

Platt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118728
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291229
Inspection date	13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Orpin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	145
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathy Jenden
Headteacher	Helen Netti
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2001
School address	St Mary's Platt Sevenoaks TN15 8JY
Telephone number	01732 882596
Fax number	01732 885105

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Platt is a small rural primary school. Pupils are mainly White British, none at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. The numbers eligible for free school meals is well below average. There is a grant-funded nursery on the school site and the playing field is located at a separate site. There is an acting headteacher while the permanent headteacher is seconded to the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Platt is a good school with outstanding features where pupils are happy and want to attend. As one pupil said, 'Teachers make learning fun.' Provision for children in Reception is good, as is their progress. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Good teaching, combined with pupils' extraordinary confidence and enthusiasm, helps them achieve well in all subjects. Standards are above average by the time they leave Year 6 and are improving year by year. Teachers encourage pupils well and provide good challenges for their differing needs. In a few instances, however, insufficient organisation leads to a slightly slower pace of learning, and a lack of clarity about how to achieve the next level can slow pupils' progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are motivated, enjoy school and care for each other. As one parent said, 'The children are polite, happy and enthusiastic.' Their behaviour is impeccable. Partnership with parents is outstanding and they are exceedingly pleased with the work of the school. Pupils know their targets and use them very well. The outstanding curriculum is exciting and stimulating so pupils have a passion for learning and thinking for themselves and they love coming to school.

The level of care, support and guidance is outstanding. Pupils know they are safe and important. As one pupil said, 'We are a big happy family.'

Leadership and management are good. The school's work is monitored closely and its self-evaluation is accurate in identifying what needs to be done. Consequently, the school is improving although a few slight inconsistencies in teaching have the effect of slowing some pupils' learning a little.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers organise lessons to make best use of time and always give their pupils a clear picture of how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Children start school at levels expected for their age, although there is a wide range of ability and there are variations between years. They make good progress in the Reception class so that, by the time they join Year 1, many children exceed some of the goals expected for their age. Their personal, social and emotional development is particularly good.

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 so that, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Over recent years, standards have been maintained at an above average level. A slight decline in reading and writing has now been reversed.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6 so that, by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. In recent years standards in Year 6 have improved and, while in 2006 there was some slower progress in mathematics, pupils now make similarly good progress in all subjects. Higher-attaining pupils achieve particularly well. The school has ensured that boys now do as well as girls, and slightly better than them in

mathematics. Pupils', including those with learning difficulties, achieve their targets in literacy and mathematics, which are challenging and help improve their progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and they behave exceptionally well. Pupils enjoy school and are proud of their work, their teachers and each other. They are exceptionally polite and considerate to others of all ages. They work together well and undertake responsibilities maturely. The school council and eco-committees are influential.

Children in the Reception class are confident and considerate. Pupils are happy at school. They feel very safe and knowledge about keeping safe is outstanding. Pupils' attendance is very good because they enjoy school so much.

Pupils learn independently and understand how reviewing their own work helps them to improve. They readily offer their opinions and listen to others. Although there is little bullying or racism, pupils are very aware of these issues and would seek help should it be needed.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and their cultural development is good. They have a very secure appreciation of their own culture, but their ability to empathise with people from other cultures is slightly less well developed.

Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles, reflected in their outstanding concern about healthy meals and snacks and the very high level of participation in sporting activities. The preparation for their future lives is excellent.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are very encouraging and relationships are productive. Lessons are fun so pupils want to learn. Teachers know their subjects well and have an accurate assessment of their pupils' different levels of understanding. Pupils are helped to learn for themselves through tasks that require independent thought and are taught to evaluate their own work. As a consequence, they are usually clear about their successes and know how to improve. Teaching assistants are very effective in helping pupils learn.

Children in the Reception class learn well because they are secure and happy. They benefit from a good range of well planned and varied activities and high quality interaction with the adults helping them. They learn enthusiastically and are stimulated by experiences such as a recent trip to the seaside.

There are a few slight inconsistencies in lesson organisation that sometimes lead to a slightly slower pace of learning and occasionally teachers need to be slightly clearer about how pupils can achieve a higher level of work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. Pupils learn through an excellent range of exciting topics so learning is fun. Planning ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes achieve well. There are

outstanding opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills, particularly in music. As a consequence, pupils enjoy learning, gain confidence in their work and want to do well.

Children in the Reception class are provided with a very well planned range of stimulating and practical activities.

Personal, social and health education is excellent, helping pupils to become more confident and to keep healthy and safe.

A very wide range of visitors and trips enriches the curriculum in an outstanding way and there are excellent opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities such as orchestra and rugby. The school is working very effectively with the local secondary school to develop sports activities. Pupils are developing and using their skills in information and communication technology as part of their daily learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Children are helped to settle at the school extremely well through outstanding links with the Nursery, and an excellent partnership with parents ensures that children know what to expect and feel secure when they start the Reception class. Pupils in Year 6 are similarly very confident about moving to their new secondary schools as there are well developed links to smooth the transition.

The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring pupils' well-being and building their self-esteem which helps give them confidence in learning. The arrangements for the safety and protection of pupils are secure. Pupils are very appreciative of the 'Listening Ear' arrangements that mean there is always an adult they can go to if needed. The school promotes the importance of a healthy lifestyle in an outstanding way. Procedures to improve attendance further and liaison with a wide range of external agencies are excellent. Teachers monitor pupils' progress very closely throughout the year and provide additional support if a pupil is seen to be falling behind. Pupils know how well they are doing and generally what they need to do to improve. The liaison with parents is outstanding so they feel extremely well informed about their child's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher and the permanent headteacher share a clear vision for the future of the school and they have an accurate picture of the few areas for improvement. The acting headteacher has continued to develop the staff as an effective team who strive to improve the work of the school and care for the pupils. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative through excellent opportunities for training. The curriculum has been developed in a creative and rigorous way to ensure that pupils are more stimulated and their achievement improved. Careful account is taken of the views of parents and pupils in planning school developments. For example, through the school council, pupils have been able to suggest improvements to school meals. The school works with parents in an outstanding way, ensuring that they are well informed and encouraging their contributions.

Managers at all levels are taking more responsibility. Pupils' standards and their achievement are tracked closely and the school's work is monitored carefully. Governance is good and has improved since the last inspection. Governors set very high standards for themselves. They give

very good support to the school and have a very clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, with an astute grasp of action needed for continuing improvement. This has led to positive developments over recent years, such as recent improved standards in mathematics and the development of a more stimulating curriculum. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	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

14 June 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Platt Primary School, Sevenoaks, TN15 8JY

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed by how friendly, polite and confident you are. Your school is giving you a good education.

This is what we found was best about your school:

- Your work in English, mathematics and science is good in all classes.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you enjoy coming to school.
- You work and play extremely well together and have a very good knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy.
- You benefit from an excellent range of interesting and exciting lessons.
- You are taught well and adults at the school take excellent care of you.

We found that a few small improvements are needed and have asked your teachers to work on these things:

- Make sure lessons are organised so you do not waste any time.
- Give you ideas that demonstrate how you can improve your work to the next level.

Thank you once again for your help and for welcoming us to your school.

- Yours sincerely,

Sue Orpin Lead inspector