



Ospringe Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118646
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291198
Inspection dates 1–2 March 2007
Reporting inspector Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Water Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Ospringe
Age range of pupils	4–11		Faversham ME13 8TX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01795 532004
Number on roll (school)	196	Fax number	01795 535744
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Alan Norley
		Headteacher	Amanda Ralph
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There have been several leadership changes in recent years. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006 having previously been acting headteacher.

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 and improving school. Leadership and management are good because the headteacher, governors and leadership team have been very effective at identifying where improvements have been needed and making the necessary changes to improve the education provided for the pupils. They have eliminated the underachievement that was previously evident in the school's national test results and many of the features of the school are now good.

As a result of good provision in the Reception Year, much improved since the last inspection, children make good progress so that they reach average standards by the start of Year 1. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average. This represents satisfactory achievement; an improvement on recent years, when pupils have significantly underachieved. Initiatives throughout the school to focus on raising the quality of pupils' writing and problem-solving skills have contributed to the improved provision. School self-evaluation is good, even though school leaders have an overly positive view of some aspects. In part, this is because of their ambitions for the school. However, this is also because when school leaders observe lessons, they focus more on the features of teaching than on the learning. Nevertheless, teaching has improved as a result of this monitoring. Teaching is now good, with pupils making good progress in lessons so that they catch up on previously lost ground. Work is generally matched well to pupils' needs, but there are still some classes where this match of work could be strengthened, particularly for the most able pupils. Teachers set out clear objectives for each lesson but sometimes these identify more what the pupils are expected to do rather than what they are expected to learn. The curriculum is good because it is made interesting and relevant to the pupils and is enhanced through a wide variety of well-attended clubs.

The school justifiably prides itself on the care it takes of its pupils' welfare. Pupils are made to feel safe and are encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices. As a result, their personal development and well-being are good. Pupils like school. They behave very well and are attentive in lessons. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory rather than good because, although pupils are looked after well and have a growing awareness of the levels at which they are working, many of the targets they have for improvement are rather general and so do not tell them what they, as individuals, need to do to improve their work. Many of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 have the same literacy target, for example, 'to use more ambitious vocabulary'.

The school has come a long way, particularly over the past year. Although much of its work is now good, the school is satisfactory rather than good because improvements have not yet had time to show through in good achievement as demonstrated in the national tests. The much improved provision does, however, demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Match work to pupils' abilities in all classes, particularly to ensure consistent challenge for the most able pupils.
- Focus attention on the learning that is expected, both when setting objectives for the pupils and when monitoring lessons.
- Set learning targets for pupils that give them more individual guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and this represents satisfactory achievement. This overall picture does not tell the whole story, however. Children join the Reception Year with skills that are a little below average. Their language and numeracy skills are especially low. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that almost all attain, and a few exceed, the goals expected for children at the start of Year 1. Standards have fluctuated in the assessments taken at the end of Year 2. They were below average in 2006 because more able pupils did not do well enough, particularly in reading and mathematics.

Progress in the past in Years 3 to 6 has been uneven and pupils underachieved in the Year 6 tests in 2004 and 2005. This improved in 2006, and pupils in that year achieved satisfactorily. As a result of recent initiatives to raise standards, pupils are now mostly making good progress in lessons. There is good provision in Year 2 and Year 6 to boost the performance of more able pupils. Able pupils do not always make such good progress in some other year groups when the work is not as carefully matched to their ability. Achievement remains satisfactory rather than good because many of the improvements are quite recent. They are already helping pupils to make up ground where they have previously not made the progress they should but they have yet to be translated into good achievement in national tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they benefit from effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well and treat each other with courtesy and respect. In lessons, for example, they listen carefully not only to the teacher but also to each other. In some classes, they spontaneously applaud each other's work. Pupils confirm that they like school, although they are sometimes compliant rather than enthusiastic in lessons. Pupils work together well, collaborating and working sensibly in pairs and small groups. Their preparation for working life is satisfactory because that is the level of their key literacy and numeracy skills.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example through taking on responsibility as school and cluster councillors; the latter representing the school

