

Littlebourne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118657
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313032
Inspection date	23 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	81
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	9
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Coleman
Headteacher	Jacqueline Reed
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Road Littlebourne Canterbury CT3 1XS
Telephone number	01227 721671

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	23 September 2008
Inspection number	313032

Fax number

01227 728669

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Littlebourne is a small village school that includes Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for pupils of statutory school age. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Their difficulties include speech and language problems as well as moderate learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy. The school has received a range of awards, including Healthy Schools and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Littlebourne is a good school. Parents express positive views and rightly say that it is 'a great school where children are well cared for'.

Personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and behave extremely well. There are good procedures to ensure their welfare, health and safety. Pupils feel safe and confident that staff will deal well with any difficulties. Children in the EYFS are well cared for, generally settle well into school routines, and make good progress across all the areas of learning. This good progress continues further up the school. A period of constant staff change and high pupil mobility has contributed to the variation in standards in the recent past, both in the EYFS and at Key Stage 1. However, staffing has now stabilised and this has helped to improve standards, which are broadly average by Year 6.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets set out in their individual plans. Very good relationships are established between adults and pupils, and teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

Teaching is good because most lessons are well planned and resourced. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and this makes learning purposeful and fun. Curricular planning is good and ensures a wide range of opportunities for pupils to progress well in their academic and personal development. Activities such as French, specialist sport and music provided by partnership secondary schools, curricular weeks and a wide range of extra-curricular events make pupils' learning fun. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their involvement in these activities, particularly gymnastics.

The school has established effective assessment systems which are developing pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The monitoring of pupils' progress and the use of this information are developing well and have already had a significant impact on raising standards across the whole school. Marking and the setting of individual targets provide appropriate levels of guidance to ensure personal goals are met.

The headteacher and staff provide strong leadership. The school has developed the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders, and this has particularly led to improvements in mathematics and English. Strongly committed staff have clear action plans to improve provision and achievement, especially in writing, where standards are currently below average throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. This is in contrast to the good progress being made in reading, speaking and listening. Governors are supportive but are restricted in their effectiveness as there are not enough members on the governing body. However, the good leadership and strong team ethos amongst the staff and the consistent raising of standards are demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Although the current group of children entered the EYFS with the skills and understanding expected for their age, this varies from year to year and some start school lacking the skills expected, particularly in speech and language. Children are well cared for, and this enables most to settle well into school routines. Because of the good teaching, curriculum and organisation, most children are actively engaged in purposeful, fun activities and make good progress expected of them from their starting points. Teachers and teaching assistants work

well together to provide children with good support. There is a good balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities, with many children in their early days in Reception already working independently. The majority of children work and play well together, enjoying their learning. As one child reported, 'It is a fun place to be.' The school is appropriately developing its EYFS outside learning areas to complement its well-planned indoor areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made in writing, so that standards are as good as those in reading, speaking and listening.
- Ensure that there is full membership of the governing body so that governors carry out their role more effectively and efficiently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

There has been considerable variation in attainment since the last inspection, exacerbated by periods of staff change and high pupil mobility. The school has worked hard to address these issues, and greater stability has resulted in most pupils now making good progress overall from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. This is particularly the case in reading and in speaking and listening, as demonstrated by the improving results and the number of areas where targets have been met or exceeded, and evident from the good achievement seen in lessons and pupils' work. Although standards overall across the school are broadly average, writing remains a relative weakness. However, attainment is improving both in literacy and numeracy, reflecting the good progress made in raising standards since the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy school, confirming the views held by parents. Exemplary behaviour, good relationships and politeness are features of the school. Many pupils take advantage of the wide range of extra-curricular clubs offered by the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. The school's positive ethos is reflected in many personal development initiatives, such as 'Child of the Week' and achievement assemblies. Pupils contribute to the school in roles of responsibility, as well as the wider community. Members of the school council take their responsibilities very seriously and are actively involved in school life, working hard to improve the environment. Outcomes of their work can be seen in the improvements to the school grounds. Pupils benefit from a developing range of opportunities to learn about racial equality and the culture of others through topics and events such as the school's multicultural week. Pupils' basic skills, particularly in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare them well for the next stage of their education, and their good attitudes and outstanding behaviour ensure a smooth transfer to a variety of local secondary schools. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains only broadly satisfactory as it has been for a number of years, due to the higher than average number of absences in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The content of lessons is matched well to most pupils' interests, abilities and needs. Lessons are well structured and interesting, and teachers show good subject knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn. In the best lessons, learning is fun, varied and exciting, as seen in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson which challenged pupils' investigative thinking skills in exploring shapes. Programmes of work are planned well, providing clear information about what children are expected to learn and when. However, not all teaching consistently provides the highest level of challenge, particularly for some younger pupils. Effective use is made of classroom interactive whiteboards, mobile laptops and classroom computers to enhance teaching and learning throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's creative curriculum is designed well, providing a wide range of activities and opportunities. This is further enriched by visits and visitors which contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Links made with other subjects ensure activities are studied in sufficient depth, and while not fully integrated in all subjects, they are starting to provide further opportunities for writing. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles and staying safe through their involvement in the Healthy School award. They also appreciate the good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, which include sport, ICT, gym, netball, art and a book club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support throughout the school are good. The majority of parents and children view this as a caring school. Highly committed staff provide strong pastoral care whilst paying close attention to pupils' health and safety. Robust procedures help to ensure that pupils are well protected. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development have been strengthened recently by improvements to assessment procedures. While these are not yet fully embedded, they are beginning to give teachers a clearer picture of the progress each pupil makes and to impact on pupils' learning. Although not universal across the school, in the best practice, teachers keep pupils well informed as to how well they are doing and, as a result, most pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led by the headteacher, who has a clarity of vision that is appropriately focused on raising standards. Ably supported by senior staff, she has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The successful introduction of a range of new procedures for monitoring teaching, setting academic targets and assessing pupils' progress has brought about considerable improvements. The leadership team has set appropriately challenging school targets which have started to impact on pupils' achievement. Governors are supportive but

there is not a full complement on the governing body. This limits their effectiveness in holding the school to account. The school is developing provision for global and cultural diversity within its community cohesion policy, and already has good connections with the local community.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

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

24 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Littlebourne CofE Primary School, Canterbury CT3 1XS

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited it recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work. We were very impressed with how hard you work to make your school a happy place.

You go to a good school where most of you make good progress. Your headteacher and staff really care about you and provide lots of interesting extra activities for you, such as school visits, enrichment weeks, sport, French and ICT, to help make learning fun.

You told us you enjoy school and work hard to do your best. You get on well with each other and have good attitudes to both work and play. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and help others to have a happy time at school. We think the quality of teaching you receive is good.

We feel that there are some things that your school could do better. This is because not all pupils are achieving their personal best in writing and there are not enough adults on the school's governing body. We have asked your school to make some improvements to help. These are:

- To improve the progress you make in writing, so that standards are as good as those in reading, speaking and listening;
- To make sure there are enough people on the governing body to help support the school in the things it wants to do better.

I hope all of you will do all you can to ensure that your school continues to improve and that you achieve the best possible results. Your outstanding behaviour and attitudes will help your teachers work on the things they need to do.

Best wishes for the future.

Wendy Forbes Lead Inspector