

# Hildenborough Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118603
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	291186
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Bassett

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 category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	219
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gerry Whittome
<b>Headteacher</b>	L Hargreaves
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2001
<b>School address</b>	Riding Lane Hildenborough Tonbridge TN11 9HY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 833394
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school, which serves mainly the immediate neighbourhood. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than in most schools. The number with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are in line with the expected standards for their age but there are a few who have weaker language skills. The headteacher leaves the school at the end of this term and the new headteacher takes up her appointment in April 2007. The school has not had a deputy headteacher for the last three years. Several teachers over the past two years have been on temporary contracts to cover maternity leave.

## 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 several strengths. Leadership and management by the headteacher are good. She gives good direction to the work of the school and has successfully created a confident team that works well together. Nevertheless, many initiatives, particularly the expansion of the role of subject leaders, have been restricted over the past three years because of the necessity to readjust management responsibilities due to staff changes. This problem is now resolved but the current subject leaders do not yet monitor the planning and pupils' work well enough. Consequently, leadership and management overall are satisfactory. During this long period of disruption the school has been prevented from appointing a deputy headteacher and without this level of management, extra duties have been placed upon the headteacher. Nevertheless, changes to staffing have been handled well by the headteacher and the governing body and satisfactory education has been maintained.

Standards are above average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Children enter school with standards at the expected levels but some are slightly weaker in their language skills. As a result of good teaching and provision in the Foundation Stage, most children reach, and a high proportion exceed, the targets set for them. Nevertheless, their standards in writing are as expected. Most children make good progress in Reception, but throughout Years 1 to 6 pupils make only satisfactory progress. Their standards at the end of Year 2 remain above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Following a period of disruption to the pupils' learning, the progress of pupils in Year 6 has now accelerated to secure satisfactory achievement. Subsequently, standards in Year 6 are now above average in English but nevertheless remain just above average in mathematics and science. However, pupils' standards in literacy work are not always mirrored in their written work in other subjects and more able pupils could do better. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good because of the extremely effective care and support they are given in small groups and as individuals.

This is a very caring school. Pupils enjoy their learning and are fully included in all that the school does. Parents express positive views and many say that they 'feel fully involved with their child's learning'. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Behaviour is good and attendance is better than the national average. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to remain healthy and safe. Their social, moral and cultural development is good, with their spiritual development being excellent.

Pupils are not given enough guidance through the teachers' marking. They are not encouraged enough to assess how well they are doing and are not always aware of their own targets. Often the more able pupils are not set work that challenges them enough. The curriculum is good and cross-curricular links, especially for the use of literacy, are well established.

Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are fully supportive and have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school's self-evaluation is good and accurate. The school's performance is monitored well to identify the strengths and weaknesses and the capacity for future improvement is satisfactory.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of subject leaders to improve the checking and evaluation of their subjects so that teachers plan tasks with higher levels of challenge, especially for the more able pupils.
- Ensure that pupils, particularly by the end of Year 2, improve their standards in writing.

- Involve pupils in assessing their own work and raise their awareness of their own targets to improve their achievement.
- Make certain that guidance and marking identify clearly what each pupil needs to do next.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory overall and standards are above average. The children enter the Foundation Stage with standards broadly as expected for their age. As a result of good teaching in the Foundation Stage, they quickly settle to the routines of the class and make good progress in all areas of learning. Some are already well placed to exceed the goals set for them, whilst most are on course to complete targets for their age by the end of the Reception year. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 2 standards remain above average in reading and mathematics but their skills in writing are still average.

Pupils in Year 6 last year and in the current Year 6 experienced disruptions to their learning in earlier classes, and this slowed down their progress. With stability throughout their time in Year 6, their progress has accelerated. Their achievement is secured as satisfactory overall and whilst standards in mathematics and science remain just above average, they have improved in English and are above average. Standards in music are well above average and the pupils' achievements in singing are a particular strength of the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

A strong Christian culture underpins the work of the school. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes towards their education. They express their views confidently and many perform competently before large audiences. The school council has a good voice and has contributed well to decision making, for example those relating to the re-marking of the playground. Pupils feel safe at school and have no significant concerns about bullying. They are well aware of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and do so. One pupil in Year 3 linked wanting to eat unhealthy snacks to being tempted and explained what she should be choosing. Cultural development is good, particularly in music, drama and art. However, pupils are not sufficiently aware of the traditions and customs of cultures other than their own. Pupils contribute well to the community through their support of local and international projects.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. Here the teacher prepares structured and purposeful experiences so that children can plan, carry out and review their own work very effectively through play and exploration. Throughout the school there are good relationships between teachers, class assistants and pupils. Questioning strategies are good and teachers give pupils many opportunities to explain their thinking. Teaching of science, an issue at the last inspection, is now much better with all pupils actively involved in investigational work. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are taught and supported well because of the careful planning of precise tasks to meet their needs and the support given to them.

