



Eastry Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 118685
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291214
Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2006
Reporting inspector Eira Gill

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cooks Lea
School category	Community		Eastry
Age range of pupils	4–11		Sandwich CT13 0LR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01304 611360
Number on roll (school)	203	Fax number	01304 621145
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	David Sugden
		Headteacher	Tim Halling
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Eastry is an average sized primary school where most pupils come from a White British background and all pupils are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average, but higher in some year groups than others. Children's attainment on entry is variable and in recent years a higher proportion start school below the levels expected for their age. The school serves an area where there are pockets of economic disadvantage. The number of pupils who have joined the school in the last two years is above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with a strong Christian ethos. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement. This is because of the effective leadership of the headteacher who is well supported by his deputy headteacher, senior staff and governors. Since his appointment two years ago, the headteacher has successfully, in the words of a parent governor, 'carefully coordinated the management of change'. Parents are supportive and a typical written comment was, 'There is a strong sense of community and belonging for all the children.' Good links with business groups support pupils' achievement in science. In response to good care, support and guidance, the pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are well behaved and polite. They work hard in lessons and say, 'It is fun'. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance.

Achievement by pupils, including those with learning difficulties, is good. By the time pupils leave school, standards are above average in English and science, and high in mathematics. Progress made by Year 6 pupils in 2005 was in the top 2% of schools. This reflects good teaching and academic guidance as well as pupils' good attitudes to learning. Children make good progress in the Reception class. Their independent learning skills are much improved because of the new outdoor learning environment. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 although the progress of boys is not as good as girls in English.

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good, and outstanding in Year 6, particularly in mathematics. This accounts for the continued overall good achievement and the outstanding achievement in mathematics in the 2006 tests. In Year 6, questioning is used very effectively by the teacher to assess where pupils are and what they need to learn next. This good practice is not as evident in all classes. Pupils are encouraged to talk through their learning difficulties with each other and, in Year 6, pupils help each other to solve problems in more depth. This helps to develop pupils' logical thinking. The good improved curriculum has been strengthened by creating more subject links. Extra-curricular activities cover a wide range of interests. Pupils say, 'We are spoilt for choice'. These opportunities are having an impact on raising the pupils' learning and academic skills. Leadership and management are good. Effective monitoring has enabled the school to identify areas where improvement is required. Systems to track pupils' progress are being developed. These systems are not yet robust enough to pinpoint exactly where and how achievement, particularly among boys in Years 1 and 2, can be raised and so that the information can be better used to set targets for all pupils that are sufficiently challenging. The leadership team, supported by good governance, has tackled successfully weaknesses from the last inspection and the capacity to make further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement of boys in English in Years 1 and 2 by planning work which meets their particular needs.
- Extend the good practice in teaching in Year 6 to other year groups.

- Improve the systems that track pupils' progress throughout the school so that any pockets of underachievement are clearly identified and the information is used to set sufficiently challenging targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school. This is because of consistently good and, sometimes, outstanding teaching that has an impact on pupils' good learning and progress. The majority of children have the expected levels of skills when they start school but this can vary from year to year. Several children start with less well developed literacy and mathematical skills. Although teaching in the Reception class is good and most children make good progress, their literacy skills are still below average when they enter Year 1. In all other areas of learning the children attain the expected levels.

Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2. New teaching strategies and monitoring have been effective and achievement is now good. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average, although the boys make slower progress than the girls in English.

In Years 3 to 6, achievement has been consistently above average since 2003, and outstanding in mathematics because of exemplary teaching in Year 6. Standards are above average in English and science and well above in mathematics. Pupils have developed good literacy and outstanding numeracy skills which will equip them well for the future.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The early morning dance exercises in the playground organised by the older pupils set the tone for the day. This regular routine is just one example of how socially mature the pupils are. They have a good understanding of the need for exercise and healthy eating. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils act as buddies to the 'Fledglings'. All groups of pupils in the school feel valued, safe and secure. The school council fulfils its role well and has a voice. Pupils participate well in local events and make a positive contribution to the community. They know how they can enhance the lives of others by helping local charities and also took part in the recent 'Village of the Year' award.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with examples of outstanding teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6 in mathematics. Very good relationships have been established with pupils, and teachers have high expectations for attainment and behaviour. Interactive whiteboards are used well to engage pupils, and particularly to help them improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are given time to talk through possible answers to questions with their partners. Older pupils are challenged further in Year 6 by helping each other with more difficult mathematical problems. This strategy compels the pupils to think more about their learning style and is one reason for their outstanding achievement in mathematics.

