

Worth Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 118404 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 291126 |
| Inspection date | 13 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Kevin Hodge |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 66 |
| School | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Miriam Bull |
| Headteacher | Linda Stanford |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 September 2001 |
| School address | The Street Worth Deal CT14 0DF |
| Telephone number | 01304 612148 |
| Fax number | 01304 619180 |

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|--------------------------|--------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small rural school and all classes contain pupils from more than one year group. Few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. Children enter the school with levels of abilities that are often below those typical for their age, particularly in their language and number skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is around 50% higher than the national picture.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The headteacher, staff and governors have succeeded in fostering very good relationships between all. Children feel secure, want to do well and enjoy attending. Parents speak highly of the school and one aptly noted that 'the children are well balanced, thoughtful and confident'.

How has the school created this good mix? Firstly, the staff work hard to make the start to school as positive as possible. The few children involved allow staff to keep a close eye on their progress and provide a good range of interesting activities. As a result, the provision for reception children is good and they make good progress. Nearly all reach the expected levels at the end of their Reception Year. Secondly, good teaching and learning ensure that most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make consistently good progress and achieve well. In Years 3 to 6, the highest attaining pupils are not always challenged to do their best. They make satisfactory progress, but are not fully stretched in their thinking so they consistently reach the highest levels in their work. At the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and science have improved since the last inspection. They are now in line with what is expected.

Thirdly, very good welfare arrangements, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and close attention to making the school feel safe and welcoming, contribute to making care, guidance and support good. Pupils are given good day-to-day guidance to help them improve their work. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because pastoral care is tailored very closely to individual needs and therefore very effective. A good curriculum provides well for the basics and is broadened with special theme days and visits away from school. Planning to combine learning across different subjects in Years 3 to 6 is not fully effective so opportunities to extend pupils' learning are missed.

Lastly, leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff work well as a team and have accurately identified areas to remedy. As a result, effective action taken has been taken, for example in improving work in science and in devising plans to enhance access to the outside area for reception children. Governors give good support. They know the school well because they visit regularly to see how well pupils are progressing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 more challenging tasks to stretch their thinking so they reach higher levels in their work.
- Improve the links made between subjects in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils can use knowledge and skills gained in one area to aid their learning in another.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. Their progress is good in the Foundation Stage and this continues in Years 1 to 6, leading to average standards by the time they leave. This is due to effective teaching in mixed-age classes, motivated pupils and good emphasis on pupils' developing needs. Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year. Nearly all reach the expected levels by the end of the year and they do particularly well in their social development and speaking skills. The school's own checks indicate that many pupils in Years

1 to 6 are making quick progress, but higher attaining pupils are not always stretched sufficiently to reach better than average levels. Pupils are confident speakers and their writing is interesting and varied. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills have improved since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) make good progress in line with classmates, as their needs are identified accurately, addressed skilfully and monitored closely.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils talk eagerly and positively about school and their attendance is good. Their confidence is promoted by the school's willingness to listen to their ideas and provide close support if needed. The school council is active and has been influential in introducing increased fund raising for children's charities. Most pupils work hard, behave very well and are eager to do their best in lessons and around school. Pupils say they feel safe and, as one said, 'We all just get on well with each other.' They enjoy attending. Pupils are active at playtimes and in lessons. They are aware of what foods are best to eat, the number of portions of healthy foods to eat per day, and the benefits of drinking lots of water. Extra-curricular activities help boost their exercise levels. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, but their awareness of cultural diversity represented in our society is not fully extended. Older pupils are prepared appropriately for their next schools and later life by their willingness to work with others and their mature outlook. They readily help at local village events and perform regularly in seasonal plays and celebrations in the village hall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are typically taught well, although there are some variations between classes. Teachers develop very good relationships with pupils and as a result they readily settle down to work. Teaching in the mixed Reception and Years 1 and 2 class is good. Pupils make a good start and gain independence quickly. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is generally good, but does not always stretch the most able pupils to reach above average standards. Some overly long explanations also reduce the pace of activities leading to some pupils losing interest. Practical work helps pupils' learning and teachers make good use of audio visual whiteboards and other resources to help promote learning. This was evident in a science lesson in Years 3 and 4 where pupils' close observations of decaying foods caused several to say, 'Yuk'. Teachers keep a close eye on pupils' general progress and those with LDD are supported and taught well. Teachers' marking gives pupils succinct, but sufficient, ideas about how they can improve their day-to-day work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good range of activities ensures pupils reach secure academic levels and caters well for mixed ages. Practical 'hands on' skills develop effectively due to improvements for subjects such as science, ICT and design and technology. Reception provision is good and encourages children's independence and ensures that they have a sound base of early literacy and numeracy skills. There is a strong commitment to developing pupils' well-being and a sports partnership with