However, there are some areas of teaching that are weaker. Although the school has endeavoured to improve teachers' marking, pupils are still not given enough guidance about what they need to do next and are often not made aware of their own targets for improvement. Often the work devised for more able pupils does not challenge them sufficiently.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Themes are planned successfully over a two year period. Good links across subjects are developed which make pupils' learning more meaningful. Literacy skills are being established across other subjects, for example, in history the use of local visits helps pupils to develop their creative and factual writing styles. French is planned effectively. The school prepares pupils well for their future well-being by helping them to achieve good standards in basic skills. Music, especially singing, forms a vital element of pupils' personal creative development. The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) is improving but is currently weaker because of the problems with networking the equipment. The pupils' learning is enhanced well through clubs, instrumental music lessons, visits and visitors that stimulate pupils' interests. Their physical education is promoted well through activities organised with the secondary schools and particularly through frequent swimming lessons.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

A strength of the school lies within the pastoral care and support given to pupils. Staff show great respect for all pupils and the school has thorough procedures to protect them and provides a safe and secure environment. Teachers give pupils effective guidance to develop their understanding that they need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The staff encourage pupils well to take part in community events including those within the village. The school provides well for pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. The support for pupils with learning difficulties is good and in small groups and individually they are given precise help by classroom assistants that raises their standards in literacy and numeracy very effectively. For those with disabilities, support is often outstanding allowing these pupils to take a full part in all activities.

However care, support and guidance overall are satisfactory overall because there are some areas of guidance that are not strong enough. Although pupils' progress is tracked accurately and effectively from one year to the next, the complexity of the whole-school assessment records inhibits their accessibility. Consequently, the staff do not use this data effectively enough to plan tasks and do not involve pupils enough in their own self-assessment. Consequently, pupils do not always have a clear understanding of their own targets. Communication with parents is now good, having improved since the previous inspection.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher demonstrates good leadership and management skills. She has been working for most of the last three years without a deputy headteacher but has been well supported by all staff including the administration team. She has twice endeavoured to form a senior management team that could take some responsibilities for whole-school development. This initiative has been thwarted by staff changes and long term staff absences. This has resulted

in some disruption to school improvement and to pupils' learning. However, with shrewd financial management, the problems caused by the fall in pupil numbers have been handled sensitively by the headteacher and governing body. Despite these setbacks, many aspects of the school have been improved because of the determination of the headteacher and governors. The building has been improved significantly since the previous inspection, with seven new classrooms replacing many temporary classrooms. Leaders for English and mathematics are improving their roles and whilst they gain experience of monitoring, the headteacher has checked the work of all pupils in literacy and numeracy as part of the whole school performance and has evaluated what each one needs to be taught next. This is having a good impact upon improving pupils' achievement. . The school has successfully developed the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Self-evaluation is accurate and carried out well and the school's capacity for future improvement is satisfactory.

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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>	<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	2
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	2
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	2

### 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	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	2

### 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>	2
<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.

## Annex A

**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	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	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. We particularly liked the new classrooms and the way you all get on so well together. We found your school to be a happy place and your singing was extremely good. These are the things that are particularly good.
- Your headteacher leads and manages your school well. She has clear ideas about the future developments.
- By the time that you leave the school at the end of Year 6 your standards in English, mathematics and science are above average.
- You are all developing good attitudes towards your work and towards each other.
- You understand how to remain healthy and safe.
- Staff and the teachers care for you well.
- Your attendance is now good and you behave well in and around the school.
- The curriculum is good and your teachers make your learning enjoyable.

There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- Help the teachers who lead subjects to develop their skills so that they can check teachers' plans more thoroughly to ensure that work that you are set challenges you more, especially those of you who find work easier.
- Make sure that your teachers help you to improve your writing, particularly by Year 2.
- Make sure your teachers encourage you to judge how well you are doing and by reminding you about your targets.
- Make certain that the comments that your teachers make when marking your work help you to understand what you have to do next to improve.

Once again thank you for your help.