



# Long Mead Community Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 118575  
**Local Authority** Kent  
**Inspection number** 291176  
**Inspection dates** 10–11 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Linda Kelsey HMI

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>	Waveney Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Tonbridge
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		TN10 3JU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 350601
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	143	<b>Fax number</b>	01732 771373
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Tony Robinson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanna Powell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2004		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This school serves a disadvantaged area of Tonbridge. Almost 40% of pupils have some degree of learning difficulty or disability. This is well above the national average. Over a third of pupils are eligible for a free school meal, which is also well above the national average. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities. At the time of the last inspection in 2004, the school was found to have serious weaknesses because pupils did not make enough progress in their work and as a result achievement was poor in most subjects. During the last two years, the school has had two monitoring visits. The number of pupils on roll at the school has fallen by half over the last two years, because a greater number have left the school than have subsequently joined it.

## 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 an effective school providing an adequate level of education. Its previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies.

Since the last inspection, there have been many changes which have brought about improvement in provision and the quality of education for the pupils. These are in the improved learning environment, better teaching and improved behaviour of pupils. The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. 'I love my teachers,' commented one girl. However, the school has lost almost half its pupils to neighbouring schools. This has had an effect on the overall standards and achievement of pupils.

Standards across the school are very low and have been for many years. There is evidence that pupils are now making satisfactory progress, and some are making good progress. Nevertheless, there are still inconsistencies. Good progress is being made in the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and at the top end of the school. In Years 2 to 4, progress is impeded by the low skills that the pupils have in literacy and numeracy, and because teaching is only satisfactory for these year groups. In these classes, the pupils' work indicates that some pupils are working at levels a year behind what they should be achieving. The school has good data analysis and tracks all pupils' progress.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, is good. Attendance has improved and is closer to the national average, but there are still too many pupils who do not attend regularly enough and this affects their progress and the standards they achieve.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and offers a good range of subjects and out of school activities. Lesson planning is a strength of the teaching and indicates that teachers have well focused plans which are based on good use of data. These lessons start by taking pupils from where they are academically and focus on building better basic skills and understanding. Teaching at its best is lively, interactive and makes good use of role play.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with some real strengths in data analysis, assessment and staff management. The headteacher has a clear vision for how the school should move forward. She is ably supported by the rest of the leadership team, who can demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The self-evaluation, while thorough and honest about standards, is too generous in its assessment of how well pupils have progressed through the school. The school is not strongly focused on rigorous monitoring of the quality of some of the teaching and learning across the school to ensure that all pupils receive the very best teaching.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement by:
- Improving the quality of all teaching to the level of the very best.

- Ensuring that leadership and management focus on the key issues for school improvement.
- Improving attendance so that more pupils attend the school regularly

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory even though pupils leave the school with low standards. In 2005, standards were below average at both key stages. The school acknowledges in its own self-assessment that standards were too low because teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in the past. The test results for 2006 indicate that standards are low and have continued to decline against the national trend. This is because in the past pupils were not making enough progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 and because there have been changes to the profile of last year's Year 6 pupils.

Children enter the school with well below average attainment but make good progress through the Foundation Stage. This is because the curriculum is very well planned and organised for them. The profile for children leaving the Reception class indicates that pupils make very good gains in personal and social development and good gains in literacy and numeracy skills. However, this good progress is limited to the Foundation Stage and Year 1 so that by the end of Year 2 pupils have not made up enough ground and are still performing below average.

Pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection, the school has lost almost half of its pupils from this key stage. This has had an adverse effect on standards and progress, and on the results for 2006. Through its detailed tracking procedures and accelerated learning programme, the school can demonstrate that pupils that have been in the school since they were infants have made good progress during Key Stage 2. The weaker progress of some can also be attributed to a high level of unsatisfactory teaching in the past and, although this has improved since the last inspection, there are still some missed opportunities to engage pupils in meaningful activities. Pupils have to do a lot of catching up of missed work to reach appropriate standards for their age.

The higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress through the school. However, this high number of pupils with additional needs and the low number of pupils who are identified as more able does have an impact on the achievement at Key Stage 2 overall. This is demonstrated by the standards achieved by more able pupils as being much lower than that found in schools similar to this one.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils show a greater willingness to learn and find learning fun, although their basic skills are limited and this affects their future economic well-being. The behaviour of

most pupils is good. Pupils are friendly and support each other, so that quality relationships are developing. Bullying is not an issue.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils understand issues within the wider world. An interesting offering of outside visits and visitors contributes well to the multicultural agenda. Pupils take responsibility through the school council and contribute well to community activities.

