

# Newington Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118649
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313028
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Bassett

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	170
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Parry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacky Darling
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Newington Sittingbourne ME9 7LB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 842300
<b>Fax number</b>	01795 843964

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized primary school draws most of its pupils from its immediate neighbourhood. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number of Traveller children attend the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Over recent months, the school has experienced significant problems in staffing. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 last year had several teachers and at the end of December 2007, the headteacher and deputy headteacher both left the school. At the beginning of January 2008, the headteacher and a deputy headteacher on a temporary contract took up their appointments. The staffing is now stable. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which is steadily overcoming the effects of the severe problems caused by many recent staff changes. This turbulence is now being resolved and the school is becoming more stable because of swift actions taken by the new senior leaders. In the six weeks since her appointment, the headteacher, working closely with the staff, governors and parents, has provided a clear direction for the school's development. As a result, leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. Thorough evaluation of the needs of the pupils and the school has already led to several changes. These are improving the quality of education, especially for the pupils in Years 5 and 6 who experienced most of the detrimental effects of the recent disruptions. Even though the senior staff are still establishing their roles, they have taken effective steps to provide opportunities for these pupils to make up for lost time. The school's capacity to make necessary improvements is currently satisfactory but expanding.

Children enter the Foundation Stage, where the provision is good, with standards below those expected for their age. Many have substantial weaknesses in their language skills. This has been the pattern for several years, including for the pupils currently in Year 6. Since these pupils joined the school, their progress has been erratic. Currently standards are broadly average overall and achievement is satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 where many pupils are not reaching high enough standards. Throughout the rest of the school, up to Year 4, pupils generally make good progress from their time of entry to the school and achieve standards that are in line with the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching and learning are largely satisfactory and there are some good and outstanding lessons. Pupils respond with enthusiasm when teachers present tasks on the interactive whiteboards with video clips and engage them in practical activities, such as bread-making. There are inconsistencies in the way teachers mark pupils' work. Pupils are not given enough guidance to help them understand how they can improve and untidy handwriting is often not corrected. The curriculum is developing satisfactorily and most pupils enjoy their lessons. The school is at an early stage of creating purposeful links between subjects but this is currently more successful in the younger classes, where themes and topics generate great interest.

The care, support and guidance given to all pupils are satisfactory. Although pupils' pastoral development is good, the tracking records to plot each pupil's achievements are not detailed enough to enable teachers to identify those pupils who need additional support to improve the quality of their work. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to gain an awareness of the wide range of beliefs, customs and traditions of other people. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and most behave well. Nevertheless, a small number of pupils in the two oldest classes can be disruptive and often display unacceptable behaviour. The school is very aware of this and is already adopting good strategies to eradicate this problem.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. As a result, good care, support and guidance for all children help them to settle into school routines quickly. Attainment on entry is lower than normally expected for children of this age, particularly in communication, language and literacy development. Good teaching and a well-planned curriculum enable most

children to make good progress by time they enter Year 1. They achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development and reach expectations but in their communication, language and literacy development, their standards are still below expected levels for their age. Standards in numeracy are broadly as expected but very few children exceed the expected levels.

