

# High Halden Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118666
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313037
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 June 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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janet Rymer-Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne-Marie Trustram
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Church Hill High Halden Ashford TN26 3JB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01233 850285
<b>Fax number</b>	01233 850656

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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:

- Attainment on entry to Reception and evenness of pupils' progress from Reception to Year 6.
- Impact of pupil mobility on standards achieved.
- The impact of leadership and management on improving achievement.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, a review of the assessment data the school uses to track children's progress, 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

High Halden School is smaller than most primary schools and serves a mixed population in the local and surrounding rural areas. Most children are White British, although an above average proportion come from Travelling communities. These pupils are mainly Gypsy/Roma, although a small proportion are of Irish heritage. An above average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, many of whom are later entrants to the school. Their needs are mainly speech, literacy and moderate learning difficulties. An above average number of pupils join the school other than at the usual time and this number is very high in some years. For example, in the current Year 2, half of the pupils did not begin in Reception.

The school holds Healthy Schools, Activemark, Travel Plan, Eco Schools Silver and Investors in People awards. The school is a member of the Specialist Schools Trust, holds the ICT Mark and is the ICT Focus School for South-East England. Recently, there have been substantial building improvements.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school, which has some outstanding features. The school has a warm, welcoming and positive atmosphere where pupils feel very secure and want to learn. The safety, well-being, enjoyment and achievement of every pupil are at the centre of the school's work. Consequently, pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, is excellent, and this helps pupils to make the most of their education. They are given a well-rounded education which enables them to achieve well in English and mathematics and excel in information and communication technology (ICT). They are given very strong learning opportunities in music and sport. Pupils' singing is extremely good. Parents are often delighted with the school, and one expressed the views of many in saying, 'High Halden Primary is second to none and is very well managed by the headteacher.'

Pupils achieve well. They enter with below average standards and by Year 6 reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. Children get off to a good start in Reception and standards are broadly average by the time they begin Year 1. Standards are average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing in Year 2, and this represents good progress compared with pupils' starting points. A very high proportion of Year 2 pupils are later entrants to the school and often enter Key Stage 1 with limited communication, literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' progress in reading is excellent in Years 1 and 2. New arrangements for teaching reading and phonics are having an excellent impact on raising achievement.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. There have also been changes to the Year 6 cohort, and a significant number of later entrants joined the school with gaps in their skills and knowledge. The school has robust procedures for helping pupils to 'catch up' and make up lost ground. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from Traveller families are well supported and make good progress. There is particularly strong support for those with language and literacy difficulties. Support staff make a valuable contribution to this.

Pupils' good progress is due to good teaching and learning. Teachers manage pupils very well and capture their interest. Setting arrangements enable teachers to match work more readily to the very wide range of pupils' learning needs. This way of working enables those who need extra challenge to work alongside older pupils, so they are able to work at higher levels, whilst those who struggle are taught smaller learning steps. However, very occasionally, work is rather hard for lower attaining pupils or easy for more capable pupils.

The sustained successful leadership by the headteacher ensures that the focus on raising achievement is always a priority. The strong systems for shared leadership are also particularly important in this smaller school where staff have many responsibilities. Good self-evaluation arrangements, including rigorous assessment systems, have led to the school having an accurate view of its own performance. Teachers' general skills in planning and promoting pupils' learning are systematically evaluated. The school takes all steps to keep teachers' subject knowledge up to date and teachers observe each other and share their expertise, working closely as a team. Their excellent subject knowledge in ICT and their advanced skills in teaching this subject are reasons why ICT standards are so high. Strong specialist teaching in music also raises achievement. The school sets demanding targets and staff evaluate pupils' progress towards these, tackling any underachievement energetically. Governors are an asset and play a key part

in challenging and supporting the school. The substantial building work has been successfully managed and did not distract leaders from their clear focus on raising achievement.

The excellent climate for learning and very strong links with the church and community ensure pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children make excellent contributions to the school and wider community. Older pupils know they have an important role in helping younger pupils to feel safe, secure and happy. Pupils are proud to attend the school, take pride in their work and appearance and are very well mannered. They develop a respect for others' backgrounds and for other cultures and religions. Initiatives such as links with a school in Malawi, and pupils' part in raising money for many charities at home and abroad, enable pupils to develop their understanding of other countries and other people's lives. They work very well with each other and develop economic awareness and enterprise skills. However, the school recognises that pupils' awareness of a wide range of jobs in business and industry is limited. Pupils have a very thorough understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, including diet, hygiene and exercise, and they enjoy the many sporting activities offered to them. Their eco work enables pupils to care for their planet. The school rigorously and successfully promotes good attendance. Close partnership with specialists for Traveller education contributes to the good progress made by these pupils.

The curriculum is broad and is enhanced through a wide range of visits, visitors and clubs. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to use computers to promote learning in other subjects. The very successful links with other schools enrich subjects as well as easing the transfer to their next school.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage is well led, managed and resourced and children get off to a good start to their education. They start school with skills and understanding that vary but, overall, they are below the levels typically expected, especially in communication and personal skills. A substantial minority are very limited in these areas. Staff provide high standards of care and there is a strong focus on developing children's language and personal skills. Children like coming to school because there are plenty of interesting things to do. They make good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is good. Staff work as an effective team to match work to children's wide range of attainment, and a good balance is struck between children learning for themselves and the direct teaching of basic skills by adults. During group writing, close attention is paid to developing children's speaking and thinking skills, but there is not always enough focus on linking reading and writing. Good assessment and record keeping enable close monitoring of children's progress. Outdoor areas are safe and have been greatly improved recently; they are used effectively in the different areas of learning. There are very good links with parents.

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

- Improve the consistency of pupils' good progress by making sure that work is always precisely matched to individual pupils' learning needs.
- Broaden pupils' awareness of the wide range of opportunities in the world of work.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of High Halden Church of England Primary School, Ashford TN26 3JB

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work and play. This letter is to tell you what I found out about your school.

Firstly, you need to know you go to a good school. Your headteacher is doing a really good job of leading you all and all the staff are working hard to make your school even better.

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You are given wonderful opportunities in information and communication technology (ICT) and reach very high standards.
- You have really good opportunities in sport and music. Your singing is great!
- Everyone in the school takes very good care of each other and your excellent behaviour helps to make your school a happy one.
- The staff keep a very careful eye on how you are getting on and make sure that anyone who needs extra help gets it.
- You like coming to a Church of England school and, at the same time, show respect for other people's faiths.
- You know how important it is to eat healthily and you really enjoy sport.

Here are the things I am asking the school to do now.

- Make sure your work is never too easy or too hard.
- Make sure you have more chances to learn more about what adults do in their various jobs.

I hope you will continue to work hard in all you do so you get better and better. I wish you every success in the future.

With very best wishes

Eileen Chadwick Lead Inspector



18 June 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of High Halden Church of England Primary School, Ashford  
TN26 3JB**

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