Teachers' marking of pupils' work is usually good and clear guidance is given to pupils on how to improve. Pupils' progress is most rapid where there is a sharp use of questioning to assess where pupils are and what they need to learn next. Such good practice is not evident in all classes. Planning is effective and has improved. Teachers deploy their skilled teaching assistants constructively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that is much improved. Children's independent learning, language and social skills in Reception have been improved by the new outdoor equipment. For the most part the curriculum is well planned to take account of the specific needs of groups of pupils. New programmes with appropriate smaller steps of learning are proving effective for pupils who have learning difficulties. Planning for boys in Years 1 and 2 is not as effective. Strategies to raise their achievement in English have not yet proved successful. Information on their progress is not yet used well enough to plan a programme that addresses their specific needs.

Pupils' personal development benefits well from the residential visits, the wide variety of after school clubs and ongoing links with the community and other organisations. There has been a drive by leadership to improve cross-curricular links and its success was evident in a Year 4 lesson. Pupils were totally engrossed making 'pop up' designs to enhance their stories and using information and communication technology to improve the presentation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's care, guidance and support for the pupils are good. Pupils feel very safe at school and trust all the adults who work with them. All staff support children effectively to ensure that their personal development and achievement are good. Procedures for child protection are well established and understood by all staff. Health

and safety procedures are rigorous. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to ensure all groups of pupils, including those who join the school part way through the year, have access to suitable support. Parents appreciate this and totally trust the school. The procedures for assessing pupils' work have improved significantly. They enable staff to identify the learning of all groups of pupils more accurately. Teachers ensure that pupils know their individual targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, in almost two years, has created an effective senior management team which has responded with keen professionalism to the different expectations of its role. Subject leaders have been trained to monitor their subjects and are contributing more effectively to raising achievement, particularly in Years 1 and 2. New systems for tracking pupils' progress have proved successful in raising teachers' awareness of the need to improve and sustain achievement. However, the systems need further refinement to ensure that the information is used to identify the specific help that pupils need to raise their achievement and to set suitably challenging targets.

The leadership team is effective in checking how well the school is doing to ensure improvement. It knows what needs to be put into place to improve the school. Plans now need to focus more clearly on the actions required to improve boys' achievement in Years 1 and 2. Governance is good. Effective links with subject leaders have increased further the governors' very clear understanding of their roles. They are prepared to challenge the school. The school consults parents and pupils and uses their ideas to improve aspects of the organisation. The Christian ethos of the school and inclusion are very evident particularly in the cohesion of the community.

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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?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	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

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?	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.

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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and observing your lessons. You were all very polite and helpful throughout the two days. Your headteacher, governors and other members of staff lead the school well. They have made many improvements since the last inspection and it is now a good school. There are one or two things that need to be done to make the school even better. We are asking the staff and governors to make a small number of improvements.

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

- Most of you make good progress in English and science, and outstanding progress in mathematics by the time you leave the school.
- You are taught well, especially in Year 6, and teachers make lessons interesting for you.
- Your attitudes to work and the way you care about each other are pleasing.
- You are encouraged to think for yourselves about how to solve problems.
- Best of all, you really enjoy school and are well behaved.

These are the things that we think the school could do better:

- The boys in Years 1 and 2 need to make better progress in English.
- When teachers ask you questions to find out what you have learned, they need to be very sure of what you need to learn next.
- The school needs to check more thoroughly the progress you make so that help is given where necessary, and so that your targets give you just the right level of challenge.