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

- develop better methods for recording and tracking pupils' progress to give teachers a clear idea of what each pupil needs to do in order to reach higher standards, particularly in mathematics in Years 5 and 6
- improve teachers' marking so that it shows pupils clearly what their targets are and what they need to do next to improve their work
- raise pupils' awareness of the diversity of beliefs, customs and traditions of the people living in our multicultural society.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' progress is consistently good throughout Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics and have remained so for several years. This good progress continues through Years 3 and 4. Current standards in Year 6 are lower than those achieved in the national tests in 2007. High staff turnover in Years 5 and 6 has had a detrimental effect on pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, and pupils in both classes have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. However, because of good teaching and concentrated efforts of the leadership and management, pupils' work in Year 6 is steadily improving in all subjects, and standards are currently broadly average in English overall. However, handwriting is often poorly presented and untidy in many pupils' books. The work in information and communication technology (ICT) is broadly as expected and the artwork around the school is above expectations.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Relationships between the pupils and adults in the school are good and as a result, most pupils cooperate well in lessons. Pupils realise the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and know how to remain safe whilst being aware of the need to avoid risks. They accept their responsibilities willingly and make satisfactory contributions to the school and village community. Their preparation for their next school and for their future well-being is satisfactory. The behaviour of most pupils is good and in lessons they are keen to learn. However, there are a small number of older pupils who present unacceptable behaviour and some parents express a concern about these pupils. The school is taking a firm approach to improving their attitudes and in Year 6, this issue is currently managed much better. Endeavours to reduce pupils' absences ensure that attendance is satisfactory but nevertheless, some still take holidays during school time.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers' planning throughout the school is thorough and includes well-designed tasks that cater appropriately for the differing abilities of groups of pupils. However, although tasks meet the needs of most pupils, teachers do not always consistently challenge the more able pupils enough. Teachers throughout the school are developing teaching strategies that stimulate pupils' learning and this is having an influence upon their attitudes to work, particularly in Year 6 where the renewed structure is helping to re-establish standards. There are some good examples of marking that help pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve their work but this good practice is not consistent across the school. Consequently, many pupils do not respond readily to the written comments made by the teachers and many are not aware of what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning satisfactorily but there are occasions when they are not involved directly enough with recording how well pupils are learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is being developed appropriately to take account of pupils' needs and interests. For example, subjects are sometimes linked together to form a stimulating topic, such as the science project in Years 1 and 2. The school is making good use of ICT and the exciting use of programs on the interactive whiteboards enlivens learning. For example, a video clip to show the mask of Tutankhamen in a history lesson in Year 4 was a dramatic way to capture pupils' imagination. However, pupils have only limited access to computers and are not yet able to use ICT effectively as a tool for learning across different subjects. The weekly French lesson enhances the curriculum well but many pupils report that they repeat the 'days of the week' and 'counting to ten' too often. Good provision for out-of-lesson activities, such as sports clubs, instrumental tuition and visits, enhances pupils' personal development effectively.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good and all staff give appropriate attention to pupils' personal development and well-being. All pupils are included in all that the school does. Support for different groups of pupils, such as the pupils with learning difficulties, is good and for those with disabilities it is very good. Traveller children are integrated well in their classes. All reasonable measures are taken to ensure that all pupils stay safe. Support of other services is developing well for those who need it. The academic guidance given to pupils is restricted because there is no whole-school format for easily recording and tracking each pupil's achievements in English, mathematics and other subjects. Teachers cannot quickly identify pupils who are falling behind and pupils are often not made aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Senior leaders and governors have taken immediate crucial steps to improve the school in recent weeks. Since the new headteacher joined the school, she has demonstrated a strong determination to counter the problems caused by staff turbulence and has carried out an accurate evaluation of the work of the school. She is giving a strong steer to moving the school forward and providing additional support and guidance to the pupils and teachers in Years 5 and 6. She has instigated several changes to improve the quality of learning. For example, the re-organisation of classes into single year groups has created a stable environment to counter the effects of the recent staff turbulence. Already this is having a good impact upon improving standards and more challenging targets are now evident for the pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6. Nevertheless, in the short time since the formation of this new leadership and management team, there has been no time to monitor teaching formally or to ensure that a common format for recording and tracking records is established.

Subject leaders for English, mathematics and science are knowledgeable and have a clear understanding of how to raise standards. The new coordinator for special needs has recently enhanced the support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The newly-formed governing body performs its duties satisfactorily and is rapidly developing strategies to support the school and to share in the evaluation of its 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?	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?	3
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?	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	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	2
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

14 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newington Church of England Primary School, Sittingbourne ME97LB

Thank you for helping us when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that your school provides you with satisfactory education and that you do some very exciting things. These are the things that are developing effectively in your school:

- your new headteacher and deputy are settling in quickly and making some good changes to improve your school
- all the staff, and especially those who lead and manage your school, have very clear ideas of how to bring about improvements
- your school is a happy place and you enjoy carrying out your responsibilities
- you enjoy your lessons and you reach the standards you should in most of your work by the end of Year 6, with the exception of mathematics
- most of you have positive attitudes towards each other and you have an understanding of how to keep safe and how to remain healthy
- most of you are polite and nearly all of you behave as you should
- staff care for you and look after you very well
- the teaching is satisfactory overall with good, and sometimes outstanding, lessons in some classes
- the teachers are improving how they link subjects together to make your learning more interesting and meaningful.

There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- develop better records about your progress to help your teachers find out more easily how well you are doing, particularly in mathematics in Years 5 and 6
- improve the teachers' marking of your work so that you understand what your targets are and what you need to do next to improve your work and your handwriting
- help you to grow as better citizens by improving your knowledge of how people who are different from you lead their lives.

Once again, thank you for your cooperation. You can help by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Yours sincerely Graeme Bassett Lead Inspector