local secondary schools which boosts their exercise levels. Activities to teach both French and Latin are proving popular and widening pupils' experiences. Work in individual subjects is carefully planned. However, in Years 3 to 6, opportunities are sometimes missed to combine learning activities so that, for example, a topic studied in geography supports work in science and mathematics. Indoor and outdoor physical activities are well planned and include swimming, extra gymnastic and musical activities. An extensive variety of extra-curricular activities is well attended and helps enrich class work. A good range of visits away from school, including a residential trip, broadens pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Consistently good care, guidance and support lie at the centre of pupils' good achievement and personal development. Parents are very confident about this aspect of the school's work and one observed that the high level of care had 'transformed' her child's well-being. Children make a smooth start to school as the small number attending mean that individual needs are catered for well. There are clear and effective arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Pupils say they feel safe from bullying and feel able to turn to any member of staff for help. Older pupils have regular responsibilities for others around the school, but all pupils are watchful to help classmates. The school's monitoring of health and safety is good. Although teachers regularly set clear academic targets for children, they do not always feel fully involved in setting them. This reduces the effectiveness of academic guidance. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils make good progress, especially those with LDD.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported well by governors, has created a close team ethos and a family learning environment. This motivates staff and pupils to contribute to moving the school forward. Significant further priorities for development are included in the concise school strategic plan. Subject responsibilities are shared sensibly between staff and feature within the plan. Suggestions from parents are taken seriously, resulting in action where appropriate, for example, in more information being sent home to parents about class activities. Regular monitoring of teaching leads to improvement, but does not sufficiently pinpoint those areas which might raise pupils' learning to higher levels. Governors give the school good support. Their day-to-day involvement such as helping with reading and maintaining the school web site, together with a programme of visits, help them assess what goes on. They are keen to seek improvements and are successful in tackling weaknesses. The improvement in ICT provision and the way that a dip in standards in science has been tackled indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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? | 2 |
| 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 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

14 June 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Worth Primary School, Worth, Kent CT14 0DF

Many thanks for showing me and my colleague around recently when we visited the school. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out about how the school works. Yours is a good school. Here are some of the things that we thought were particularly good.

- You all try hard to make Worth a good school and a happy place to be.
- When children join Class 1, they settle quickly to school and learn well.
- You said you feel safe and all the staff make sure that you are.
- Teaching is good and teachers like to help you.
- You know about exercising regularly, drinking water and what foods are the best to eat.
- The activities you do in school, like science and maths days, help boost your learning.
- You all behave very well and the school helps you become mature.
- You make good progress in your work and reach average standards by the time you leave.
- You get involved with village events such as plays, fetes and sports activities so you learn about the local community.

Here are the three things we have suggested the school does next.

- In Years 3 to 6, we have asked teachers to stretch your thinking more, particularly for those of you who like greater challenges.
- You need to be involved more in setting your own targets so that they motivate you more to improve your learning.
- Links made between subjects need to be closer so that you can make best use of all your skills in topic and project work.

Yours faithfully,

Kevin Hodge

Lead Inspector