



# Trottiscliffe Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

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Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 118630  
**Local Authority** Kent  
**Inspection number** 291194  
**Inspection date** 11 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Lois Furness

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>	Church Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Trottiscliffe
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		West Malling ME19 5EB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 822803
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	61	<b>Fax number</b>	01732 822803
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Ann Kemp
		<b>Headteacher</b>	S Sudds
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 January 2003		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a small school where almost all pupils are White British. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is below average and when children join the school in the Reception year their skills and experiences are similar to those expected for their age. Nevertheless, attainment on entry can fluctuate depending on the size and make-up of the small intake. The pupils are organised into three mixed-year group classes.

This is the school's first inspection since it was removed from special measures in June 2004.

## **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 good features. Parents are supportive of the school and say 'The school is at the heart of the community, providing a warm, friendly environment where children thrive'. Pupils agree that Trottiscliffe is a good place to be. They have positive attitudes despite facing several difficulties since the last inspection including expansion from two classes to three and the possibility of closure. During this time the headteacher has been instrumental in maintaining morale, whilst continuing school improvement. Now the threat of closure has been removed, all those involved with the school are working effectively together and the capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

The quality of provision in the Reception year is satisfactory and standards are similar to national expectations. Children settle quickly into school routines and reach at least the standards expected in each area of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are mainly above average. Achievement is satisfactory, although progress varies year on year and the school's analysis shows that writing and mathematics standards could be higher. The drive to improve writing, which was a priority last year, has been partly successful. Spelling and punctuation skills, in particular, continue to require development for improvement. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length or use and apply their numeracy skills.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with good features. Staff manage pupils well and relationships are very good. As a result, pupils work responsibly, both individually and in groups. Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress, including that of pupils with learning difficulties. The use of assessment information is improving but needs development to ensure that pupils are given sufficient guidance about how they can improve their work.

The curriculum is good. Good planning is providing a secure structure for growing improvements in teaching. There is a good range of enrichment activities. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning and their interest leads to good behaviour. Their personal development is good because the school effectively promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils know the importance of a healthy lifestyle; as one pupil said, 'You might get diabetes when you are older if you eat the wrong food'. They know how to keep themselves safe and are confident in approaching a member of staff if they have a worry. Pupils say their concerns are quickly and effectively dealt with. Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good. Effective arrangements to safeguard pupils are in place, with the school working well with external agencies when necessary.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides clear direction and is supported well by staff and governors. Monitoring and self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. The headteacher and subject leaders monitor teaching and learning, but the effectiveness of this is reduced because checking on the actions agreed with staff is not always sufficiently rigorous.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' spelling and punctuation skills and provide them with regular opportunities to write at length.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills.
- Provide pupils with clearer guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation is more robust by checking upon agreed actions more rigorously.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Although standards fluctuate because numbers of pupils are so small, achievement is satisfactory for all, including pupils with learning difficulties. Improvements in teaching and a better planned curriculum are starting to increase the rate of progress made by pupils. This has been uneven in the past. For example, the pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 who were identified as underachieving in the last inspection have made up lost ground and are now working at levels at least expected for their age. By Year 2 and Year 6 standards are above average, although writing and mathematics are relatively weaker aspects of the pupils' work. Although standards are improving in both these subjects, there is still more work to be done. Reception-aged children make satisfactory progress. By the end of the Reception year they have at least met the goals expected for their age and are ready to access the Year 1 curriculum.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoy school. They collaborate very well when asked to work with others and older pupils willingly support younger pupils around the school. Behaviour is good, although pupils sometimes become restless if they do not engage with the lesson and lose concentration.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop a good understanding of the consequences of their actions and, as one pupil said when explaining why unkind behaviour is not acceptable, 'I would not like it if somebody did that to me!' Pupils know of the need to care for others through their fund raising and work for different charities. Pupils have a good understanding of the arts and local culture, but their understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain is more limited. Pupils willingly take on responsibility and are keen to make suggestions to the school council. They are pleased with some of the results, for example they say 'the spacewalker is really good fun'. Pupils are prepared well for their next stage of education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Relationships between pupils and staff are very good and this leads to pupils having good attitudes towards their work. Support staff understand the needs of pupils well and ensure that pupils with learning difficulties take a full part in lessons. The use of assessment is improving. Teachers use this information to plan activities that are appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. There is a strong emphasis on practical activities but this valuable approach is not balanced with enough opportunities for pupils to record their work, notably in writing. Members of staff use praise well to boost the Reception children's confidence. However, there are occasions when these children are expected to sit still for too long. At these times they lose attentiveness and their learning suffers. Marking in pupils' books is satisfactory, but comments do not always provide pupils with useful guidance about how they might improve their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities which are carefully broken down into small steps for learning. This approach ensures that activities can be appropriately matched to pupils' starting points as they work together in the mixed-age classes. This improved planning structure is effectively supporting improvements in teaching. The school's strong focus on improving pupils' writing has been partly effective in raising standards, although issues remain in spelling, punctuation and opportunities for independent writing.

The range of enrichment activities is good and pupils also have good opportunities to learn from visiting speakers and from a wide range of visits. The curriculum for Reception children is satisfactory overall. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-led activities in the indoor curriculum, but provision for outdoor learning is less extensive.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The small size of the school and the way pupils are organised in mixed-year group classes contribute well to a family atmosphere where every child is valued. Parents comment, 'Every child is treated as an individual'. This good level of care and support contributes well to pupils' personal development. Health and safety routines and risk assessments, including all the checks required to ensure pupils' welfare, are fully in place. Pupils with learning difficulties are carefully identified and appropriate support is provided for them. Pupils' work is regularly monitored and the tracking of pupils' progress is secure. Pupils are involved in identifying their own targets and although

some targets are helpful in enabling them to make progress, others are too vague and do not provide useful guidance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has been the key factor in creating a safe happy school where everyone is valued and this contributes significantly to pupils' good personal development. There are good working relationships between the staff and supportive governing body. Together they have established an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and secured satisfactory improvement. The school improvement plan is thorough; however, although focused on raising standards, it is overly detailed and the many actions planned make it difficult to identify key priorities.

Teaching and learning are regularly checked by the headteacher and subject leader. Even so, the effectiveness of this monitoring is reduced because findings are not always followed up rigorously enough. For example, analysis of assessment information identified that there were weaknesses in the use and application of pupils' numeracy skills. Despite this, teachers' planning has not been checked to ensure that regular opportunities are provided for pupils to practise these skills.

Good links with external agencies and wider school networks have been established. These are used well by this small school to extend pupils' learning opportunities.

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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	3
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	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	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	3
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>	2

<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	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly. You attend a satisfactory school with some good features. We liked these things most of all

- You attain above average standards by the time you leave school in Year 6 and your achievement is satisfactory.
- Your school is a happy, friendly place and you get on well together.
- Your teachers plan lots of interesting activities and I enjoyed watching Year 2 pupils pretending to be different symbols of punctuation. I am sure the person who was the full stop will always remember that a full stop comes at the end of the sentence!
- You behave well and enjoy your learning.
- It was good to know that you think that adults in the school will always help you if you are upset.
- You know the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how to keep yourselves safe.

These are the things we have asked your school to work on now

- Help you to improve your spelling and punctuation skills and give you more time to write longer pieces of writing.
- Make sure you have regular opportunities to use your numeracy skills to solve problems.
- Give you more information about how you might improve your work.
- Check thoroughly that you are all learning as well as you can.

We hope you continue to make your school a happy place and help your teachers to make your learning even better.