stimulating. Pupils develop confidence and this contributes well to the positive learning atmosphere. For example, children in the Reception classes enjoyed answering the register in Chinese, following their learning about Chinese New Year celebrations. The personal, social and health education programme makes a very effective contribution to pupils' personal development. Attendance is average and the school is working to improve this further by giving pupils a range of rewards for good attendance and behaviour. Pupils are aware of how to take care of themselves and understand the needs of others; for example, older pupils successfully support younger pupils by acting as playground friends. Pupils are confident to inform adults when occasional bullying and anti-social behaviour occurs and know that it is dealt with effectively. Pupils welcome their responsibilities on the school council, but its role is not yet fully developed and this limits the influence that it has. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and enthusiastically participate in after-school sport. Pupils contribute well to the local community, for example, by producing harvest baskets for the elderly, raising money for various charities and putting on drama productions.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching, but not yet consistently good in Years 1 to 6. In some classes, lessons are well paced, with a variety of activities from which pupils learn well, and pupils are challenged by effective questions. This was particularly successful in an investigative mathematics lesson when pupils were required to develop and justify their answers. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to maintain an enthusiasm for learning. Sometimes concentration dips because the pace is too slow when pupils have to sit listening for a long time or the tasks they are set do not excite or motivate them. Sometimes teachers' planning does not clearly identify precisely what it is that pupils should be learning. Learning objectives are not always made clear enough to pupils for them to review their own achievements. This has a direct bearing on the standards achieved. Pupils use 'response partners' well to evaluate their own work. Pupils' work is marked regularly and is supportive of pupils' efforts, but does not always give pupils precise guidance about how their work could be improved.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and the emphasis on English, mathematics and science is improving achievement in these subjects. Information and communication technology skills are developed well through the school. A number of opportunities successfully enrich pupils' learning, for example, through visits linked to curriculum topics. Where teachers make links between subjects this makes learning more interesting and relevant for pupils. However, such links are not made often enough and pupils are given too few opportunities for practical, 'hands-on' learning and lose interest in some lessons. The school recognises that these are areas for further whole-school development.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wealth of clubs, particularly for sport, music and computers. Many of the sports activities are supported by local secondary schools and this also helps pupils prepare for transfer to the next stage of their education. Pupils are rightly proud of their significant success in inter-school competitions.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The systems for the care and protection of pupils, including those who have learning difficulties or disabilities, are effective and pupils feel well supported in their personal and academic development. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and additional support from outside agencies used when necessary. Children entering the Reception classes are well prepared for school by 'taster' visits. Good relationships with local nurseries ensure that pupils with special educational needs are identified early and

their needs prepared for. Pupils know that there is someone to approach if they have a problem and as a result, they know how to stay safe and secure.

The school has introduced good assessment systems for tracking pupils' academic progress and is using them well to set personal targets and monitor pupils' progress towards them. This gives an accurate whole-school picture, which is used effectively to plan additional support when individuals are seen to be falling behind. However, work is not always marked sufficiently well for pupils to be clear about what they need to do in order to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management have effectively maintained a positive ethos during a period of staffing changes, but staffing difficulties have reduced the pace of change in recent years. The headteacher and senior team have an ambitious vision for the school's future. Plans for improvement are being implemented successfully to build upon the recent improvements in teaching and pupils' achievements, confirming that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Although some of its assessments of performance are overly optimistic, the school's self-evaluation and development planning have identified the areas for further development which will have the greatest impact on raising standards. All staff contribute to the smooth running of the school and due attention is paid to ensuring that provision for all groups meets their needs.

Governors are committed and are actively involved in the life of the school, providing effective support and challenge. Parents are consulted and their views respected and given thoughtful consideration. The recently constituted 'parents' forum' is an innovative addition to the many ways already in place to seek parents' views.

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## 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>	3
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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

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

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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 making the inspection team so welcome to your school. We really enjoyed listening to what you had to say about the things you do. We are pleased that everything is at least satisfactory and that some things are good.

- You behave well and this helps you to be happy in school.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in the Reception classes.
- You have good attitudes to your work and mostly work hard, although some of you said that you could work even harder.
- The adults in the school help you to make progress and reach standards which are similar to other pupils of your age.
- You are cared for well and know that you have someone to go to if you have a problem.
- We were pleased that bullying is rare and sorted out quickly when you tell an adult.
- Many of you enjoy school clubs and you are keeping fit and healthy because so many attend sports clubs.

The headteacher and the staff have planned some things to help you to make your work better. We also think that these will help and hope that you will also concentrate on these too. We have asked your teachers to:

- Share the learning objective with you in all lessons so that you can check at the end that you have understood the lesson properly.
- Point out exactly how you could make your work better and we hope that you will try to do this in the next piece.
- Link subjects to make sure that you have interesting things to do and do not have to sit listening for too long.