in meetings with representatives of other schools in the locality. They also contribute well to the wider community through, for example, their charity fundraising. They understand well the need for healthy lifestyles, enjoying sports and mostly choosing healthy options in the dining hall. They learn how to be safe, with, for instance, many pupils in Year 6 earning a Junior Citizen First Aid Award. They express confidence that 'bullying is not a problem in our school' because any friction is quickly dealt with. Pupils' attendance has improved steadily over the last three years, and particularly since the school started telephoning parents on the first day of any unexplained absence. Attendance is satisfactory. It would be better still if parents did not take their children out of school for family holidays in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, so that pupils are now making good progress in lessons. Teachers have raised their expectations of what their pupils are capable of achieving. Most lessons are characterised by good pace so that pupils get a lot done. Because teachers now make more effective use of assessment information to plan their lessons, pupils are helped to build well on what they have learnt before. As a result of a whole-school focus, work is being increasingly matched to pupils' different abilities. However, this is better in some year groups than others. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well throughout the school but this is not the case for the most able pupils who are not set difficult enough work in every class. Teachers set out objectives at the start of each lesson and share these with the pupils but these objectives are sometimes not focused enough on what the pupils are expected to learn. Marking is good. It gives pupils very clear feedback on how well they have done and some useful pointers to help them to do better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Revisions to the curriculum have provided more opportunities for using and developing key skills, for example pupils apply what they learn in literacy when writing in other subjects. However, this initiative is too recent to have yet had a significant impact on raising standards. Very good use is made of specialist teachers, who teach music and physical education while the class teacher is released to carry out preparation, planning and assessment. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to learn French from Reception Year upwards.

Interactive whiteboards are used routinely to help capture and hold pupils' interest. Pupils are also increasingly engaged by the creative links being developed between different subjects, such as the work in history, geography and literacy, which was done by pupils in Years 5 and 6 following their visit to Dover. The curriculum is enriched

through the good range of clubs on offer which are well attended and help to develop pupils' interests and enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes good care of pupils and, as a result, they are helped to feel safe and to grow in confidence. The school is particularly successful in, as it describes in its prospectus, creating 'an atmosphere of care, consideration and purpose'. Links with the on-site nursery and the good procedures for supporting children when they first join Reception help them to quickly settle into school life. Legal requirements for pupils' welfare are fully met, drawing well on support from the local authority and other external agencies, for example where a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are new and are beginning to have an impact on raising standards as teachers are more keenly aware of how well pupils are doing and where extra support is needed. Pupils have targets in English and mathematics but these are not making as much contribution to raising standards as they could because they are not specific enough to individual pupils' needs. Many pupils in different year groups have identical targets and many pupils are unaware of what their targets are.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and the leadership team have a shared vision for school improvement. Moreover, they have shown how effective they are at putting improvements into place. New initiatives have already had a significant impact through, for example, better attendance, improved use of assessment information and a more interesting and relevant curriculum. Lesson observations have helped to improve the quality of teaching, although this monitoring has not always been sufficiently focused on how the teaching affects the learning that is going on. That shortcoming contributes to school leaders sometimes having an overly positive view of some lessons.

The school has been working hard to develop stronger links with parents. It consults with them regularly and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. As a result, parents are supportive of the school and speak positively about the improvements they have seen.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and have a good understanding of the next steps for the school. They are actively involved in all aspects of school life, for example working alongside staff of the subject leadership teams, and they provide the headteacher and staff with constructive challenge.

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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	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

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	2

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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

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?	3

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.

Leadership and management

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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us. We were pleased to see how much your school has improved. We think your school is giving you a sound education. Teachers are helping you to make good progress in lessons but this has not yet been shown in better scores in the tests you take at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- Your headteacher and staff have been successful in spotting what needed to be improved and in making changes for the better.
- You behave well, get on well with each other and listen well in lessons.
- Staff take good care of you and help you feel safe.
- You like the good range of clubs and other activities on offer.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- In some classes, work could be better matched to what each of you needs to learn. Sometimes some of you could be tackling more difficult work.
- When teachers set objectives for you at the start of lessons, it would be better if these always identified what it was you were expected to learn. It would also be better if school leaders particularly checked out your learning and progress when they came in to see what your lessons are like.
- Many of you have the same targets rather than targets that are personal to each of you. Many of you do not know what your targets are, so they are not helping you enough to improve.

I am sure that you can help too by continuing to work hard and do your best.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.