

Doddinghurst Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115124
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311843
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Janet Robinson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Church Lane Doddinghurst Brentwood Essex CM15 0NJ
Telephone number	01277 821064
Fax number	01277 823714

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Doddinghurst Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School draws most of its pupils from the village itself, but a few live in outlying villages. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and only a small number speak English as an additional language. A smaller proportion than nationally have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and very few have a statement of special educational needs. The school has current Investors in People accreditation, an Activemark award and it has just been awarded Healthy Schools accreditation.

There is a breakfast and after school club on the school site which is run by an external provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Doddinghurst Junior School is an effective school that provides good value for money. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the opportunities it offers to its pupils. One parent wrote, 'My child is very lucky to have had the chance of such a good and rounded education.' The school benefits from the strong leadership of the recently appointed headteacher, who is working tirelessly to raise standards, improve achievement and make the school as good as possible. The rigorous and systematic use of procedures for tracking and assessing progress are proving successful. The standards and results reported over the last two years in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have been average with the 2008 results showing a slight improvement over 2007. Due to improvements in teaching and greater rigour in tracking, pupils are now achieving well and performing at well above average standards. Pupils of all abilities make good progress, although some more able pupils are not achieving as much as they are capable of. Progress in Year 6 is very good and pupils are on track to achieve the challenging targets set for them.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and have good cultural and spiritual awareness. They willingly take on responsibilities, both in the school as monitors and prefects and in the wider community, for example in their involvement in the junior neighbourhood watch scheme. Pupils are happy at school and well cared for. Attendance is very good. The school council gives pupils a voice and they feel that adults listen to their views. Pupils develop good social skills as they work and play together. Good standards in English and mathematics, combined with learning how to work both independently and co-operatively, prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and for their future lives.

Teaching and learning are good. The best teaching promotes very good learning as it interests and engages pupils of all levels of ability. The school involves parents closely in their children's learning so they are aware of ways in which they can help. Teachers mark work regularly and make supportive comments on pupils' work. However, methods of marking are not consistent between classes and, in some cases, pupils are not told what they need to do to improve. This variation also relates to target setting, where different arrangements mean that some pupils have more meaningful and helpful targets to work towards than others do. A good curriculum is enriched by activities such as trips, visits and visitors. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the numerous clubs and activities on offer and talk enthusiastically about them.

The school works well with others to improve pupils' learning and well-being. This includes effective support from trained counselling mentors for children with behavioural and emotional difficulties which has resulted in a dramatic reduction in lateness and absenteeism. The special educational needs co-ordinator effectively arranges support for pupils with a range of needs, including speech and language, reading and physical difficulties. Pupils feel safe and are confident staff will help them if they have a problem. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are good. Academic guidance for pupils is good overall, but a lack of consistency means that some pupils receive inadequate guidance to help them make the progress of which they are capable, especially the most able who are not consistently challenged. The leadership and management of the school are effective, and governors and management teams are working well together to improve teaching. Subject leaders are developing their roles in tracking and monitoring progress. The headteacher sets a clear direction, motivates her team and is fully committed to

improving the school. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and the capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure sustained and consistent challenge for more able pupils.
- Ensure there is consistency between classes in the target setting and marking systems used.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve standards above those expected nationally. This is due to the increased rigour with which the school is assessing and tracking progress and ensuring interventions are being put in place early to support pupils who are falling behind. Teachers are becoming increasingly skilled at interpreting and using information about pupils' achievements to help them plan good quality lessons that contribute to the good progress pupils are making.

