



# The Pilgrim School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 134823  
**Local Authority** Medway  
**Inspection number** 294177  
**Inspection dates** 28–29 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Melvyn Hemmings

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 address</b>	Borstal recreation ground site Warwick Crescent, Borstal Rochester ME1 3LF
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled	<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 841873
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11	<b>Fax number</b>	01634 841873
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Chair</b>	David Rutt
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	160	<b>Headteacher</b>	Justin Smith
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body		
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

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<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28–29 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 294177
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

The Pilgrim School opened in September 2005 following the closure of separate infant and junior schools. All pupils are housed in the former junior school building. The attainment of pupils when starting school varies between well below to below that expected. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds, with a small number at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school's motto is, 'He who would valiant be, let him come hither'. Within a Christian community pupils are challenged effectively to be valiant and reach their full potential. This is a good school that enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress and achieve well. The school is rightly gaining a growing reputation within the local community for the good standard of education it provides for its pupils. This is shown by the fact that over 30 pupils have joined the school since its opening, and 11 more are due to enter Year 2 in January 2007. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. As one parent wrote, 'I feel my son has improved in so many ways since he has been going to The Pilgrim School.' Good leadership and management have been the key factors in the successful amalgamation of the two previous schools. Senior leaders have forged a strong sense of teamwork among staff who are all committed to helping pupils to achieve as well as they are capable of doing. Clear systems and routines have been put into place to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Governors have been very supportive of the work of the school in its first year, which has been appreciated by all staff.

Children in the Nursery make good progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional skills. This progress is maintained in most areas of work in the Reception class. However, too little emphasis is placed on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills in this class and as a result progress is only satisfactory in these areas. In Years 1 to 6 pupils' achievement is good because of the consistently good teaching they receive. In the national tests in 2006 pupils in Year 6 reached broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. This showed good progress from when they started school, particularly in mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 2 made satisfactory progress, though standards were below those expected for their age. Learning in this class was disrupted by long-term staff absence. Pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 show standards below those expected, though this represents good achievement in relation to their low skills on entry. Pupils' skills in reading and writing are weaker than those in other subjects throughout the school. The main reason for this is a lack of consistency between classes in the teaching of phonics, an area that has been identified for improvement by the school.

This is a very caring school that places pupils' interests at the heart of its work. Pupils respond positively to this, being well behaved and eager to learn, and their personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the above average attendance rate, which has improved since the school opened. Teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Because of this, pupils maintain their interest and concentration and good learning takes place. A good curriculum is enriched by a broad range of after-school clubs and a variety of visits and visitors. For instance, pupils in Year 4 are eagerly preparing for a forthcoming visit to a theatre in London to see a performance of *The Lion King*. Pupils have too few opportunities to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support work across the curriculum, another area for improvement acknowledged by the school. The school's self-evaluation is

accurate and its track record since it opened shows it has good capacity to make further improvements.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Place greater emphasis on developing children's basic skills in literacy and numeracy in the Reception class.
- Introduce a consistent whole-school approach to the teaching of phonic skills to raise standards and achievement in reading and writing.
- Provide more planned opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their skills in ICT by supporting work in other subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The good achievement that pupils make is a direct result of the good quality of teaching and learning that takes place in the school. It is very evident that pupils want to learn, and this enthusiasm makes a positive contribution to the progress that they make. When their work is seen in relation to their prior attainment, pupils make good progress. However, the current Year 2 and Year 6 classes have high proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, which lead to standards being below those expected in these years. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English make the same progress as their peers. This is because of the well targeted extra support that they are given, in which teaching assistants play an important role.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are polite and courteous, and clearly know right from wrong. They know the importance of keeping safe and of developing a healthy lifestyle. As one commented, 'What I like about this school is we can make healthy choices at lunchtime, such as pasta and salad.' In the Nursery and Reception classes children are confident, willing to share with others and able to work independently of adults. Throughout the school, pupils are friendly and show care and consideration for others. They readily take on responsibilities in school, such as being a member of the school council. Pupils also make a good contribution to the local village community. Their awareness of life in a culturally diverse society is limited, however, and the school accepts that pupils need to gain a broader understanding in this area. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stages of education and their future life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject expertise that helps them to explain new ideas and demonstrate new techniques in a precise manner. Because of this, pupils are clear about what they are to learn and what is expected of them. Activities are interesting and build effectively upon previous learning. Consequently, pupils are able to use prior knowledge and understanding to develop their skills further. This was evident in a science lesson for pupils in Year 5. Using what they knew already, pupils were able to work collaboratively to devise a fair test to investigate finding out if it is possible to change the speed of evaporation. In the Reception class, not enough attention is given to developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, which limits the progress they make. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they respond to this well, resulting in a friendly working atmosphere in all classrooms.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school has been successful in developing a primary curriculum that meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils effectively. In the Nursery and Reception classes the emphasis is on providing children with practical and creative activities that capture and maintain their interest. In Years 1 to 6 there is a good balance between the development of pupils' academic and creative skills. When necessary the school is willing to modify the curriculum to meet changing needs. For instance, more time has been allocated to science to improve pupils' investigational skills. Curriculum planning is mostly good but has not achieved a whole-school approach to teaching phonics, which leads to pupils making less progress than they should. The school works well with others, such as professional sports coaches, to extend the curriculum. Off-site visits for all pupils and a residential stay for pupils in Year 6 effectively develop their personal skills.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. All staff are committed to ensuring pupils' health and safety. Child protection arrangements are in place, with all staff aware of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. There are rigorous risk assessments in and around the school and for off-site educational visits. Parents are very pleased with the way the school looks after their children. As one wrote, 'I have every confidence in The Pilgrim School. The teaching staff are fabulous, they listen to any concerns and offer good support to children.' Academic guidance is good for most pupils, with assessment information being used well to show pupils how to improve their work. This is not done as effectively in the Reception class to improve children's literacy and numeracy skills.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Senior managers have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This has enabled them to prioritise areas for development, such as a progression in phonic skills. Leaders of core subjects have a good overview of provision in their subjects, though this is not as strong in the leadership of non-core subjects. Of particular note is the way in which the headteacher has worked successfully to raise the profile of the school within the local community. One parent's comment captures the views of many, 'There are not many schools where the headteacher takes the time to stand in front of the school everyday to greet the pupils and their parents.' Performance management is well developed, effectively linking staffs' own professional development with school priorities. Governance is satisfactory, with governors being very supportive and developing their skills in holding the school to account. They are keen to do better, for example by being more involved in planning for future school improvement.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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>	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	3
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	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

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

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking with some of you and finding out about all the things you do. I would like to tell you what I found your school does well and how it could improve further.

Your school is a good one, being a very friendly place in which to work and play. Everyone works hard to help you do well and because of this all of you make good progress. You are well behaved, work hard and told me you enjoy coming to school. I am pleased to see that your attendance has improved and is now above average. This is a credit to all of you.

I have asked your school to help you do even better in a few areas. For example, children in Reception will be given more guidance to help them improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers will be working hard to help you all do better in reading and writing. You are going to be given more opportunities to use your ICT skills to make your work in other subjects even more interesting.

All the adults in the school are very proud of you and told me how kind and considerate you are to others. It was also good to see how many clubs, school productions and educational visits there are for you to take part in. I know that pupils in Year 4 are really looking forward to going to London to see The Lion King. I particularly like the way that pupils in Year 6 are able to go on a residential visit to help them develop further their personal and social skills. Your parents are very pleased about the way the school looks after you.