

Hoo St Werburgh Primary School and Marlborough Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118327
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	312889
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	447
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Chappell
Headteacher	Jo Trickett
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002
School address	Pottery Road Hoo St Werburgh Rochester ME3 9BS
Telephone number	01634 338040
Fax number	01634 253893

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school with an integrated specialist autistic centre for 54 pupils. The centre transferred to the school in 2004. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, and is high in some year groups. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above average. There have been significant changes in leadership and staffing including at senior level; the school has had three headteachers in three years. The current headteacher joined the school in June and was appointed permanent headteacher in September 2007. The school is part of a local authority support programme to raise pupils' standards and achievement. In recognition of its work, the school has a Gold Active Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required to raise standards and achievement in English and mathematics throughout the school through more effective teaching.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because standards are too low and pupils' achievement is inadequate. The headteacher faced many significant challenges on joining the school and has acted energetically to make improvements in some important areas. She has taken determined action to improve pupils' low standards and insufficient progress. As one teacher said, 'Now we have a clear sense of direction'. There are clear signs of improvement with pupils beginning to make up for previous lost ground but some underachievement remains. Pupils' writing skills, particularly their spelling, use of vocabulary and understanding and use of number are weak. Improvements in teaching are beginning to tackle these effectively. Nonetheless, some inconsistencies in the use of assessment information mean that work is set that is not always matched to pupils' different abilities. Whilst some good constructive marking helps move pupils on to the next stage of learning, some is not as sharply focused on improvement. As a result, some pupils understand how well they are doing and how to improve and others do not. Good enrichment opportunities and a more relevant, interesting curriculum are making learning more enjoyable but the curriculum is not fully meeting the needs of more able pupils.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are strengths. This is a significant and recent improvement and is evident in pupils' good personal development and enjoyment of school. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy but their economic well-being is inadequate because basic skills are weak. Pupils are well cared for and supported and close links with external agencies benefit pupils' learning. Most parents support the school's work and value the work of the centre. Several commented, 'The recent changes are so much better'. The well led centre offers pupils a satisfactory education with some good features. This is an improvement. The headteacher has established new systems, procedures and more rigorous checking systems to evaluate the school's performance. However, some middle managers are still developing their roles.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress. By the start of Year 1, most are on track to achieve the expected levels except in linking sounds and letters and in personal, social and emotional development. Satisfactory teaching is now placing a greater focus on children's personal, social and emotional development than before but aspects of the outdoor curriculum are not as well developed. Children have a balance and range of activities to help their independent learning but provision is uneven because not all staff are fully trained to meet the needs of all children. Behaviour is good and children play well with each other.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus on improving pupils' writing skills, spelling and use of vocabulary, and their understanding and use of number.

