

Sturry Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118658
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	298569
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Margaret Dickinson HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	D Cowley
Headteacher	Adrian Andreo
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2006
School address	Park View Sturry CT2 0NR
Telephone number	01227 710477
Fax number	01227 712209

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sturry Church of England Primary School is a larger than average primary school on the outskirts of Canterbury. Pupils come from broadly average social and economic backgrounds. There is a low proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. A few pupils are from Traveller and gypsy/Roma heritage. An average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has gained an Active Mark for promoting healthy lifestyles.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that has some good features and the capacity to improve further. The school has improved since last year's inspection and no aspects are inadequate. In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. However, there are some strengths within this picture. Pupils know a lot about keeping active and eating healthily. They try hard to follow a healthy lifestyle and several said they eat more healthily at home as a result of the work they have done in school. The vast majority of pupils behave well. They also have a good awareness of keeping safe and they look out for one another, especially at playtimes. They are aware of how important it is to work in a safe environment and come up with their own suggestions about how the school could be improved further. The majority of parents are happy with the school's work, but a significant minority have some concerns and this is rather more than is usually found. Of these, a good number feel the school does not respond well to parents' suggestions or concerns. They would like to see better communication between the school and parents.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving. Standards are average at Year 2 and Year 6. This year's national test results in Year 6 show a marked improvement and are likely to be above average for the first time in several years. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 because teaching for these pupils is good. Children also achieve well in their Reception year. They get a good start here because they are taught well and benefit from a broad and interesting curriculum.

Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress setting up new systems to assess pupils. The senior management team checks regularly how well individual pupils are learning. This is helping them to identify where pupils are doing well, or not well enough, and is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' achievement. The quality of the teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory overall. However, there is not enough consistently good teaching to ensure good achievement across the school. Pupils do not achieve as well in Years 1 to 4 as they do elsewhere, particularly in writing and mathematics. This is in part due to some classes having had several different teachers which has disrupted learning.

The senior leadership team and staff have responded positively to the range of advice from the local authority consultants and have worked well as a team to bring about improvement. Teachers with responsibility for English, mathematics and science are playing an increasing role in the school's self-evaluation and they know where the strengths and weaknesses lie in their subjects. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has also improved. A weaker aspect relates to the monitoring of teaching and the curriculum. The senior management's monitoring is not sufficiently evaluative and diagnostic, and this limits its usefulness in improving provision further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that more is good.
- Continue to improve pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 4, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Monitor the quality and impact of teaching and the curriculum more effectively.
- Improve the school's communication with parents, especially when they have concerns.

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 inspection before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Reception classes with broadly average standards, although writing and aspects of number are weaker. They make good progress and, by the end of the Reception Year, most meet the expected standards. Writing remains relatively weaker. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 but reading and, particularly, writing are below average. The good progress that children make in Reception is not being securely sustained in Years 1 and 2. The school knows that writing is a priority area and it has been focusing on this. However, the greatest improvement has been at Year 6 where, this year, a much greater proportion of pupils reached the nationally expected level than last year. The 2007 national tests at Year 6 also show clear improvement in reading and mathematics, largely due to the better progress that pupils make in Years 5 and 6. The school's assessments show that a minority of pupils are not moving forward at the expected rate in Years 3 and 4, especially in writing and mathematics. Although achievement is better than it was a year ago, there is some way to go before pupils achieve consistently well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being is satisfactory. Pupils are friendly and courteous. They enjoy school, although tend to talk much more about the social aspects and meeting their friends than the things they have done in lessons. The vast majority behave well. A few parents and pupils say that behaviour is not always good, particularly at playtimes. Playground buddies are helping to address this by being allocated to individual pupils who have difficulties. The older pupils take these responsibilities very seriously and are pleased they can make a difference. Members of the school council are enthusiastic about their role. They suggested improvements to the playground and were involved in interviews for the new headteacher, who starts in September. Pupils like the opportunities to learn about road safety and cycling proficiency to help them keep safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy working on group tasks, or with a partner, and happily share ideas and suggestions. Attendance is satisfactory. The school is taking appropriate steps to improve the attendance of a small number of pupils who do not attend regularly. Overall, pupils are getting a satisfactory grounding for their next steps in education and their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In lessons where pupils learn well, they are clear what they are doing and where this is leading. A dance and a design and technology lesson were typical examples. Both were planned well to give pupils challenging and interesting tasks that they really enjoyed. In both lessons, teachers built in good opportunities to develop pupils' independence, something that does not happen in many lessons. Increasingly, teachers are using assessments to set pupils specific targets to help them improve. This is particularly good

