



Stansted Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118628
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291193
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Joan Lindsay

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rosemary Douglas
Headteacher	Patricia Crane
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2001
School address	Malthouse Road Stansted Sevenoaks TN15 7PH
Telephone number	01732 822323
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small village school where most of the pupils come from White British families. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities varies from year to year but overall is above average. Children join the school with average levels of ability. Two of the four teaching staff are new to the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Stansted Church of England Primary School is a satisfactory school with a number of outstanding and good features. What stands out, and what is commented on particularly by pupils and parents, is the family, caring environment. One parent commented, 'Stansted School is a friendly, inclusive school with a lovely atmosphere'. Pupils are nurtured here and their personal development is good. As a result, their behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils feel exceptionally safe in school. Their lives are enriched by an outstanding array of extra activities and a wonderful sense of community awareness as a result of participation in many village events. Parents have very positive views of the school and are very supportive in terms of time given and financial support. However, too many parents remove their children for holidays.

Pupils' standards are average and achievements are satisfactory across the school including in the Reception year. There are variations from year to year owing in part to the small number of pupils in each year group, where occasionally there is also a gender imbalance. For example, 2006 results for Year 6 pupils were particularly disappointing for the school, especially in English as pupils did not do as well as expected. Pupils' skills in writing across the school are relatively weak. Although steps have been taken to correct this, there is still scope for further improvement. In addition, there has not always been appropriate challenge for all pupils to enable them to achieve their best although again the school is taking steps to address this.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is a significant amount of good practice in lessons throughout the school with teachers being particularly adept at keeping pupils' attention with interesting tasks. Pupils appreciate that lessons are made fun. Teachers are using tracking data to match learning to the needs of different abilities but as a lot of these systems are new this is still an area for development.

Pupils benefit from a good curriculum that has been made more interesting through the introduction of more creative projects. What stands out in this small school is the extremely wide range of clubs available to pupils of all ages and catering for many different interests. This has a very positive impact on raising the self-esteem of pupils who may have special talents other than academic ability.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pastoral care is very strong and so pupils feel well cared for. Academic support and guidance is also good and improving further with the introduction of new tracking systems. Pupils are aware of their targets and are beginning to be guided more successfully in what they can do to improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has been effective in establishing a very caring, nurturing environment. Self-evaluation is good as the school paints an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. With a stronger focus on raising awareness of where underachievement is occurring, through the use of more effective tracking, on support for new teachers and on stretching the more able, results are beginning to come through in improved standards. The whole-school focus on writing is also beginning to bear fruit. The strong commitment by all staff, the recognition of areas of weakness and the positive steps being taken to address them mean that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards of writing across the school.

- Ensure that work set in lessons challenges pupils of all abilities so their achievement is increased.
- Improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Children come into school with average levels of ability and as a result of the satisfactory provision, make steady progress in Reception so that most reach the expected levels as they move into Year 1. This satisfactory progress continues through Years 1 and 2 so that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1. Nevertheless there were fewer pupils than the national average who achieved the higher levels in the tests particularly in writing and reading in 2006. However, 2007 results show a significant improvement.

Results in 2006 for pupils in Year 6 showed a dip in standards and achievement, particularly in English but also in science. This was a disappointment to the school. To some extent the results were affected by the specific make-up of the group of pupils taking the tests but nevertheless the most able pupils did not achieve as well as they should have. The school has analysed the reasons for this underperformance and has improved support for more able pupils and particularly for those identified as gifted and talented. Some successful steps have also been taken to improve writing across the school although this is still an area of relative weakness. Standards overall are improving as a result of targeted support for focus groups of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. As a result those pupils achieve at least as well as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils love coming to this school which a parent described as, 'a very caring and loving environment where good manners and courtesy are taught and upheld'. Pupils' positive attitudes to each other stand out and one girl said what she liked best was all the friends she had made. Pupils enjoy helping each other in the playground and at clubs such as the Fun Club for the youngest children. They develop very good self-esteem and pupils are rightly proud of the work that is displayed on 'Excellence Boards' around the school some of which is of a high standard. Their attitudes to learning are very positive.

