

Wateringbury Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118632
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313021
Inspection date	1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Brown
Headteacher	Noreen Vinall
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
School address	147 Bow Road Wateringbury Maidstone ME18 5EA
Telephone number	01622 812199
Fax number	01622 812199

Age group	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: • how well teachers use assessment information to help pupils improve their work • the quality of provision for pupils with learning difficulties • how well senior leaders and governors monitor pupils' progress. Evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, members of staff and governors, observations of teaching and learning, views of parents, scrutiny of pupils' work and school 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 in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Pupils come to this average sized primary school from the village of Wateringbury and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The school has a broadly average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. The headteacher joined the school in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pupils behave well at this satisfactory school. The good relationships they form with members of staff and each other, combined with the good pastoral care they receive, support their outstanding personal development very well.

On entry to the school, most children are working at or beyond the levels expected for this age group. Children in the Reception class gain confidence quickly and make a sound start to their education, although provision for creative and physical development is restricted by a lack of space. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Between Years 1 and 6, teaching is satisfactory with good features, enabling most pupils to make at least satisfactory progress. Progress is best in mathematics because pupils have good opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects such as science and design and technology. In English, pupils do better in reading than in writing. In writing, teachers do not always write specific comments on pupils' work to challenge them to improve quickly, and they do not ensure that pupils swiftly follow up any advice that is given. During whole-class discussions, teachers are good at asking questions, and this supports pupils well in extending their good speaking and listening skills.

Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties. Specific targets and work tailored for individual needs enable these pupils to learn quickly. However, academic guidance is only satisfactory overall because teachers sometimes do not plan lesson activities that are sufficiently tailored to the needs of different ability groups, and when this happens some groups of pupils are not challenged enough and their learning slows. The school has started to improve the availability of information on pupils' progress so that teachers can sharpen up their planning.

Well above average attendance demonstrates that the pupils enjoy school very much and appreciate the good, varied and relevant curriculum. The many enjoyable, purposeful activities capture the pupils' interest and make them very keen to learn. Good use is made of the local community, visits and visitors to expand the pupils' knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 1 remembered a vast number of facts following a visit from the fire brigade. The way the curriculum is used to support pupils' personal development is especially strong, and helps them to lead exceptionally healthy lifestyles and to become safety conscious. For example, pupils have a good awareness of the need to take care when playing near the local railway and river. The school is expanding the satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and information and communication technology skills to support learning in other subjects.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show very good respect towards others and are very tolerant, kind and helpful. They take responsibility very seriously and help each other by becoming reading partners, play leaders and librarians. Most pupils feel safe from bullying at school and are satisfied with the way 'angry moments' between pupils are dealt with. The contribution pupils make to the community is good. They take part in supporting various charities and carry out work such as maintaining the local pear orchard.

Members of staff ensure that procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place. As one pupil said, 'When we have a problem, they sit down with us and sort it out.' The school works exceptionally closely with external agencies such as parents, the church, other schools and health services to support the well-being of all of its pupils.

Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that the school is improving steadily. The new headteacher, senior management team and governors are working together well as a team. They are enthusiastic and committed to improving provision. Recent improvements in mental mathematics and science demonstrate that the school has a sound capacity to improve further. Satisfactory systems for self-evaluation enable leaders to know the school's strengths and areas for development. The school sets challenging targets across the school, although not all pupils achieve them. Senior members of staff and governors are aware that the system they have set up to track pupils' progress is not yet sufficiently complete to ensure that all leaders can monitor pupils' progress and quickly tackle any dips in progress.

Above average standards and outstanding personal development prepare the pupils well for the next stage of their education and later life. Most parents are pleased with the work of the school. Two parents summed up the positive views of many others by writing, 'All my children enjoy school, and fully participate in all activities' and 'Pastoral care is a great strength of the school.' These comments demonstrate what the school is already doing really well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching enables children in the Reception class to make sound progress, and standards are above average when they start in Year 1. Children do especially well in personal development because sensitive members of staff teach them how to develop good manners and to work together well. Consequently, children are happy and feel secure. They are keen to carry out their 'plans' and are confident when trying out new things such as making a home for a hamster from recycled materials. Members of staff are good at managing behaviour and ask well-considered questions to help children plan what they are going to do. The curriculum is restricted owing to a lack of space both indoors and outside. This limits the range of activities that can be available at any one time. For this reason, standards in creative and physical development are lower than in other areas of learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Members of staff keep careful records of the children's progress and senior members of staff have clear plans to improve provision by extending the space available.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Raise the quality of teaching, ensuring that marking is more effective and that lesson activities consistently challenge pupils of all abilities.
- Increase progress in writing by ensuring that pupils follow consistently good quality guidance on how to improve.
- Complete the system for tracking pupils' progress and ensure that all leaders use the resulting information to monitor and rectify dips in progress as soon as they arise.
- Improve opportunities for children in the Reception class to develop creative and physical skills both indoors and outside.

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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

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?	2
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	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

2 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Wateringbury Church of England Primary School, Maidstone ME18 5EA

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for sharing your work with me. I am pleased that you thoroughly enjoy your time at school. I found that it is providing you with a satisfactory education.

- Here are some other points about your school:
- You make satisfactory progress and do especially well in mathematics.
- You behave sensibly and take responsibility well. I was particularly impressed with the way play leaders help younger children.
- Teaching is satisfactory and your teachers help you to enjoy school by making lessons interesting.
- You study a good range of topics and I am pleased that you appreciate that you have 'lots of things to do' at school.
- All adults in school are kind and caring and look after you well.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are beginning to put things in place to make the school better.
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.
- What I have asked your school to do now:
- Make teaching better by marking your work more helpfully, and always giving you work in lessons that is just right for you,
- Improve your writing by showing you how you can do better, and making sure that you follow this advice.
- Improve the way leaders check that you are all making good progress, so they can put things right quickly if you are not.
- Make sure that children in the Reception class have plenty of chances to develop creative and physical skills both indoors and outside.

You can help your teachers by taking notice of their advice on how to improve your writing. I thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge Lead Inspector