

# Horsmonden Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118276
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312864
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Greenfield

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	192
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Grant Leslie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Malcolm Hayes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Back Lane Horsmonden Tonbridge TN12 8NJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01892 722529
<b>Fax number</b>	01892 724134

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • the impact of the school's provision in raising standards and pupils' achievement further, especially in writing at Key Stage 1 and mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 • the effectiveness of the school's provision in promoting pupils' personal development • the impact of leadership and management at all levels to drive forward school improvement. Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, discussions with pupils, staff and two governors, the views of parents and a scrutiny of the school's documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Horsmonden Primary is slightly smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The substantive headteacher has been back at the school full time since the beginning of this term following a period of secondment, during which time the leadership of the school was shared with another co-headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Horsmonden Primary provides pupils with a satisfactory education. This judgement is not quite as positive as the school's own view. Nevertheless, the school is improving rapidly. Several aspects of its work are good and a few elements of pupils' personal development are excellent. Since the beginning of this term, the school is settling down under the sole leadership of the substantive headteacher. Governors, staff and a large number of parents have welcomed the return to a single headteacher, believing that it will provide greater sense of clarity and direction to the school's work. This is already beginning to happen. Most parents are happy with the school and what it does for their children, typically saying, 'my child enjoys school and is always happy to attend' and 'the children seem to be so happy, enthusiastic and well behaved'. A few commented that standards have declined over the last two years.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their extremely high levels of attendance and excellent behaviour. One pupil said, 'I like everything about this school', and members of the school council could find nothing that they would like to see improved. Pupils play together exceptionally well, taking turns and waiting patiently to go on the climbing equipment in the well equipped playground. They are extremely friendly and polite, and take good care of one another, with older pupils helping younger ones through the 'partner' system. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not exist and are confident that adults will help them when they have any problems. Older pupils in particular have a good understanding of the skills needed to keep themselves and their community safe, benefiting from a 'Safety in Action' visit.

Pupils make a strong contribution to the school and the wider community. The school council represents the pupils' voice effectively. This year, their surveys on the use of the library and after-school clubs, and discussions with the school's catering company, have resulted in positive action. They led to the production of a reward card for attending a club each week and the introduction of a '10p' salad bar, which is available to all pupils. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy, also recognised by the Healthy Schools award.

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although accelerating because of better teaching. Children are making good progress in Reception, which is an improving picture, and they are on course to start Year 1 with above average standards in most areas of learning. Across the rest of the school, pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, but the impact of the better teaching in individual classes is resulting in a greater level of challenge and more effective learning. This is evident in the improvements made recently in writing in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics and science in Key Stage 2, which were relatively weaker areas in the national tests in 2007.

Senior staff have taken robust steps to reverse the decline in standards between 2005 and 2007. Their actions have not been in place long enough to raise standards significantly, although the good teaching in most classes is helping pupils to make faster progress, enabling them to catch up on the slower pace of earlier learning. The school's assessment information shows that more pupils are on course to attain the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 this year.

Teachers plan their lessons well and provide pupils with a good range of activities to help them learn. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and their written work in books is exceptionally neat and well presented. Work is marked regularly and in the best examples, there is clear guidance on how they might improve it. All pupils have personal learning targets displayed in the

classroom, which they clearly understand. As preparation for the termly review by staff, parents and pupils, pupils are expected to identify how they have met their targets in their work across the curriculum. Individual teachers track the progress of their class carefully during the year, sharing this information informally with subject leaders and senior staff, but there is no whole-school system that monitors pupils' progress over a longer period, although plans are in hand to do so shortly. This makes it difficult for senior leaders to ensure that pupils remain on course to reach the challenging targets that the school sets itself.

A wide range of activities, visits and visitors enrich the good curriculum, and together they ensure pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and personal development as well as widening their horizons. Pupils learn French, and all those in Years 3 and 4 receive cello lessons. The school has retained a topic-based approach to curriculum planning for many years which brings coherence to pupils' learning. A key feature of the curriculum is the development of the 'outdoor classroom' to enhance learning. Pupils' personal and academic development is also enhanced by the high quality care, guidance and support they receive. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety are robust. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small number considered vulnerable is good, enabling them to make similar progress to their classmates. Specific provision is also made for pupils identified as gifted and talented.

Some of the senior leadership team are relatively new in post. Under the determined leadership of the headteacher, they are playing a stronger role in monitoring aspects of the school's work with increasing rigour and disseminating good practice. Senior staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses as shown in the school's improvement plan. The plan focuses on the most important issues to be tackled, although the criteria for judging success are not sharp enough. The actions that have already been taken are having a beneficial impact on teaching and learning, so that standards are rising. Governors are playing a more influential role in school improvement, especially through the work of its self-evaluation committee, which is taking a robust stance in checking the school's performance. The recent progress that the school has made in a relatively short time shows that it has good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

When they enter the school, children's skills and experiences are broadly typical of those expected for their age. The good teaching and the well planned curriculum ensure that children get off to a positive start. Staff have a clear understanding of the developmental needs of young children, placing good emphasis on developing the children's basic skills. Staff track children's progress carefully and provide them with a balanced variety of activities. These engage children and help them to learn well. Children make good progress across most areas of learning. Although satisfactory, progress in their mathematical development is not quite as strong as other areas. This year, standards are above average by the end of Reception, which is an improving picture over the previous year. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and children receive high quality care in a safe and secure environment. Although children have access to an outdoor area, the ease of movement from the classroom to this outside area is restricted because of the lack of a connecting door.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in writing at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2.

- Implement a more robust system for tracking pupils' progress throughout the school.

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 inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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## 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?	3
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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

<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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

23 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Horsmonden Primary School, Horsmonden, TN12 8JA

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I particularly enjoyed my discussions with members of the school council and talking to so many of you in the playground. You helped me find out so much about your school. This letter is to tell you what I found.

- You receive a satisfactory standard of education at Horsmonden and it is getting better.
- Standards are broadly average but the good teaching is helping you to make faster progress now than you have done in the past.
- You enjoy coming to school very much and your excellent attendance shows that.
- You behave exceptionally well. I particularly liked the way you helped each other at playtime and waited your turn to use the climbing equipment.
- You have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and to keep yourselves safe, and the school council is good at helping the school get better.
- The school provides you with lots of interesting things to do to help you learn and I was very interested to see your 'outdoor classroom'.
- Adults in the school ensure that you are well cared for and receive the right kind of help. They check your progress carefully and I was impressed with how well you know your personal learning targets and what you need to do to get better.
- The headteacher and senior staff know what needs to be done to make the school even better and are working hard to do so.

I have asked the staff to do two main things to help the school get even better.

- Help those of you in Years 1 and 2 to do better in writing and those of you in Years 3 to 6 to do even better in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that senior staff are able to check your progress more effectively as you move through the school.
- I hope you will continue to work hard and try to do the very best you can.
- Yours sincerely

Mrs J Greenfield Lead inspector

23 May 2008



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Yours sincerely

Mrs J Greenfield  
Lead inspector