- Ensure teaching is consistently good by using assessment information consistently well to make sure work always matches the needs of all pupils and ensure pupils understand how to improve further.
- Develop the skills of all middle managers in monitoring and evaluating, to drive forward the improvement in standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are not high enough and pupils' overall progress is inadequate. Attainment on entry is generally below expectations and there is a legacy of pupil underachievement. The Year 6, 2007 national tests results in English, mathematics and science were low compared to pupils' performance in Year 2. With the arrival of the new headteacher, there has been a strong steer to raise achievement through improved teaching, pupil behaviour, and use of assessment. Actions taken have meant that pupils are beginning to catch up on previous underachievement. School tracking and inspection evidence confirm that most pupils throughout the school, and especially those in Year 6, are making better progress than before and pupils are making up lost ground. Identified weaknesses in pupils' writing, spelling, limited use of vocabulary, and use and understanding of number are now being supported more effectively. It is too soon for the effect of recent improvements to be shown in terms of raised standards. The school has set more challenging targets and school data indicate pupils are on course to achieve these. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress owing to the support given. In the centre, standards are low, although pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and there are examples of pupils making good progress both in academic and social learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents and pupils say how much behaviour has improved recently. Pupils' good behaviour, attitudes and enjoyment are significant strengths of their personal development. As one pupil said, 'We can get on and enjoy learning now without constant interruptions.' Those who have difficulties in managing their own behaviour readily take responsibility and self-refer to 'Place2Be' or the sanctuary to seek adult support. Incidences of bullying and racism are rare and pupils say any concerns are dealt with quickly. More rigorous procedures have led to improved attendance but have highlighted some punctuality concerns, which are being tackled. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Opportunities to help pupils raise their self-esteem contribute immensely to their good social and moral development. Pupils are friendly and proud to be 'buddies' and 'ambassadors', and say 'we like to help'. Pupils know how to lead healthy, safe lifestyles. They contribute satisfactorily to the local community through organising charitable fund raising events. They enjoy managing the school council's budget and run a healthy tuck shop, but their weak basic skills hamper their future well-being. The good emphasis in the centre on developing pupils' social awareness, relationships and good eye contact reinforces personal development well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school understands that the satisfactory teaching is not good enough if all pupils are to catch up on previous underachievement. Sharing of good practice, training and monitoring of teaching and learning are priorities and are helping to bring about improvement. Good teaching was seen when questioning provided good opportunities to extend pupils' speaking and writing skills and when they were involved directly in their learning. Year 3 pupils enjoyed researching and presenting facts about favourite authors. Year 5 pupils loved watching and listening to funny poetry recordings before finishing their own poems. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to their learning. Year 6 pupils, following a theatre group visit, learnt about the Children's Charter and discussed some sensitive issues maturely. Marking is inconsistent. There are examples of good marking which helps pupils to improve their work but some marking is cursory. Teachers now have more accurate information about what pupils are capable of. Some teachers use this information well to move pupils on to the next stage of learning, but others do not. Consequently, lesson planning in the school and centre does not consistently ensure that work always matches the needs of all pupils sufficiently. Adults in the centre relate very well to pupils and their complex needs are understood.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has recently undergone significant change, with stronger links between subjects. The needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are satisfactorily addressed, but provision for more able pupils remains inconsistent. Visitors and visits enrich the curriculum. Educational trips to Chatham Docks and the British Museum make learning more enjoyable and relevant. Visitors from the Mayor to 'anti-bullying' theatre groups stimulate learning and help pupils understand their rights and community involvement. A wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities, breakfast and gardening clubs are popular. Year 6 pupils, including those from the centre, enjoy a residential week in Dorset. The issue of curriculum balance in the previous inspection has been addressed successfully. Pupils in the centre have a well-balanced curriculum which caters for their complex social, communication and academic needs. Individuals join main lessons if this meets their needs. The visits and activities have a positive effect on their social development and inclusion.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Child protection and safeguarding procedures are secure. The sanctuary, nurture, social interaction and anger management groups contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Valuable support is given to pupils, parents and staff through 'Place2Be' and 'Place2Talk'. Contacts with parents are made quickly and good use is made of specialists and external agencies. The centre ensures a very safe, secure environment and pupils are looked after well. Teachers track pupils' progress but not enough is done to ensure information is acted upon consistently in lessons. All pupils have individual learning targets but they do not always understand what they need to do to develop their learning. In the centre, older pupils know their targets and many take pleasure in talking about them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has very quickly established a clear sense of purpose and direction centred on overcoming underachievement and raising standards. Her good leadership is strongly supported by senior leaders and managers, who share the determination to improve pupils' learning. Leadership and management are good in the centre and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Staff are working hard to raise standards, notably in Year 6. Recent data show that actions taken have meant that the majority of pupils are beginning to catch up on previous underachievement. Some middle leaders are still developing their roles so have not had a full impact on moving their subjects forward. Monitoring is becoming more systematic but the school recognises that it needs to record the feedback given to teachers when they have been observed to secure further improvement. Nonetheless, improvements have already made a real difference to pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning and the quality of teaching.

Its self-evaluation gives an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and work is underway to tackle these. Good systems, structures and analysis of performance continue to be embedded. Improvements in tracking pupils' progress have led to more accurate information being available, so teachers can now identify any underachievement quickly and address any weaknesses. This is ensuring that the majority of pupils are on track to meet their targets. Governors have a clearer view of the school's work. They recognise their monitoring role needs developing and are undergoing training to ensure that all their responsibilities are carried out. Though some pupils are still underachieving, there is strong evidence of 'green shoots' in several areas that indicate the school has a satisfactory capacity to bring about further improvement.

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?	4
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	4

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hoo St Werburgh Primary School and Marlborough Centre, Rochester, ME3 9BS

Thank you for helping us when we visited you. We enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and seeing your lessons. You and many of your parents told us how much more you enjoyed school now that everyone's behaviour was so much better. Although there are some successful aspects to your school it is not doing well enough and has some significant weaknesses.

Here are some of the things we found out.

- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are really good.
- You told us how the school looks after you well, and we agree.
- You told us you really enjoyed all the visits, visitors and after school clubs.
- We were impressed with the work of your buddies and ambassadors.
- You have a good knowledge of how to lead safe, healthy lifestyles and your spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good.
- The headteacher, staff, governors and others are working very hard together to make the school and centre better and they are starting to make a difference.

Here are some things we would like to see improved.

- For teachers to help you to improve your writing skills, spelling, and use of a wider range of vocabulary, and to help you to improve your understanding and use of number.
- For teaching to be consistently good, and assessment information used consistently well to make sure the work you do is set at the right level for you and helps you all to understand what you need to do to improve further.
- For the teachers who are middle leaders to check on the work classes are doing, so that they know all pupils are doing as well as they can.

You can help too by working really hard and by asking teachers how to improve your work.

All best wishes Sheila Browning Lead inspector

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All best wishes
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Lead inspector