The school has taken major steps to improve the healthy lifestyles of all pupils. As one boy commented as he selected to eat a chocolate bar rather than a bag of crisps, 'I have two things here I shouldn't really eat. I have decided to choose just one of them.' The lunchtime cooked meal eaten by almost half the pupils is nutritious and tasty. Pupils are given opportunities to sample new menus, which is a good way of encouraging them to try new tastes.

The school's attendance has improved and unauthorised absence has sharply declined. However, pupils' attendance still remains obstinately below the national average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning is good across the school. Teaching in the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and at the top end of the school is good. However, there is some inconsistent teaching in Years 2 to 4 where pupils' learning is consistently inhibited by their low levels of basic skills. The inconsistency of teaching quality prevents some pupils from making the significant gains needed from lost ground in the past. Teachers have good behaviour management skills and they produce calm and productive classrooms with strong relationships. Classrooms are interesting and teachers show that they value pupils' work through displays which improve their self-esteem. Good examples of good role play were seen in the Reception class where children were playing at being a scientist in a laboratory, making up experiments using coloured chocolates.

When teaching is only satisfactory, lesson activities are not accurately targeted at the needs of learners. There are too many paper and pencil exercises, or pupils spend too much time listening to teachers talking. Consequently, concentration and learning skills fall.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is overall satisfactory and is being developed to be more appropriate to the pupils in the school, both in content and learning style. Pupils are responding well to a less rigid approach in subjects and are able to see the connections between activities, such as in science where there is a greater hands-on approach by pupils.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

The school's care of pupils is good and is a key reason for their good behaviour. The headteacher, staff and governors are very mindful of the community that they serve and consistently try to tailor their support for the individual child and family. The school is well supported by outside agencies in its care and support agenda. This includes more stringent follow-up of absences. Health and safety procedures are thorough.

The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is developing well. The school has many intervention strategies, including a nurture class, but has yet to evaluate these strategies for their effectiveness. The assessment, monitoring and tracking of pupils are systematic and rigorous and are driving improvement in many areas of the school. They are well used to define intervention strategies and set targets for individual pupils.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school is well led by a determined and strong headteacher who is well supported by the senior leadership team. This team, together with the good support from the governing body and the local authority, is focused on raising standards and promoting pupils' well-being. There is a strong sense of common purpose to ensure that each child can achieve their full potential.

This strong and determined leadership has brought about many good improvements to the culture and ethos of the school. Classrooms are better organised and the refurbished outside play areas have extended the learning environment for all pupils. As a result, the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils have improved and they are more ready to learn in class.

Leadership of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is outstanding and the work within the Early Years is having a positive impact on improving the teaching styles throughout the school. However, amongst other managers, best practice is not always disseminated thoroughly enough.

Performance of pupils across the school is monitored very well. The school has clear ideas about how well each pupil is achieving and is able to track when learning accelerates and when it slows. The headteacher has a clear idea about the strengths and weaknesses of the staff in the school, although the self-evaluation is too generous in how far the school has improved. Nevertheless, the headteacher knows what needs to be done to bring about continued improvement.

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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	4
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	4
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>	3

<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	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	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**

We enjoyed meeting you all recently and were pleased that so many of you willingly chatted to us during our visit. You told us how much your school had improved. We agree that the classroom and outside areas are exciting and interesting work and play areas.

The standards in your work are still below what they should be for your age and some of you still find writing and number work difficult. Many of you are now making much better progress than you used to and because of this we have decided that your school no longer has serious weaknesses. Your headteacher and her staff work hard to make sure that they know as much about your work as they can so that they can plan appropriate lessons for you. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that all of you get the best possible teaching across the school so that you can catch up with some of this basic work you have missed in the past.

Your headteacher is good at making sure the school is a happy place for you all to learn in. We have asked her to make sure that all teaching is good. The majority of you enjoy coming to school and are there most days of the year. However, we feel that more of you should try much harder to get to school on time or to be at school regularly.

We wish you all the best for your future life, health and continuing happiness. You can help make your school better by working hard and helping your teachers when you can.