

# Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118714
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	291224
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	294
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Geraldine Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Cockroft
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 January 2001
<b>School address</b>	Market Heath Brenchley Tonbridge TN12 7NY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01892 722929
<b>Fax number</b>	01892 724847

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 June 2007
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

This report was amended on 2nd July 2008 due to a complaint.

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average-sized primary school, serving Brenchley and other surrounding rural villages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most children are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is in line with most schools. The headteacher joined the school two weeks before the inspection, following a lengthy period of instability in the leadership of 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

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and is improving. Parents have rightly been concerned that the instability created by frequent leadership changes has resulted in weaker performance than when the school was last inspected, but many also commented positively on recent improvements. Satisfactory pastoral care leads to satisfactory personal development and well-being. Children develop good attitudes in the Reception classes and the sound provision at this stage gives children a thorough basis for later learning. Pupils say that they enjoy school, although they also comment that pupils do not always respect one another well enough, which can be threatening for younger pupils when play is too boisterous at lunchtime. However, they also report that this situation is improving. Pupils value the role undertaken by older pupils who mediate if there are problems between younger pupils. The school council is developing well and giving pupils valuable opportunities to influence school life, for example, in designing playground games.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but inconsistent from class to class. Following a history of good achievement in the school, standards have fallen in recent years and pupils' achievement is only satisfactory overall. Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with national averages, giving pupils the confidence and basic skills they need to progress to secondary education. Standards in Years 1 and 2 have not declined as much and are above average. This year, pupils' progress has been monitored carefully and underachievement challenged successfully. However, the school recognises that this information is not used as well as it could be to set challenging tasks and match work closely to all pupils' abilities, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Some teachers do not expect enough work from pupils in the time available. The improvements made to the teaching of mathematics in particular have been successful, with many pupils now making above average rates of progress. The curriculum meets pupils' needs satisfactorily and improvements are under way to make it more interesting and redress the emphasis on literacy and numeracy which has been necessary to bring about higher standards.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the temporary arrangements in place this year have effectively improved achievement. The new headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has already established a clear view with staff and pupils about how the school will move forward. However, not all the management systems are in place which are necessary for everyone in the school to fully understand how they will contribute to improving the school.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning so that pupils make more even progress.
- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and match pupils' tasks more closely to their earlier attainment.
- Establish a longer-term strategic plan so that leaders at all levels are clear about the next steps for improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils join the school with attainment in line with that expected for their age but with higher levels of social and emotional development than usual so that they are ready and keen to learn. Children enjoy the activities in the Reception classes and make satisfactory progress, entering Year 1 having achieved the expected goals for learning for their age. For a number of years, pupils have made good progress in Years 1 and 2 and generally reached above average standards by the end of Year 2. Although satisfactory, progress has not been as rapid in Years 3 to 6 so that results in the Year 6 tests have only been in line with the national average for the last two years. In 2006, the school did not meet all of its performance targets. Pupils have not done as well in mathematics as in English and science but the school has made improving the teaching of mathematics a priority and standards have risen significantly. Pupils are now achieving as well in mathematics as in the other core subjects. Different groups of pupils make similar rates of progress and those with learning difficulties or disabilities progress satisfactorily towards the targets set for their development. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly and prompt action taken to help pupils catch up when they are seen to be falling behind. Achievement is satisfactory overall and pupils' standards are broadly in line with national averages. The school is now better placed and on course to meet its targets this year and is confidently setting more challenging targets for future years.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development is not as strong as at the time of the last inspection but pupils are confident and articulate in expressing their views. Although they enjoy coming to school and say that bullying is rare, some are worried by the boisterous behaviour of a minority of the older pupils, particularly at playtimes, where play can feel intimidating. However, behaviour is satisfactory and the vast majority of older pupils show concern for the safety and well-being of younger pupils. Pupils observed that changes of rules about behaviour have been confusing and that sanctions need to be used consistently to be effective. Attendance overall is average. In spite of the involvement with external agencies, the attendance of a few pupils is poor and a number of families take holidays during term time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, although the diversity of faiths and cultures in England is not strongly reflected in the school environment.

