



Queenborough First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118345
LEA Kent
Inspection number 291101
Inspection dates 6 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Hartland HMI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Edward Road
School category	Community		Queenborough
Age range of pupils	3 to 9		Kent ME11 5DF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01795 662574
Number on roll	300	Fax number	01795 581200
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Councillor Peter J Morgan
Date of previous inspection	7 October 2002	Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Conroy

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors who studied performance data and the self-evaluation form. The inspector also met with pupils, talked to parents and held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and the school improvement partner. School documentation was evaluated together with information on standards and the pupils' progress. Over 80 parent questionnaires were read and analysed. A number of lessons were seen.

Description of the school

Queenborough First School is a large school with an attached nursery, for children from 3-9 years of age. It is a popular school. Many pupils come from families with limited experience of higher education. Standards on entry are below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage with special educational needs is well above average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic communities or who have a first language other than English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Queenborough is a good school which is well on the way to becoming a highly effective school. It justly merits the high esteem in which it is held by parents. The school has many strengths and provides a good education for its pupils. It is a calm and orderly environment in which the pupils are enabled to feel good about themselves and to become more confident. It is as a result of the staff's efforts that pupils very much enjoy being at school. One parent stated, 'My child loves going to school.' The school is a happy and vibrant community where the staff are very willing to try out new ways of teaching, learning and organising subjects, continually seeking to make things better for the pupils.

Pupils make good progress in their learning throughout their time at the school because of good teaching, high expectations and the concerted efforts of all staff to provide the very best for all pupils. The provision for children in the Nursery and the Foundation Stage is good. The children are off to a good start in the Reception Year and make better than expected progress.

The staff and pupils are very welcoming towards visitors. The teachers work as a team and are highly supportive of each other. Increasingly, they are finding new and creative ways to pursue topics which will engage the pupils and sustain their interest and enthusiasm. The warm and friendly relationships which exist amongst the staff spill over to create excellent personal relationships between the pupils and teachers, which ensures that pupils are contented and happy learners. The pupils are very friendly and display positive attitudes. They get on very well with each other showing much enjoyment in each other's company, especially at break times, when they can play games together. As a result of the excellent standard of care shown to them, the pupils feel valued as individuals. They become secure in the knowledge that the school is a safe place to be and that the staff care about, and want the very best for, every single one of them. When writing about her daughter, one parent expressed her sincere thanks to the staff at the school, 'for making every day of the last school year so happy and enjoyable.'

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are very happy with what it offers. Another parent added that her daughter 'had such a good caring start to her education.' The school has successfully tackled the areas for improvement in the last inspection report and provides good value for money. Under the wise, nurturing and exemplary leadership of the headteacher, the school has a very good capacity to improve further to become an outstanding school. In working towards this goal it needs to: develop staff expertise in making the best use of assessment information; maintain its sharp focus on improving reading; strengthen the systems for identifying and supporting pupils with learning difficulties and additional needs; and ensure that the good achievement in the infants is maintained in the junior part of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement and standards are good. Children enter the Reception Year with below average skills, but make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with standards in line with national expectations. Results in the 2005 national tests at the end of Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. The number of pupils gaining the higher grades in these tests was slightly above average in writing and mathematics. Although teacher assessments show that pupils make better progress in Year 4 than Year 3, they leave at the end of Year 4 having maintained these average standards.

All pupils make good progress including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. A parent whose child has learning difficulties, wrote, 'My son has developed so well in his school life so far. He is progressing more than we ever thought he would, most of which is due to the patience and care he is shown at school.' The school recognises that some pupils, especially some boys, are capable of making greater progress in reading, and there are encouraging signs that better tracking of the progress of individual pupils is bringing about improvements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. An assembly taken by a visiting Christian minister conveyed a clear Christian message about everyone's uniqueness which chimed in well with the school's values. The school led the way locally with a project to develop the social and emotional aspects of pupils' learning. Early indications suggest that it is having a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem and is developing their willingness to talk and write about themselves.

