

Leybourne, St Peter and St Paul Church of England Voluntary Aided
Primary School
Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 118727 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 296481 |
| Inspection dates | 9–10 October 2006 |
| Reporting inspector | Graeme Bassett |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 213 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kevin Wagstaff |
| Headteacher | V Dunnet |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 March 2003 |
| School address | Rectory Lane North Leybourne West Malling ME19 5HD |
| Telephone number | 01732 842008 |
| Fax number | 01732 842009 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Peter and St Paul C of E School is an average-sized primary school situated in Leybourne. The school serves mainly the immediate neighbourhood and accepts a small number of pupils from further away. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are expected for their age but there are a few who have weaker language skills. The school has been awarded an 'Investors in People' award, a renewal of the 'Quality Mark for basic skills' and most recently a 'Quality in study skills' award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils have a high regard for their school and express this in many ways. A group of them said, for example, that learning in this school is fun and we have lots of friends. Their opinions are well founded, as many elements of the school's provision are outstanding. Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding and have a significant impact upon all that the school does. There is a very purposeful atmosphere in the school and pupils feel safe and happy. The headteacher knows all pupils very well and they chat freely with her. She is the driving force behind the developments of the school and has excellent leadership and management skills. She has created a dedicated and dynamic team of staff and governors that strives successfully to improve the quality of education. She has a fine eye for detail and is very rigorous in her monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. The headteacher is modest about the school's success but under her guidance and with the vigorous support of the deputy headteacher, senior staff and governors, the school's overall effectiveness is outstanding and its capacity for improvement is excellent.

Teaching and learning are outstanding, being consistently effective throughout the school and, in many instances, excellent. This high quality of teaching has a significant influence upon raising pupils' achievements and promoting their exceptional personal development. Pupils' progress is carefully checked and teachers use assessments extremely well to plan what they need to teach next and over the longer term. Some pupils said that teachers, 'explain new learning in many different ways until we understand.' Written comments in pupils' work are good, but procedures to ensure that children act upon these comments are not as effective as they should be.

Achievement is outstanding and standards are significantly higher than the national average. Children enter Foundation Stage with broadly average attainment but some have weaknesses in their language skills. Provision here is good and by the time they enter Year 1 they grow in confidence. They all consolidate their learning in all areas of learning well to achieve the targets set for children of this age. By the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress. Standards are consistently above average but unusually, last year, writing standards were only average. Consequently, the current pupils in Year 3 need more help to improve their writing standards. Achievement by the end of Year 6 is outstanding and standards are exceptionally and consistently high in English and mathematics. With science being above average, it is not as strong, and standards need to be improved; this was an issue reported for action at the time of the previous inspection.

The curriculum is good and, with many stimulating out-of-lesson activities, enhances the pupils' learning. Cross-subject links are being developed successfully and the ways information and communication technology (ICT) is being used bring better understanding and enjoyment to learning and teaching. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because of the quality of teaching and the excellent care, support and guidance pupils receive. This prepares them well for their next school. They have an admirable understanding of the need to remain safe and do so, and their behaviour is exceptionally good. They have a strong awareness of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the teachers check that the written comments in their marking are acted upon by the pupils.

- Raise the standards in science by the end of Year 6 to match the high standards in English and mathematics.
- Improve the achievement and standards in writing of pupils in the current Year 3.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and standards are significantly higher than the national average. Children enter the Foundation Stage with attainment broadly average, settle quickly, grow in confidence and consolidate their skills and understanding across all areas of learning. They achieve the targets set for the end of Reception and join the Year 1 with broadly average standards. Children with weaker language skills make good progress and catch up well. Pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2 and currently standards in Year 2 are above average and have been so for several years. Current Year 3 pupils could improve their writing to match their higher reading and mathematics standards. Pupils' progress throughout Years 3 to 6 continues to accelerate. By the end of Year 6, achievement is outstanding and standards in English and mathematics are exceptionally high. Science is not as strong and should be better, even though standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good.