The role of the school council is developing and its suggestions are being used well, for example, to influence the redesign of the playground. Pupils know how to stay safe and have a good understanding of how to eat healthily, knowing the importance of exercise and how smoking and taking drugs can adversely affect health. Pupils enjoy fundraising for charities and older pupils willingly take on responsibilities which contribute well to the school community, acting as prefects or playground buddies.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning, whilst satisfactory overall, are inconsistent across the school. Changes in organising activities in the Reception classes have improved children's experiences and

independence this year, with many making better than average progress. Where teaching is most effective and pupils make the greatest progress, learning is varied and relevant. For example, good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in quick paired discussions, helping them organise their thoughts which they then confidently share with others in the class, and they listen well to one another's contributions. When they are given interesting activities to do, they enjoy their work and concentrate well. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to illustrate and enliven learning. However, in some lessons, because teaching is less imaginative and pupils are not sufficiently challenged, they become restless, and are not motivated to do as well as they might. Teachers' lesson planning generally does not identify adequately the range of activities appropriate to pupils' different abilities. Marking celebrates pupils' successes well and generally shows pupils how they can get better.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and changes made during the current year have been successful in raising standards in English and mathematics. However, the school recognises that the focus on these core subjects had an adverse impact on the balance of the curriculum and is currently improving this situation. Consequently, many activities such as visits related to curriculum topics, which enrich pupils' experiences and bring greater relevance to their learning, have not been undertaken throughout the year, but are planned for the remainder of the summer term. Pupils who are gifted or talented have been identified recently but provision to meet their particular needs is limited. However, the curriculum enables all groups of pupils to progress at the rates expected for their abilities. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a variety of lunchtime and after school clubs, giving them good opportunities to participate in activities to meet their individual interests. The residential visit for Year 6 pupils is the highlight of their school career for many.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils' well-being and welfare are satisfactory. Health and safety and other risk assessments meet statutory requirements, and child protection procedures are effective. The school works with external agencies to provide effective support for pupils identified as vulnerable. Good links with pre-school groups and secondary schools help pupils to transfer confidently into new settings.

The systems introduced during the current academic year to track pupils' progress regularly are used well to identify any pupils who may be falling behind. Specialist programmes introduced to help pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those not making the expected progress have proved successful in improving pupils' achievements. A range of initiatives has been introduced to guide pupils by setting targets for improvement. Many of these successfully help pupils to understand exactly what they have to do next to improve their work, but inconsistencies across the school mean that some pupils are unclear about the detail of their targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Since the last inspection, the number of temporary and acting headteachers and deputy headteachers has led to a lack of continuity in overall approach and differences in leadership style have been unsettling for staff, pupils and parents. This uncertainty has impacted adversely on the school's drive for continued improvement. The local authority support programme introduced this year has brought new rigour to evaluation and monitoring of performance and the action taken by the school has successfully improved standards, particularly in mathematics. The new headteacher, supported by the senior team, has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and clear views about how to take the school forward. Within a short time, there is a consensus and renewed commitment to improvement across the staff team, improving morale and giving the school the capacity to improve. However, some weaknesses remain. There is a lack of long-term planning for school improvement focused on accelerating the progress which pupils are making. Ensuring that teaching is systematically monitored is not central to the school's work and has resulted in inconsistent approaches to teaching and uneven progress across the school. Key governors have worked hard to support the school through the recent staffing changes, and the arrangements agreed with the local authority to stabilise the school this year have been effective. However, procedures for the governing body to assess the school's effectiveness over a longer period of time are not sufficiently robust.

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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?	3
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	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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

### 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>	3
<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	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

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,  
Brenchley, Nr. Tonbridge, TN12 7NY

Thank you for making the inspection team welcome and talking to us about the school and the things you do. We particularly liked the way you made suggestions about how the school could improve.

We are pleased that your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education.

- Children settle well into school life in the Reception classes.
- You told us that you enjoy school and we saw that most of you work well in lessons.
- The adults in the school help you to make sound progress and reach standards which are similar to those of other pupils of your age, and sometimes better.
- Adults take care of you so that you are safe and secure in school.
- Teachers help you to understand how well you are doing regularly.
- You particularly enjoy the space of the school grounds, but a few of you find the boisterous games of some a bit intimidating.
- The school council is a good way for you to let adults know your views.
- You have a range of subjects in lessons and a lot of clubs which you attend well.
- You are given the support and guidance you need so that you are ready to move on to your next school when the time arrives.
- You know how to stay fit and healthy.
- We agree with your teachers that your work could be even better and we have asked them to:
  - Think even more carefully about how subjects are taught so that you make more even progress.
  - Make sure that the tasks they give you are all new to you so that you do not waste time doing things you can already do.
  - Make a plan of the most important things that need to be done to help you achieve well in the future.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings Lead inspector