The pupils make a good contribution locally. The school choir sings at different venues within the community and pupils are regularly involved in raising money for charities. The pupils have shown a great interest in, and learnt much about, the regeneration of their local area and have very successfully presented their project work to the members of the county council. They understand about healthy lifestyles and the school is well on the way to achieving Healthy School status. Many younger pupils were seen enthusiastically eating fruit at break time.

Pupils cheerfully take on responsibilities. For example, the older pupils help younger ones with their games at break-times. The school council has successfully prevailed upon the headteacher and governors to improve toilet and outdoor facilities. In lessons and around the school, behaviour is good. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Although the attendance of many pupils is good, the school is aware that the continuing reluctance of a small minority of families to send their

children to school regularly means that attendance overall is below the national average. It is developing effective systems to reward good attendance which are bringing about improvements.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The main evidence for the overall quality of the teaching is seen in the outcomes: the pupils make good progress. School reviews also show teaching to be good. The pupils are strongly encouraged to do well. Teachers have high expectations and pupils readily respond. In the lessons seen, skilful teaching and good class management enabled the pupils to remain attentive and to sustain their concentration. Newly qualified teachers have their teaching appraised regularly. Pupils' work is marked well and regularly with written comments which identify the strengths and aspects that need to be improved. Teachers are getting better at using the information from assessments to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a broad and increasingly innovative and creative curriculum. For example, the pupils are learning to speak French and many warmly greeted the inspector with 'Bonjour' with some following this by saying 'Je m'appelle' before giving their name. A strong emphasis on speaking and listening, reading and writing rightly pervades the curriculum. The range of extra-curricular activities and clubs is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes justifiable pride in its outstanding care of pupils. Pupils feel safe and secure as a result.

Pupils' progress is now more closely checked which enables the school to provide better support for any pupils in danger of underachievement. Systems to support pupils with learning difficulties are improving but the identification of those with particular gifts and talents remains underdeveloped.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good. Following her recent appointment the headteacher began a rigorous and timely review of all aspects of the school's work. Improved systems of pupil tracking and assessment, the updating of the policies, a sharper monitoring of staff with better opportunities for them to take on

responsibilities, and the development of a more creative curriculum, all indicate that the headteacher is providing exemplary leadership. She is correctly held in very high regard by pupils, staff, parents and the local authority. She provides a very clear direction for improvement and works with a steady intelligence to develop all aspects of the school's work.

The headteacher is well supported by an effective leadership team and staff with further responsibilities, all of whom are happy and enthusiastic about exercising their leadership roles. Self-evaluation is rigorous and takes into account the views of parents and pupils and acts well upon them. Governors play a supportive role in improving the work of the school and are becoming more involved, but have yet to develop sufficient confidence to fully hold it to account. They know the school's strengths but are less secure in identifying the precise areas that need to be improved.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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	3	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	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	3	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 let you know what I think about the school. Thank you for your help in talking to me about your work and what you think about the school.

I think your school is a good school which is getting better all the time. It provides you with a good education. I saw, and your parents told me, that everyone takes very good care of you and you get on very well with each other. I know how much you enjoy coming to school, because you told me, and that the teachers make the lessons interesting so that you can learn more easily. You told me that you feel safe and that there is always someone to talk to if you have a problem. Teachers listen carefully to what you say and the school council makes things happen. The school prepares you very well for the next stage of your education.

You work hard in lessons and as a result do well, especially in the tests you take in Year 2. You behave well in lessons and around the school. Your parents are very happy with the school and all that it provides for you. Your headteacher is an excellent leader. She and all the teachers work very hard to make the school even better for you.

The school's leaders are working hard to make the school even better. They know that they need to:

- help all teachers to make the best use of what they know about your progress;
- help you all, especially some boys, to become better readers;
- help those of you who find learning difficult, as well as some of you who find it easy, to do as well as you can in every school year.

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