These exceptionally high standards and achievement are confirmed in the results of the national tests, as targets set for Year 6 were exceeded in both 2005 and 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and enjoy learning. This is reflected in their above-average attendance rates. However, some parents take their children for holidays during school time and this prevents the attendance from being even better. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have an extremely good understanding of right and wrong. They are polite and courteous and get on well together. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school and are confident about approaching an adult if they have a concern. Within the strong Christian ethos of this caring school, the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils take their responsibilities around the school and as school council members very seriously. They are actively involved in school improvement, such as considering the best colours for toilet refurbishment and choosing playground markings. Strong community participation, including contributions to charities and notable links with a school in France, prepares pupils well for their future lives. Very good standards of basic skills set them up well for their secondary schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are particularly strong in the older year groups and consequently pupils' progress is accelerated significantly, building upon their good progress in earlier years. In the Foundation Stage the children thrive in a purposeful and stimulating environment. Good planning throughout the school ensures that tasks are matched very effectively to the differing needs of all pupils. The high quality of challenge and stimulating tasks ensure that all pupils enjoy their learning and that their personal development is promoted very effectively. Many children expressed an opinion that, 'mathematics is really good.'

Interactive whiteboards are used extremely well to support their learning in a wide and varied fashion to take account of the different ways pupils learn best. The teachers all mark work effectively. They write clear comments that show pupils how they can improve but do not ensure that these comments are acted upon by the pupils. Otherwise, assessment procedures are excellent, with all teachers maintaining full records of what each pupil has achieved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is varied and planned in detail to meet pupils' different needs, including those who find learning difficult. This has a good impact upon raising pupils' achievements. It is enriched by a wide variety of additional activities. Good opportunities are provided for more-able pupils and those with particular gifts and talents to help them to attain exceptionally high standards. Personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development very well and residential visits for Years 4 and 6 also make a good contribution. Themed weeks, for example, in art and mathematics, and the very effective use of ICT are successfully adding to cross-subject links already established. The whole Year 3 class receive violin or guitar tuition and this contributes extremely effectively to their cultural development. Foundation Stage children benefit from a good balance of teacher-directed activities and activities chosen by themselves.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Teachers and support staff know the pupils extremely well and provide outstanding care, guidance and support, particularly for those who find learning difficult. A parent commented, 'We feel privileged to be able to come to this school.' The 'playground buddies' and 'friendship stop' at playtimes encourage pupils to care for others very successfully. However, more could be done at playtimes to organise activities that promote a healthy lifestyle.

Tracking of pupils' progress is regular and extremely accurate, enabling staff to quickly identify any pupils who may be falling behind. The very effective use of improvement targets, particularly in literacy and numeracy, helps individual pupils to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding and are extremely effective in raising pupils' achievement and supporting them. The headteacher has an extremely clear vision of how the school can develop in the future. She has worked hard with the staff and governors to establish a very secure base from which to make further improvements. The strengths of the headteacher are strongly reflected in the drive and enthusiasm of the deputy headteacher and the senior management team. Subject leaders conscientiously monitor and develop their subjects and have an eagerness for their responsibilities. This very accomplished team has an astounding impact upon raising pupils' achievements and ensuring their personal development. Governors are extremely knowledgeable and have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are dedicated and give exceptional support to the school. It is clear that the headteacher's evaluation of the school's performance is very accurate. Thorough analysis provides an accurate appraisal upon which the school's improvement plan is based.

Priorities identified are relevant and provide the right path to enable the school to maintain its high performance. All required procedures are established to safeguard pupils.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 |
| 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? | 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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| 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 |

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. We particularly liked the way you all get on together. We found your school to be a happy place. It is providing you with an excellent education. These are the things that are particularly outstanding.

- Your headteacher leads and manages your school excellently.
- Your behaviour and the care you have for each other are extremely good.
- Your teachers teach you outstandingly well and help you by planning and explaining things to you in interesting ways so that you enjoy your learning.
- By the end of Year 6 you make excellent progress and the standard of your work is exceptionally high.

Even though your school is excellent, in many ways we want it to improve even more and have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- Make sure that the teachers check that the comments they write in your books are understood by you and that you do what you are asked.
- Help the children in some years to improve their writing so that it is as good as their reading and mathematics.
- Help you all to improve your work in science so that it is as good as your work in English and mathematics.

Thank you once again for helping us on our visit.