

# Wrotham Road Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118577
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312999
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Chadwick

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>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	377
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ken Hammond / Jean Craig
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Wrotham Road Gravesend DA11 0QF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 534540
<b>Fax number</b>	01474 322413

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • the progress more-able pupils make in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 • the progress pupils make in Years 3 to 6, particularly lower-ability pupils in English and mathematics and higher-ability pupils in science • the impact of leadership and management, particularly through school initiatives, on improving standards. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, reviewing the assessment data the school uses to track the progress the pupils make, and analysis of pupils' work. 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 in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. Half of the pupils come from ethnic backgrounds, with the largest group of Indian heritage. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language and a significant minority of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry is below average but there is a wide range. There has been an unsettled period of senior leadership in the last year, with three acting headteachers. A period of building work, extending over 18 months, has recently been completed, with every class disrupted at some point. A permanent headteacher takes up post in April 2008. The school holds the Investors in People and Healthy School awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory, with some good features. A strong ethos and celebration of cultural diversity are supported by firm links with the community. Excellent relationships and high standards of care also promote pupils' good personal development and excellent behaviour. It is a credit to the staff and governors that the school has maintained its happy and welcoming atmosphere during the period of disruption to senior leadership and substantial building improvement. Building improvements have been very worthwhile and pupils learn in a safe, attractive and orderly environment and thoroughly enjoy school.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start and they make good progress to reach average standards by the time they begin Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. Standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2, and average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. However, the progress of both higher-ability and lower-ability pupils occasionally slows when the work they are given is too easy or too hard. Pupils often write confidently for a range of purposes but weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and handwriting are not always picked up. Basic writing skills are not always built upon systematically, year on year, and this is preventing standards from rising more rapidly.

Over the past few years, standards have often been above average in mathematics but have fluctuated in English, mathematics and science. Though self-evaluation procedures are sound, the school has accurately identified that these procedures are not strong enough to bring about more even standards and achievement. School leaders are not systematic enough in evaluating the effectiveness of teaching. Pupils' progress is being tracked but tracking systems are not robust enough to pinpoint how well different groups are achieving. The development of this process has been hindered by the recent unsettled period. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory overall, and good in the Foundation Stage. There is some good teaching in Years 1 to 6, but not enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Teachers manage their pupils very well but inconsistencies in the use of assessment mean that work is not always effectively matched to pupils' capabilities in these years. Pupils' creative education is well catered for in art and design, with examples of good quality artwork visible throughout the school. There are some high quality curricular links between art and history. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the good range of extra-curricular sporting activities and these really enhance pupils' personal development.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The two acting headteachers have minimised disruption to pupils' education and ensured the school runs smoothly. Together with other senior staff, they have accurately identified the strengths and weaker aspects of the school. Although the school sets clear targets for each pupil, the monitoring of pupils' progress towards these targets is not sufficiently rigorous at senior and middle management level. There is also work to do to make sure teachers consistently use the targets to move children on in their learning. Subject leaders play their part in supporting colleagues, but they are not given enough opportunities to observe their colleagues teaching. Teachers' morale is high and staff show a willingness to adapt and recognise the need for stronger support for improving their teaching. The governors are well led by the knowledgeable and committed chair and play a strong part in challenging and supporting the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and representatives from several different religions help pupils to become aware of different faiths. Pupils are very proud of their school and develop a good sense of responsibility for the care of their local environment. They make a good contribution to helping those less fortunate than themselves by raising money for charities. The school council is a good vehicle for enabling pupils to contribute to school decision making. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and the school has good procedures for promoting this.

Most parents are pleased with the school. However, a minority of those who have children with learning difficulties expressed concern that their children's progress could be faster. Inspection evidence showed that pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, although occasionally the steps in reading and writing are not matched well enough to their learning needs and spelling is a weaker aspect to their writing. The rate of improvement prior to disruption, the school's current performance and strong teamwork by staff show the school has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below that expected, particularly in speaking, listening and personal development. A significant minority are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. Children do well in response to good quality teaching throughout the Foundation Stage. In the Nursery, staff give high priority to enabling children to enjoy school and to develop their communication and personal skills through practical activities, including play. In Reception, activities motivate children and the development of children's speaking skills underpins all learning. Good teaching ensures the systematic development of children's literacy and numeracy skills through utilising opportunities for purposeful play as well as focused groupwork. However, the work set for more capable children is sometimes too easy. There are good induction procedures for helping children settle when they join the school. Building improvements have enabled the Nursery and Reception classes to work together more closely. Assessment is detailed but information is kept on paper rather than computer, which prevents easy analysis of children's progress over time across the areas of learning. The school is appropriately focusing upon improving assessment for transition across Reception and Year 1.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science by improving the quality of teaching, particularly by consistently matching work to the full range of ability.
- Track pupils' progress more effectively to determine the attainment and achievement of different groups and ensure the impact of teaching is fully evaluated.
- Increase opportunities for middle managers to check teaching and learning so they have a greater impact on raising achievement.

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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## 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?	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	3

### 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	3
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?	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

<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	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	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

30 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Wrotham Road Primary School, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0QF

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I was impressed by your excellent behaviour throughout the day. I enjoyed talking to you, and you helped me to get to know the school in a short time.

Firstly, you need to know your school gives you a sound education and school staff intend to make this better. Here are some good things about your school:

- You behave extremely well and are keen to learn.
- Those of you in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- You have some really good opportunities for art and after-school clubs.
- You take on responsibilities willingly and carry them out properly.
- The teachers and staff take good care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteachers, governors and staff have worked very hard to make sure you have a wonderful school building that is well organised.

Here are the things we are asking the school to change:

- To help you reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science, including spelling, punctuation and handwriting, by making sure your work is never too hard or easy.
- To make sure school leaders and staff keep a better check on how well you and the school are performing.
- To help teachers in charge of subjects to be more involved in raising standards.

You can help your teachers by making sure you continue to work hard at improving your English, mathematics and science.

Thank you again for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector

30 January 2008

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Thank you again for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick  
Lead inspector