Pupils have a good awareness of what leads to a healthy lifestyle, enjoy their fruit and vegetables at break time and have access to a wide range of sporting activities after school. Pupils are very community conscious because of the excellent involvement in village events. The school council also makes a strong contribution to school life and members rightly take pride in their involvement in enhancing the outside environment and in thinking of ideas such as 'Friendship Friday'. Preparation of pupils for their future working life is satisfactory as they make steady progress in acquiring basic skills.

Attendance is inadequate, although recent figures do show an improvement. The number of holidays taken in term time has an adverse impact on attendance figures, even though the school has asked parents not to do this. Their absence for holidays means pupils miss much important work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some strong features, in the Reception class and throughout the rest of the school. Teachers develop warm relationships with pupils and manage them well so there is a good environment for pupils to learn in. The use of interactive whiteboards in two classrooms has added to pupils' interest in their lessons. Teachers make good use of group work to help pupils learn for themselves. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. The use of assessment and progress tracking data to enable lessons to be planned to give appropriate challenge to pupils of all abilities is relatively new. The effect of these measures is beginning to be seen in improving standards but the school recognises that this is still an area for further development to enable underachievement to be overcome as soon as possible.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy a good, broad curriculum that has benefited from the introduction of creative projects to add depth and enhance learning for pupils. The school has this year focused on improving pupils' writing and has added elements of thinking skills into the curriculum, which has made it more interesting for all ages. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from specific groups and clubs that provide them with interesting and challenging tasks. Children in the Reception class enjoy a sound balance of teacher-directed learning and purposeful play. Currently only two out of four classrooms have interactive whiteboards so not all pupils profit from greater use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance the curriculum.

An outstanding range of clubs and activities is on offer to pupils which reflects the commitment of teachers and parents, many of whom help run clubs. Pupils greatly enjoy these activities and participation rates are high. Activities are carefully designed to help promote development of creative and thinking skills as well as sporting techniques. Pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school is also greatly enhanced through residential and camping trips. The school has established an active and positive partnership with parents to support this broad curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care and support that pupils receive is excellent and reflects the inclusive nature of the school. This support ensures all pupils are safeguarded properly and that they develop a strong sense of self-worth. Any vulnerable pupils are supported well through targeted help tailored to their needs with the school making good use of outside expertise where necessary. This ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported to progress at least as well as others in the school.

Academic support and guidance is good and continuing to improve as a result of more involvement of pupils in assessing their own learning. Pupils are aware of their targets and are helped to understand what they need to do to improve. The use of tracking data to monitor how well pupils are progressing is now more effective and is beginning to impact on achievement. Pockets of underachievement, including any by the more able, are now more quickly overcome.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and her committed staff have taken successful steps to counter last year's dip in standards and achievement, especially in writing. New teaching staff have been very well supported so that they are quickly becoming effective in their roles. Improvements are now being seen, for example with more guidance and support for pupils in improving their writing and more challenge for the more able. Systems for tracking pupils' progress and for using this information to overcome underachievement have recently been improved and are already having a positive impact on standards.

The leadership team and governors have a realistic and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. Governors are supportive of the school and are prepared to challenge at an appropriate level. Issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed and the school has satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	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

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

22 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stansted Church of England Primary School, Sevenoaks, TN15 7PH

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. You obviously are very happy in school and enjoy the huge range of extra activities that the school provides for you such as cricket and chess clubs. We think that your behaviour is excellent and it was particularly good to see how kind the older pupils are to the young ones – the school is like one big family. You are very well looked after in school and this makes everyone feel extremely safe and secure so you are happy and ready to learn. You know a lot about how to keep healthy. We also think your involvement in village life is excellent and that the school council does a good job in school with ideas for improvements. This all helps you develop into confident, polite young people.

We think that your school gives you a satisfactory education. In any school, there are some things that can be improved and we have suggested three to your school's staff and governors.

- Last year standards were not high enough, especially in writing. Although the school knows this and is taking action, there is still more to be done to help you improve your writing.
- Your teachers could use the information they collect about your progress more successfully to make sure everyone achieves their very best.
- The attendance rates at school are too low because too many pupils take holidays in term time. This means they miss a lot of work.

You can all help your school by continuing to work hard, particularly at your writing.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours faithfully

Joan Lindsay Lead inspector