The current Year 6 pupils have made good progress over the past two years and they are now achieving standards above those expected for this time of year. In the 2008 national tests, standards in English and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average and in science a little higher. Current progress shows greater gains are now being made in English and mathematics. Predicted targets for Key Stage 2 national tests are realistic and challenging and a careful analysis of progress shows that pupils are on track to achieve them by the end of Year 6. If achieved, these levels will be well above average in English and mathematics where the recent tracking has been focused, and they will be above average in science. Throughout the school pupils show good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) with standards above national expectations. Pupils who need particular help with their learning and those who have medical problems progress as well as the other pupils because their needs are identified and the individual support provided for them is effective.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and consequently their attendance is well above average. Pupils are friendly and polite and there is a strong sense of community and mutual support amongst adults and pupils. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities. For example, Year 5 pupils act as 'Guardian Angels' to Year 2 pupils in the nearby infant school and help them settle when they join the junior school the following September. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils gain a good understanding of different cultures through assemblies and activities in lessons and they are learning how to mix with people from different backgrounds to their own. The school supports the wider global community through fund raising activities such as helping an orphanage in Africa. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and are aware of the need for safety when using the internet. Staff deal effectively with the rare cases of bullying that occur.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy through diet and exercise and they take part in a wide range of sports activities that contribute well to building up their fitness levels. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers make their lessons interesting and stimulating and pupils take an active part in their learning. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons a great deal and are attentive and well behaved. Teachers plan their lessons thoughtfully. Computers, interactive white boards and group work are used creatively to engage pupils and to aid their learning. Teachers manage their classes well and deploy teaching assistants efficiently to promote learning for pupils by, for example, teaching them research skills on the computer or working in small groups with pupils who need extra help with writing. Currently, however, many lessons do not provide enough challenge to ensure that the most able pupils make the progress of which they are capable. In some lessons, pupils gain a clear indication, from the marking of their work, of how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. This is not, however consistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has developed an interesting curriculum that engages and enthuses pupils. All National Curriculum subjects are planned effectively and the development of ICT skills is promoted well. Additionally, the curriculum is enhanced well for pupils in Years 3 and 4 who learn French and pupils in Years 5 and 6 who learn German. Good opportunities to develop sporting skills enrich the curriculum through physical education lessons and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a gardening and aerobics club. Teachers link learning well across different subjects to make lessons interesting and relevant. Themed days and weeks are popular, such as the health and safety week. Visits to places of interest, such as Colchester Castle and Duxford, enrich the history curriculum effectively. Visitors to school also support learning effectively, such as the school community officer who raises pupils' awareness of social issues and visiting music teachers who enhance the school's music provision with guitar, keyboard and woodwind lessons. Year 6 pupils particularly enjoy the challenges they experience on their residential visit. Links with local primary schools and the partner secondary school are good and benefit pupils in a number of subjects. The school uses the good quality accommodation and grounds effectively to support learning. An outdoor classroom in the wooded area is planned to contribute to increasing the progress in investigative and practical science to the level of progress currently seen in English and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy and develop their confidence well due to the good levels of pastoral care and welfare provided. Many parents responding to the questionnaire spoke highly of the school's very caring approach. As one commented, 'The school is a very caring environment with an open, approachable staff.' Good procedures ensure the safety of pupils, and the requirements for safeguarding them are met in full. Child protection procedures comply with requirements. The school provides good support for pupils needing particular help with learning and those with medical problems. Well-qualified and effective teaching assistants provide good support in the classrooms. Academic guidance is good and pupils are given clear feedback on areas where they need to improve and commendation when they achieve their learning targets.

Teachers involve parents in their children's learning so that they are aware of what they need to work on in order to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for improvement that she pursues rigorously. She and her senior colleagues are already working well as a team to put in place systems and practices that will improve levels of challenge and increase accountability amongst the staff. This includes working with the subject leaders to help them develop the skills to monitor their subjects and track data and progress more effectively. Governors are committed to the school and fulfil their roles well. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. It makes a very good contribution to the cohesion of the local community by working closely with the neighbouring infant school and the village. The school manages its resources very well for the benefit of the pupils. School self-evaluation is good and, as a result, areas to improve are identified accurately. Actions being taken to meet the current priorities are already having positive outcomes.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

28 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Doddinghurst Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 0NJ

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. Mr Manuel and I really enjoyed the time we spent with you. It was especially good for us to hear about all the things you do and know that you enjoy school very much.

You told us how your school teaches you to keep fit and healthy and how you are learning to improve your work. Many of you told us about the exciting things you have been doing this term and the clubs you attend.

Here are some of the many things that are good about your school:

- you work well and try hard
- you look after each other and care about your school
- you have lots of opportunities to do fun things and enjoy yourselves.

There are two things that we feel would make your school even better.

- Some of you are able to do harder work or work more quickly than your teachers make you do at the moment. We would like your teachers to make sure you all work well enough in the time you have and that you have work that is hard enough.
- We would like your teachers to make it easier for you to understand how your work is marked and how to learn your targets so you can get even better at your work.

You all told us you go to a good school and we agree with you. We know Mrs Cooper and her staff will work hard to make your school even better. You can help by always doing your very best.

We wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Robinson

Lead inspector