

Hartlip Endowed Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118734
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291231
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Kevin Hodge

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	99
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Addicott, OBE
Headteacher	Lesley Lawson
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2001
School address	The Street Hartlip Sittingbourne ME9 7TL
Telephone number	01795 842473
Fax number	01795 843148

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller sized school than average. There is a wide social mix among pupils, but many come from favourable backgrounds. Few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. Children enter the school with levels of abilities that are typical for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than the national picture. Most classes contain pupils from more than one year group.

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. The headteacher, staff and governors have succeeded in creating a 'family' based feel in a learning environment where children feel secure and want to do well. A positive picture comes through from many parents of 'a happy and successful school which children want to attend'.

Provision is good in the Reception class because the school ensures, as a parent perceptively explains, 'children have an excellent introduction to school life and come home happy'. As a result, children make good progress and standards at the start of Year 1 are above average. Good teaching and learning throughout the school ensure that pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make consistently good progress and achieve well. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Standards are not as high in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 as they are in English and science. This is because there are not enough opportunities created for pupils to apply their good numeracy skills to investigate mathematical problems.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff work well as a team with a shared commitment to make this effective school even better. They have successfully addressed a past drop in test results by keeping a closer eye on pupils who could be doing better in their work and getting them back on track. Governors give good support and know the school well. Teaching and learning are monitored so that senior staff have a picture of how well the school is doing. Although monitoring is regular, it lacks a clear focus on identifying what would take teaching to the next level. Older pupils know where to target their efforts, as most are aware of what they are aiming for. Teachers' marking is regular, but the use of comments to help pupils improve is not consistent between classes or subjects.

Very good welfare arrangements, especially for vulnerable pupils, and good attention to making the school feel safe, help make care, guidance and support good. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result. In addition, an effective curriculum provides well for the basics, and is enhanced by extra-curricular clubs and special theme days. Consequently, pupils are eager to take part in school activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils in Years 3 to 6 more investigational activities in mathematics so they are more confident in using their problem solving skills.
- Ensure that teachers' marking is consistently good so that pupils have a clearer idea of how to improve their day-to-day work.
- Ensure that checks on teaching focus more clearly on those factors which could improve pupils' progress and enjoyment of learning still further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. Their progress is good in the Foundation Stage and this continues in Years 1 to 6, leading to above average standards. This is the result of effective teaching, motivated pupils and good coverage of basic skills in the curriculum. Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year and, by the start of Year 1, many are working above expected levels. Pupils' current work in Years 1 to 6, supported by the school's

