

# Hernhill Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118647
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313027
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Figgis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Brenda Windsor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Forstal Hernhill Faversham ME13 9JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 751322
<b>Fax number</b>	01227 752391

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<b>Age group</b>	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 issues. • Standards and pupils' achievements. • The effectiveness of the school's target-setting systems. • The impact of leadership and management in contributing to school improvement. Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of school and nationally published data, pupils' work, teachers' planning and the views of parents, and discussions with pupils, staff and representative governors. 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

This is an average sized primary school, which moved into new buildings four years ago. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has Activemark and Investors in People awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Hernhill CE Primary is a good school. Pupils achieve well and develop exceptionally strong personal skills which will be helpful to them in their future education. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. The views of most parents and carers accurately sum up the school's qualities: 'The school is to be admired; it is friendly whilst professional and comfortable for children.' The school makes good use of its 'ideal setting' and new accommodation. Older pupils in particular have enjoyed the contribution they have made, for example, by influencing decisions about how their classrooms are laid out and planning for more playground facilities. Children have a good start to school in the Reception class. Children are provided with a good curriculum that enables them to learn to make choices, to broaden their knowledge and to become independent. Good use is made of the outside area to extend learning, even in heavy rain. Plans are in place to improve the external environment further to provide more opportunities for imaginative play. Pupils continue to make consistently good progress across the school. From broadly average standards at the end of Reception, pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Since the last inspection, there has been some variation in the Year 6 results, but this reflects the differing abilities of pupils, a number of whom joined the school towards the end of their primary education. The turnover of pupils by the end of Year 6 has declined significantly as all year groups are now full. Results overall are improving faster than nationally. Standards in the national assessments in Year 2 are consistently above the national average, which places the school in a good position to improve the results in the Year 6 tests even further. Pupils take great care and interest in their work and respond well to teachers' high expectations of them, so that their work is of a consistently high standard through the year. The school has been focusing on how to increase the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in English, mathematics and science and the tracking information shows that the school is likely to exceed its increasingly challenging targets this year. The school's successful commitment to pupils with additional needs is seen in the well targeted support and good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from their different starting points. Pupils understand and value the school's 'People Rule', which gives them an excellent understanding of their own feelings and the impact of their actions on others. Adults are good role models for pupils, and this helps pupils to develop and use their interpersonal skills to resolve many issues for themselves. Pupils say that bullying is very rare, and they know exactly who to go to when anything makes them feel uncomfortable. They say one of the most important things about the school is that 'adults take very good care of us and teachers have a nice way of talking to us'. Pupils' impeccable behaviour leads to a very orderly and safe environment where they learn and play together exceptionally well. This helps them to enjoy school a great deal, shown for example, in their high levels of concentration in lessons. Whilst attendance is good, unauthorised absence is a little above average, mainly because the school takes a robust approach in not authorising holidays during term-time in line with locally agreed policy. Pupils enthusiastically undertake responsibilities which make a significant contribution to the school and the wider community. For example, all Year 6 pupils have a designated responsibility, such as leading whole school fund raising, acting as peer mediators, or listening and helping younger pupils to read. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a direct result of what parents describe as the school's 'warm ethos', the close links with the local church, and the very varied extra-curricular programme and rich opportunities provided by the school's revised curriculum. Teaching is good, with teachers using their strong subject knowledge to plan imaginative and interesting topics and

tasks for pupils' learning. Pupils know what helps them to learn well, saying for example, 'The computers and whiteboards help us to learn.' They also talk excitedly about how they learn through visits out of school and through themes such as 'Romans' which give them relevant opportunities to learn and practise important literacy and communication skills as well as gain new knowledge. A topic on 'Health' is extending older pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles, which they happily apply to their choices of food and sport. The residential visit is a highlight for many Year 6 pupils. The new curriculum requires further adjustments to give pupils more opportunities to develop their research skills by posing and resolving more questions for themselves, and to make even better use of recent national guidance. Pupils' academic progress is tracked regularly and action taken quickly if any pupil is seen to be falling behind. Pupils appreciate that extra help is available when it is needed, and believe that their work gives them about the right level of challenge to learn new skills comfortably while keeping learning interesting. Teachers offer encouragement through their marking. Pupils value the conversations they have with their teacher about their work and the class targets displayed in classrooms. However, there is some inconsistency across the school in how teachers relate their marking to pupils' individual targets and opportunities are missed to give pupils a written record of key areas for improvement. Consequently, pupils are not always clear enough about the quality of their work or what they have to do to improve further. Their targets are not always reviewed frequently enough. An undoubted reason for the school's success is the staff's shared commitment to evaluating their own practice and a willingness to learn from best practice elsewhere. New approaches are planned carefully before implementation. The headteacher's calm approach values others' contributions and the future direction is based firmly on taking action to improve standards further. The roles of middle leaders have developed well since the last inspection so that they are a key resource and support colleagues well. Staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and the school has built well on its previous inspection report, giving it the capacity to continue to improve in the future.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents, including those of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are extremely positive about how much their children enjoy school. Many attribute this to the school's family atmosphere where the older children interact well with the youngest. In the last few years, more children join the school with speech and language difficulties than previously when children's attainment on entry was broadly in line with national expectations for their age. Adults know children very well and their needs are assessed quickly. The information is used well to plan an interesting and engaging range of activities so that children make good progress. By the time they join Year 1, they are working within national expectations in all areas of learning. Children are sociable and are confident to express themselves in conversations with adults. A number of new initiatives, including the introduction of 'Sounds Write', are proving effective in developing children's early skills of reading and writing.

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

- Improve the quality of marking and target setting so that all pupils are clear about what they have to do to improve their work.

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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?	2
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	2
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	1

### 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?	2

<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



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

- 1 May 2008 Dear Children Inspection of Hernhill CE Primary School, Faversham, ME13 9JG  
Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I visited recently. I very much enjoyed my visit, particularly having lunch with you and talking to you. You know that you get a good education. These are the things I particularly liked about the school.
- You feel safe and comfortable in school and know that adults listen to you if you have any concerns.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- Your teachers make your work and the classrooms interesting for you.
- You learn a lot in the special 'theme' activities, such as the Health and Romans topics.
- You work hard in lessons and this helps you to do well.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You are very aware of the impact of your actions on one another and try hard never to do anything that would make anyone feel unhappy.
- Many of you, particularly those of you in Year 6, get a lot from taking on responsibilities around the school and this helps the whole school to run smoothly.
- You know how to stay fit and healthy and are lucky to have so many sports clubs to choose from. Your teachers are always trying to make things better and I have asked them to:
- make sure that when they mark your work and set new targets that you know exactly what you have to do to improve. You can help by making sure that you ask for help if you do not understand what to do next. Please thank your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires. I enjoyed reading their comments. I wish everyone at Hernhill CE Primary every success for the future. Yours sincerely Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead inspector



1 May 2008

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- Your teachers make your work and the classrooms interesting for you.
- You learn a lot in the special 'theme' activities, such as the Health and Romans topics.
- You work hard in lessons and this helps you to do well.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You are very aware of the impact of your actions on one another and try hard never to do anything that would make anyone feel unhappy.
- Many of you, particularly those of you in Year 6, get a lot from taking on responsibilities around the school and this helps the whole school to run smoothly.
- You know how to stay fit and healthy and are lucky to have so many sports clubs to choose from.

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- make sure that when they mark your work and set new targets that you know exactly what you have to do to improve.

You can help by making sure that you ask for help if you do not understand what to do next.

Please thank your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires. I enjoyed reading their comments. I wish everyone at Hernhill CE Primary every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings  
Lead inspector