in Year 6, but weaker in classes where pupils have had a series of teachers this year. Specialist skills are used well for teaching mathematics and English in Year 5 and for information and communication technology throughout the school. Teaching assistants are not always used well. There are times when an additional adult in the classroom, particularly in Year 2, would be beneficial especially when pupils are working on different tasks. When teaching is satisfactory, lessons often lack pace. The teacher tends to talk too much or repeatedly quietens down the class, which disturbs the flow in pupils' learning. In these lessons, pupils become restless and make only satisfactory steps in learning. Marking has improved since the last inspection. Pupils find it helpful when the teachers make suggestions to help them improve their work and they also like being praised for things they do well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and is good for children in the Reception classes. English and mathematics are planned well and improvements in how science is planned are having a positive impact on the achievement of older pupils. Some valuable curriculum time is lost through a slack use of time at the start of some lessons. The organisation of the day also limits opportunities for a wide coverage of subjects beyond English and mathematics. The school is beginning to rectify this through sessions that link different subjects together. Moral and health elements are covered well by providing pupils with opportunities to improve their understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles. Opportunities to help pupils develop their spiritual and cultural awareness, including art, history and music and teaching pupils about different cultures are more limited. Pupils say they would like more of these lessons. They would also like to use computers more in lessons and to be able to use the library more often. The accommodation and grounds have been developed effectively to support learning, especially in relation to outdoor facilities for younger pupils. There is a satisfactory range of clubs and visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Pupils feel they can approach teachers if they have a problem. Arrangements for safeguarding children are satisfactory. The headteacher and family liaison officer are fully trained in child protection. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well through detailed individual education plans. Attention to academic guidance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Regular assessments and tracking are helping teachers and senior managers to monitor pupils' progress. The school is in a much better position to identify pupils who are underachieving than they were at the last inspection. Pupils now have individual targets and these are helping teachers become more aware of the progress that children should be making. Pupils in Year 6 are pleased that they know their targets. A lot has been done in the last year but the systems have not yet had time to improve pupils' achievement in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and are promoting satisfactory teaching and achievement. The headteacher and key members of staff have worked closely with consultants from the local authority to target support where it was most needed. There is a sense of shared

commitment to the school's continuing improvement. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities has improved and these pupils' targets and progress are monitored well. Subject coordinators for English, mathematics and science have carried out careful analyses of pupils' assessments. They have provided good support for teachers and their work is beginning to raise standards. They monitor planning and sample pupils' work but they have not had an opportunity to monitor teaching in their subjects. This has restricted the impact they have on pupils' day to day learning. The school's view of its own effectiveness is mostly accurate. However, when judging the quality of teaching and learning, too much emphasis is placed on describing what is happening rather than evaluating the quality of learning that is taking place. Governors have played a strong and supportive role in improving the school's effectiveness.

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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>	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?	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	2
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	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Sturry Church of England Primary School, Sturry CT2 0NR

We visited your school recently and I am writing to thank you for talking to us about your school and the things that you do in your lessons. We enjoyed meeting many of you and would particularly like to thank the school council and the groups of pupils in Years 3 to 6 who talked to inspectors.

Your school is satisfactory and it has improved a lot since its last inspection a year ago. Your headteacher, senior staff, governors and teachers have all worked hard to make things better for you. There are several things that are good. You are friendly, polite and well behaved. We were impressed how aware you are of keeping healthy and active and keeping safe.

We have asked the school to improve a few things. We would like more lessons to be really good so that you all learn well and enjoy the activities that teachers plan for you. Some of you in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 could be doing better than you are, especially in your writing and mathematics. Your teachers will be working on this and you can help too by trying your best and letting teachers know if you are finding work a bit easy. We have asked the headteacher and teachers with special responsibilities to watch lessons from time to time and look carefully at how well you all are learning. Finally, some parents wrote to tell us about things that they would like to see improved. We have asked the school to work more closely with your parents, especially if they have particular concerns.

Thank you once again for helping us in our work.

With best wishes for the future.

Margaret Dickinson Her Majesty's Inspector