

Lydd Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118560
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312991
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2008
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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Walsh
Headteacher	Florence Warren
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2004
School address	20 Skinner Road Lydd Romney Marsh TN29 9HN
Telephone number	01797 320362
Fax number	01797 321814

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lydd is a much larger than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and other White backgrounds; a very small number are White and Black African, White Asian or from other mixed backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly above the national average with a smaller proportion than is the case nationally having a statement of special educational needs. A very small minority have dyslexia, moderate or severe learning disabilities, and a small number have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The most common needs are related to speech, language and communication.

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced some significant instability in staffing, which remains unresolved. Changes to staff, some at a senior level, have particularly affected Years 3 to 6. An advisory headteacher was placed in the school in March 2008 and the local authority has begun to work closely with the school. In recognition of its work to promote pupils' awareness of a healthy lifestyle, the school has a Healthy Schools Award and an Activemark Award.

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 special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. The school's judgement is more positive than this because its monitoring is not sufficiently robust to provide the clear and detailed information it needs to gain an accurate view of its performance. While pupils have good attitudes to learning and most enjoy school, they do not achieve academically as well as they should. The pupils make inadequate progress and the school has failed to eradicate the long-standing legacy of underachievement in Years 3 to 6. Children start school with skills and understanding that are broadly as expected for their age and achieve satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage. They build on this and reach broadly average standards in Year 2. By the end of Year 6, however, standards are below average in mathematics and science and are exceptionally low in English. Although teaching has begun to improve, there are still too many weaknesses in pupils' basic literacy, numeracy and scientific skills across the school. Pupils write too little and their descriptive writing and punctuation skills are weak. In addition, mathematical calculations and number problem solving skills are limited and pupils have too little knowledge of scientific vocabulary and investigation. The lack of emphasis on improving basic skills acts as a barrier to learning. Given pupils' starting points, too few in Years 3 to 6 are on track to reach levels expected for their age and, until very recently, the majority have made slow and inadequate progress by the time they leave school in Year 6.

The quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory and this is beginning to make an impact on standards. However, work is not always challenging enough because there are weaknesses in the process of setting targets and the use of assessment information to accelerate learning. The marking of pupils' work is also inconsistent, and pupils are not given sufficient academic guidance about how to move forward. Adults show a strong commitment to pupils' care and welfare, and work closely with parents and other agencies. At the time of the inspection, the school had not fully met all of the Government's safeguarding requirements. Action is already being taken, with the local authority's support, to rectify this situation. The needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified, but appropriate support for these pupils is not yet focused on where it is needed most. A satisfactory start has been made to improving the curriculum so that it better meets the needs of all learners. Pupils enjoy good enrichment opportunities.

Leadership and management are inadequate. The school's self-evaluation does not accurately reflect the school's strengths and weaknesses. While staffing difficulties have hampered progress to some extent, at the same time, procedures to check and evaluate the school's effectiveness lack rigour. Where actions have started to improve teaching and learning, and raise standards, these have not been maintained sufficiently right across the school. Senior and middle managers, and governors, have not had the opportunity to develop their roles, and as a result, they have had too little impact on school improvement. They are, nevertheless, eager to move the school forward and demonstrate a united determination to do so. Parents are largely supportive of the school's work. However, over half of the parental questionnaires returned during the course of the inspection expressed concerns about communication between home and school and the

leadership and management of the school. The local authority and advisory headteacher are currently helping the school to make improvements in all of these areas.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress across the Foundation Stage. As a result, they reach the expectations for their age in all areas of learning by the time they join Year 1, except in their knowledge and understanding of the world. These skills are relatively weak when they join the school. Teaching is satisfactory, but stronger in the Nursery than it is in Reception.

There is a strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development, particularly in the Nursery class. As a result, children benefit from a balanced range of activities to support their independent learning. These features ensure they are secure and enjoy their learning. Good systems are in place to check children's progress. Sometimes, however, opportunities are missed to challenge children, especially the more able in the Reception class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure leadership and management contribute effectively to raising standards and that the school complies fully with current Government requirements for safeguarding learners.
- Develop and implement rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's work in all year groups to improve the school's effectiveness.
- Ensure that assessment information and targets are used effectively so that pupils are challenged to do their very best and achieve well.
- Tackle weaknesses in pupils' use of punctuation, descriptive and extended writing, mathematical calculations and problem solving skills, and use of scientific vocabulary and investigation, in order to raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve broadly average standards in reading and mathematics, though writing is below average. By Year 6, standards are lower and are well below average. Results at Key Stage 2 have been significantly below the national average since 2003, although the trend is uneven with dips in 2004 and 2007 and rises in the other years. Nevertheless, results have been below the national figures since 2005, with limited sign of improvement.

Pupils make inconsistent and inadequate progress from Year 1 onwards, particularly in Years 3 to 6 because there has been insufficient focus on improving teaching and learning or on tackling robustly the legacy of underachievement. As a result, achievement is inadequate. Evidence from pupils' work and existing assessment information confirm that over time pupils' progress is too slow. Weaknesses are evident in pupils' use of punctuation, within their descriptive and extended writing, in their calculation and problem solving skills in mathematics, and in their use of scientific vocabulary and investigational skills. Some pupils in Years 3 to 6 are just beginning to make up for lost ground, but too few are on course to reach the national expectations for pupils by the end of Year 6, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' good attitudes to learning and collaborative skills show that they enjoy school. Pupils' willingness to work productively in lessons is helping to improve their progress, and they are keen to take part in the school's increasing range of extra-curricular activities. Attendance is average and improving and the introduction of breakfast club has helped reduce lateness. Behaviour is satisfactory. Although several parents expressed concerns about behaviour, they generally recognise that it is improving, and pupils largely support this view. However, pupils reported that difficulties often occur at playtimes because there are few activities in which they can take part. During the inspection, a few instances of inappropriate behaviour occurred in the junior playground; nevertheless, pupils say that lunchtime nurture groups and the work of learning mentors help them to feel safe. Pupils do not yet feel that they have enough voice in what goes on in school because although several systems are in place for them to express their views, these are not yet fully developed. As one pupil said of the school council, 'We don't really know what they do.'

