

# Cuxton Community Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118323
<b>Local Authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	312887
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carole Skinner

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Harper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandra Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Bush Road Cuxton Rochester ME2 1EY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 718162
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 718162

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the school's overall effectiveness and investigated the following issues:

the apparent mismatch between seemingly satisfactory achievement and the significant body of evidence that indicates good provision

the impact of the school's leadership and management on improving achievement at Key Stage 1

the effectiveness of target setting, assessment and tracking procedures in ensuring that lessons meet the needs of all pupils and promote good progress.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with staff, the chair of governors and pupils, samples of pupils' work, parent questionnaires, observations of pupils at lunchtime and a review of the school's own assessment and monitoring evidence. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail but there was no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The vast majority are of White British heritage. A falling roll has resulted in a recent reduction from five classes to four. Two of the classes cater for pupils in two different year groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has risen since the last inspection and is now above average. Attainment on entry has fallen and many pupils start school with weaker language, literacy and number skills than those typically expected for their age. The school has achieved the Inclusive Quality Mark, the Healthy School Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and feel very safe and happy. It has some outstanding features, notably the way it cares for and nurtures its pupils so that they grow in confidence and self-esteem. Parents value greatly the school's welcoming ethos and the fact that teachers know every child personally. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter is continuing to thrive under the teaching and care of all staff who are approachable and friendly.' First-rate support and guidance for pupils begin before they even start school through the excellent induction procedures. Close liaison with the adjacent junior school leads to a seamless transition to the next phase of education. Pupils do indeed thrive in this positive and supportive environment. Their outstanding personal development, from Reception onwards, helps them to acquire great enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to 'have a go' without fear of failure. Attendance rates have steadily improved over the past three years and are now close to the national average. Pupils also develop very good relationships and social skills. These are enhanced by the school's excellent links with the local community. It was delightful to observe pupils entertaining members of the '50 Club' and chatting with them over lunch.

Owing to the small number of pupils in each year group, standards vary from year to year, as does the range of abilities among the pupils. In most years, standards have been close to the national average. They dipped in 2007 because there was a much higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is usual. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement for this group of pupils and reflects what is now an upward trend in standards throughout the school. Pupils also have good computer skills. For example, Year 2 pupils have created simple 'Power Point' presentations. These good basic skills prepare pupils well for the future. Recent efforts to improve all aspects of pupils' attainment in English have had a very positive impact. Consistently good teaching of reading, spelling, speaking and listening skills has contributed greatly to raising standards in writing. Some of the poems written by Year 2 pupils during the inspection were of an exceptionally high standard.

Consistently good leadership and management ensure that the school is well equipped to continue this upward trend. Senior leaders and governors have high aspirations for the pupils' academic and personal development. They evaluate the school's performance rigorously and use the information gained to guide future planning. Exceptionally good leadership of literacy has had a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning. School leaders are aware, nevertheless, that there is still room for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and some lessons are outstanding, but rigorous monitoring of lessons and pupils' work has highlighted a few inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. This leads to occasional inequalities in provision for pupils who are in the same year group but in different classes. Senior managers are aware that teachers would benefit from more opportunities to work collaboratively in order to share ideas, expertise and best practice.

The school has made great strides in improving the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. Termly reviews show at a glance whether pupils are on track to achieve the levels expected of them. Senior managers analyse this data rigorously and identify pupils who may not be making enough progress. Discussions with teachers lead to prompt action to provide additional support for these pupils. The excellent arrangements for supporting pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties often involve specialist outside agencies. This high quality support enables pupils to overcome potential barriers to learning and make good

progress. Pupils know their targets in English and mathematics and say that these help them to learn. As one put it, 'They remind you about what to do'. Sometimes pupils assess each other's work, as when Year 2 pupils were reading each other's poems and looking for particularly good use of words. This increased their understanding of what makes a good poem.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning because teachers make lessons fun. They plan an exciting range of practical activities that enable pupils to learn through first-hand experience. The use of drama techniques such as 'hot seating' and 'decision alley' helps all pupils to organise and articulate their thoughts. The curriculum is well planned around themes that interest and motivate pupils. The school is currently seeking ways to enhance the continuity and consistency of provision within and between each year group in order to boost pupils' progress. The curriculum and its many enrichment activities contribute exceptionally well to pupils' spiritual and moral awareness and their appreciation of different cultures. Creative links between subjects bring learning to life within everyday contexts that are meaningful to pupils. Pupils acquire an excellent understanding of the importance of eating a healthy diet through special events such as the recent 'Food and Fitness Day'. They tuck in to fruit and vegetable snacks with gusto and get plenty of vigorous exercise. Pupils are also encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility for a variety of jobs. The gardening club cares for the school environment while the two school 'shops' help pupils to learn the value of money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

There have been significant improvements in the provision for Reception children since the last inspection, particularly the new accommodation and resources and further training for staff. Children have good opportunities to learn through play as well as from more structured, teacher-led activities. They make good progress, often from low starting points, and reach broadly average standards by the end of the Reception Year. In the past, standards have been lowest in reading and writing, but the recent introduction of a new system for teaching sounds and letters is having a beneficial effect and children are now making faster progress in these aspects. The planning and delivery of the curriculum, while ensuring good coverage of all six areas of learning, does not fully exploit opportunities for linking them together to make learning more creative and meaningful.

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

- Ensure that all teachers have equally high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving.
- Provide more opportunities for teachers to plan and work collaboratively in order to share their knowledge and expertise.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

### 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?	1

<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>	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 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	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

27 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Cuxton Community Infant School, Cuxton, ME2 1EY

I really enjoyed visiting your school and meeting you all. Thank you for talking to me and letting me watch some of your lessons. I particularly enjoyed having lunch with you and was very impressed by the way you looked after your visitors. Several of your parents wrote to tell me they think Cuxton Community Infant School is a good school, and I agree with them. Here are some of the reasons why:

- You make good progress in your learning because your lessons are fun and there are lots of interesting things for you to do.
- All of the adults look after you very well and help you to settle into school quickly so that you feel very safe and secure.
- You obviously enjoy school a great deal. You behave very well indeed and you work very hard in lessons.
- The school helps you to be confident and independent and prepares you well for when you move on to the junior school.
- You eat healthy snacks and get plenty of exercise at playtimes.
- The teachers keep a very close eye on how well you are doing and give you extra help if you need it.
- You know your targets very well and use them to help you to learn new things.

The adults who run the school do a good job. They are always checking how good the school is so that they can make it even better. We have asked them to do a couple of things to help some of you make even faster progress:

- Make sure that all of the teachers expect you to do as well as you possibly can in all your lessons.
- Give the teachers more time to plan things together and discuss how they are going to teach you so that they can share all their good ideas.

Carry on working hard and enjoying school!

With very best wishes

Carole Skinner Lead inspector

**Annex B**

27 March 2008

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With very best wishes

Carole Skinner  
Lead inspector