own checks, indicates that they are reaching above average standards and are likely to achieve their challenging targets in Year 6. Pupils achieve well in their speaking, listening, reading, writing and science work. Their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved considerably since the last inspection. Although their number calculation skills are accurate and quick, pupils are not fully confident in applying their skills in extended investigational work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in line with classmates, as their needs are accurately identified, addressed skilfully and monitored closely.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show a real enjoyment of school. Although Year 6 pupils voice sadness at the thought that they will soon be leaving, they are well prepared for their next schools as they gain basic skills well. They like the teachers and find the school 'welcoming and safe'. Their confidence is promoted by the school's success in making all pupils feel they 'have a say'. All pupils are members of the school council and take their collective role seriously. Pupils are keen in lessons. They work hard and are eager to do their best. Pupils often arrive early for school and their attendance is good. Many pupils are active at playtimes and in lessons. Most are aware of what foods are best to eat and the benefits of drinking lots of water, but admit that they are not yet committed to changing their eating habits for the better. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn about other cultures and know about the places of worship associated with different faiths. They readily help with local village events and raise money for good causes. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils say they are confident that on the rare occasions when someone is hurtful or unkind, teachers quickly sort it out. As one parent noted, 'I can always talk to staff to help ensure my daughter's well-being'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are taught well and one pupil's comment, 'That teachers always explain things carefully', reflects the view of many. Activities generally take good account of the different year groups found in three classes. In the Reception class, lively practical work promotes children's natural desire to investigate, while extending their social skills. In the other classes, teaching is typically good. It is purposeful and generally well focused and is supported by very effective teaching assistants. Relationships are particularly well developed which means pupils are willing to learn, listen carefully and settle down quickly. Well organised teaching enables pupils to make good progress in gaining basic skills, while involved in interesting ICT and science work. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers know their pupils well and recent changes have enabled them to keep a closer eye on those pupils who need a boost to their learning. Marking is satisfactory but the quality varies. The best gives clear guidance about how pupils can improve their work, but this is not found in every class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school plans a good range of activities which ensures pupils gain good levels of both academic and practical 'hands on' skills. There is a strong commitment to developing pupils' well-being, along with good preparation for their future learning. Following a dip in recent results, the school has focused successfully on raising pupils' levels of basic skills. Work in ICT is well planned and provision has improved since the last inspection. Reception provision is good, which encourages children to flourish and ensures that they have a good base of early literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, the school has enabled a more gradual change of work when pupils enter Year 1 to ensure they have a confident start. Links between subjects, to make learning more relevant, have only been partly successful. They do not always fully motivate pupils to extend their learning. In mathematics, there are not enough regular activities for pupils to carry out extended investigations. Indoor physical activities are constrained by having a small hall space, but outdoor games are well planned for. A very good range of extra-curricular clubs helps enrich class activities. A weekly 'booster' club for older pupils is very well attended. A good range of visits away from school are regularly arranged.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Consistently good care, guidance and support lie at the centre of pupils' good achievement and personal development. There are clear arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Pupils say they feel able to talk to any member of staff and older ones willingly help care for younger schoolmates. Parents typically describe the school as having a 'family' feel. Simple 'buddy' systems and recent discussions about recognising bullying help pupils feel settled and safe. The school's monitoring of health and safety is good. The systems for tracking pupils' personal and academic progress have been improved recently and give a better picture of pupils' progress. Most older pupils are aware of their targets, but those in Years 1 and 2 are not sufficiently clear what their targets are or how these can help them. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils make good progress, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported well by governors, has created a good team ethos and a family learning environment. This ensures well motivated staff who are successful in moving the school forward by, for example, improving assessment routines. Significant further priorities for development are included in the school improvement plan, but the inclusion of several low level priorities detract from its usefulness. Suggestions from parents are taken seriously and have resulted in changes to playground supervision and provision for swimming. The monitoring of teaching is regular and has led to improvement, but is not focused closely enough on assessing what makes learning even more effective. As a result, teachers are not always clear about what needs to be done to improve lessons and boost pupils' progress further.

Governors give the school good support. Their day-to-day involvement with issues such as improving the accommodation and assessing the take-up of healthy lifestyles is high profile. Governors and staff use simple self-evaluation routines to assess what goes on, but are modest

about the school's overall effectiveness. This is because they are keen to seek improvements and are successful in tackling weaknesses. The improvement in ICT provision and the way that the dip in test results has been reversed indicate 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?	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	3
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.

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

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hartlip Church of England Primary School, Hartlip, ME9 7TL

Thank you for making us feel welcome at your school when we visited a couple of weeks ago. The special technology day you had looked lots of fun.

Here are some of the things we found out:

- You work very hard to make Hartlip a good school.
- Children in the Reception class settle in well and quickly feel at home.
- You said you feel safe and all the staff make sure that you do. You said you like the 'family' atmosphere and we noticed it too.
- You make good progress in your work and reach above average standards by the time you leave.
- Teaching is generally good and teachers explain things well.
- The activities you do in school like your 'technology day' are interesting.
- You know about keeping fit and active but some of you need to remember that eating sensibly is important too.
- You all behave well and the school helps you become sensible.
- Your involvement with local events such as the village fete is good.

I have asked the school to do three things:

- Help you do more investigative mathematics work in Years 3 to 6 so that you learn how to solve tougher 'real-life' problems.
- Ask the teachers to give you more advice about how to improve when they mark your work.
- Ask the headteacher to give the teachers more ideas about how to make lessons even more fun so you make even better progress.

Yours faithfully

Kevin Hodge Lead inspector