Pupils are increasingly aware of the importance of leading safe and healthy lives. They participate in a range of school clubs and show a growing sense of being part of a community. Their contributions to the local community include raising money for charities and distributing harvest gifts. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is hampered by their limited literacy and numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. Sometimes it is better than this, but not yet frequently enough to eradicate underachievement. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their work. Children in the Foundation Stage, for example, happily take part in a suitable range of learning activities. In Years 1 to 6, pupils concentrate well and seek to do as well as possible. One mathematics lesson was outstanding, with pupils enthusiastically engaged in their work. Good teaching was also seen in French and English lessons.

There are several reasons why teaching is not good or better in every lesson. For example, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. The best marking is frequent and provides good information about how pupils can improve, but this good practice is not yet embedded throughout the school. In addition, the school does not track the progress of its pupils as accurately as it could and, as a result, teachers do not always have the information they need to focus their teaching on each pupil's particular requirements. They have started to use questioning to develop pupils' understanding and are using information from pupils' self-evaluation to promote learning that is more successful. However, this is a very recent development and, as yet, it has had insufficient effect on pupils' attainment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Nursery and Reception curriculum contributes satisfactorily to children's development, especially in the spacious and well-resourced outdoor learning environment. Consequently, these children settle happily to school life. Opportunities for pupils' personal, social and health

education development are adequate. The amount of time allocated for different subjects varies in different classes and year groups and, consequently, pupils' needs have not always been met and they have much ground to make up. Recent changes in the curriculum have led to improvements in teachers' lesson planning and provided greater opportunities for developing pupils' basic skills. The use of national guidance contributes to sound planning. In addition, the school is now seeking to develop a creative curriculum, using links between subjects to make learning more relevant and exciting. French is regularly taught in Year 6, and some other classes experience it informally. The school provides a good range of opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences. Visits such as those to the Cutty Sark and the Tutankhamun Exhibition, and extra-curricular activities, have a positive effect and broaden pupils' horizons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The school is committed to its pupils' welfare, and most parents are grateful for the care and support given to their children. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they know that they will be treated well and that any concerns they have will always be taken seriously. The school promotes pupils' social well-being very seriously, and this attention helps them to grow satisfactorily in maturity and responsibility. They are carefully supported in their transition to secondary school. Most health and safety procedures are secure. Nevertheless, the school has not met all of the current requirements relating to safeguarding learners. Action to tackle this weakness is being taken as an urgent priority.

Day-to-day monitoring of pupils' responses in lessons is now satisfactory, but the school's systems for monitoring progress over the medium and longer term are inadequate because they do not provide the school with good information about how each pupil can improve, where additional help needs to be provided, and about the success of any additional support. Support for individual pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory, although there is insufficient focus in the way that support is allocated to different classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Weaknesses that have led to academic underachievement over a prolonged period have not been rigorously tackled. Consequently, pupils have not made the progress they should and standards are not high enough by the time they leave the school. Monitoring systems are not sufficiently robust for the school to have an accurate picture of its performance and its self-evaluation does not take enough account of the views of governors or staff. Processes for checking pupils' progress are insecure and the school's recent attempts to look at the extent of pupils' underachievement have not yet resulted in rigorous enough action to remedy the important gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Governors do not have the full range of information needed for them to fulfil all their statutory duties and ensure that all the school's procedures are in place and effective.

The local authority is now working closely with the school to increase its effectiveness. Staff are very keen to take the school forward, including those with senior and subject leadership responsibilities and teachers are enthusiastically looking to further their professional development. Despite the determination of staff and governors to improve the school, they

do not demonstrate the capacity to bring about further improvement without substantial reliance on external support.

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	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

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	4

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
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	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lydd Primary School, Lydd, Kent, TN29 9HN

Thank you for being so helpful to us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing your lessons. Although there are some successful aspects to your school, it is not doing as well as it should. We are asking that your school receives special help to make things better so that you make much faster progress.

Here are some things we found out:

- You have good attitudes to learning, your behaviour is satisfactory and your attendance is improving.
- You know what you should eat to be healthy and how important it is for you to exercise.
- You feel that any worries you have are taken seriously, although you would like more opportunities to express your views about the school.
- You told us you really enjoyed all the visits, visitors and clubs.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are helped to settle happily into school life.

Here are some things the school needs to do to improve:

- Those responsible for leading and managing the school need to make sure they help to raise standards in the school.
- Staff and governors need to check the school's work very carefully to make sure that you are doing as well as you can and that the school improves quickly.
- The school needs to make sure lessons are taught really well, and that work is set at the right level for you so that it is not too easy or too hard, and that you know how to improve your work.
- We have also asked the school to help you to become better at writing as well as solving number problems in maths and making better use of scientific vocabulary when you investigate things in science.

You can help, too, by working really hard, and by asking teachers how to improve your work. You should tell them if the work is too easy or difficult.

All best wishes

Sheila Browning Lead inspector

Annex B

27 March 2008

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All best wishes

Sheila Browning
Lead inspector