

# Tenterden Church of England Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118671
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313039
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Lindsay

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	310
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Trustram
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Dodge
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 February 2004
<b>School address</b>	Recreation Ground Road Tenterden TN30 6RA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01580 763717
<b>Fax number</b>	01580 766273

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a relatively large junior school, drawing nearly all its pupils from the neighbouring infant school. The great majority of pupils are White British and come from the town of Tenterden. Fewer pupils than average are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have a learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with other schools. In recent years, the school has experienced several changes of leadership with temporary headteachers and deputy headteachers. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2006 and the deputy headteacher since 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

Tenterden Junior School provides a satisfactory education. There are some stronger features, namely pupils' personal development and wellbeing, the pastoral care they receive and the enrichment activities available to them. The school has also established good links with other schools, outside agencies and parents which are all beneficial to pupils' well-being and learning. Parents have generally positive attitudes to the school. Since the last inspection, there have been several years of unsettled short-term leadership which has led to declining standards and achievement. The current headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is held in high regard by staff, pupils and parents. Several parents commented on how they felt the school had moved forward under his leadership. Although there are still pockets of underachievement it is evident that there are already signs that initiatives such as new tracking systems are beginning to have an impact.

Standards are broadly average but as pupils enter the school in Year 3 with above average levels of ability, historically the progress they make has not kept pace, particularly in writing and in mathematics. Underachievement is being addressed through teachers being supported more in the way they plan and deliver lessons. They have better tools to track progress and identify underachievement. Middle managers are beginning to take more of a leadership role and focus on halting underachievement. Teaching, whilst satisfactory overall, has elements of good and occasionally outstanding practice. The school is working on making sure that there is more consistency such as ensuring lessons go at a cracking pace and that pupils are regularly involved in assessing their own learning. The use of tracking data is beginning to have a positive impact on standards enabling appropriate support to be put in to help pupils achieve as well as they can. Pupils themselves are still not always given enough guidance on how to improve, particularly in mathematics. The school is aware of this and targets are being introduced for mathematics as they have been for literacy. Nevertheless, there is still some inconsistency in how well marking and assessment informs pupils about what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Its development has suffered from many changes of leadership but there is now a focus on developing a more creative curriculum blended with the need to improve standards in writing and mathematics.

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. This results from good levels of pastoral care that have improved recently with the introduction of a greater focus on social and emotional development. Pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well. One parent stated that 'it is a joy to hear my child wanting to go to school'. The good attendance and lack of any exclusions reflect pupils' positive attitudes and enjoyment. The very good range of other activities, aptly described as 'fantastic extras' by one parent, also add to pupils' personal development. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and his senior leadership team have done much to halt the decline in standards and achievement. The new initiatives are beginning to have some effect. Middle managers have embraced their new responsibilities with enthusiasm and their leadership skills are now being developed. Governors are supportive and their greater knowledge now puts them in a position to be more challenging especially in relation to the school's performance.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and in mathematics in all year groups, and particularly for girls in mathematics, by regularly assessing achievement and progress, and ensuring that pupils know and understand their individual targets for improvement.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that best practice which has already been identified is shared in the way time is best used, questioning, marking, and the use of lesson objectives.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and achievement satisfactory. A push to improve standards in writing and alleviate the greater underachievement of boys is beginning to bear fruit. The focus is now on improving standards and achievement in mathematics having identified weaker areas of learning such as mental calculation. However, although the school has noted that girls significantly underperform compared with boys in mathematics the reasons for this have not yet been fully identified. Teachers, armed with more effective tracking tools, are now spotting underachievement. This is beginning to have an impact on progress overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve at least as well as others. They have benefited from a recent overhaul of the special needs provision that has led to more targeted support in groups and in class. More able pupils are now being stretched more and so also now make satisfactory progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils value and care for each other, and develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Their excellent social skills develop through numerous paired and team activities, and they are notably polite, relaxed and confident with adults. Good links are in place with the local community, with use of interesting attractions such as the steam railway. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and are well aware of the needs of others through supporting many local and national charities, and engaging in several recycling projects. Links are being developed with a school in Malawi to widen their understanding of other cultures. They currently have an adequate understanding of ethnic minorities that are largely unrepresented in the local area.

Pupils greatly enjoy school. One pupil stated 'Teachers are really nice to us'. Another said, smilingly, 'They never hold grudges!' Behaviour in lessons and around the school is always at least good, and is often outstanding. They cheerfully accept classroom responsibilities and, in Year 6, have significant roles as house captains. They understand how to be safe in school, reporting that bullying incidents are infrequent, and are quickly resolved. The school council meets regularly. It successfully promotes pupils' views, and has had significant influence on anti-bullying procedures and playground improvements. Pupils understand the requirements for a healthy diet, and take part very enthusiastically in many sporting and exercise activities. Their improving literacy and numeracy skills, and the school's emphasis on computer and social skills, are adequate preparation for secondary education and future life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning while satisfactory, is improving. At the start of each lesson, all teachers explain what pupils are expected to learn. During lessons, some teachers refer back to these objectives and, in closing sessions, lead pupils in reviewing their progress. As this good practice is not universal, the value of some lessons is not assessed and learning is not fully evaluated.

Teachers generally make the best use of lesson time, and fully challenge pupils to improve their work, but this is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers' questioning skills are satisfactory, but confident volunteers are usually selected to answer questions while hesitant pupils look on with varying degrees of understanding. Teachers' marking is satisfactory overall, but too often is limited to ticks, compliments and generalised requests for improvement. Teachers are beginning to use the school's new assessment and tracking systems and, consequently, work planned for pupils is increasingly well matched to their individual needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support in lessons and their achievement is satisfactory.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The satisfactory but improved curriculum ensures there is appropriate coverage in each subject and provides continuity from year to year. The school rightly recognises that there is still some way to go to achieve consistency so that all teachers can build on their pupils' earlier learning. The focus has been quite rightly to improve the provision for literacy and numeracy. These initiatives are beginning to bear fruit in raising standards. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' knowledge has been enhanced by modern hardware and greater emphasis on teaching the necessary skills. Pupils' enjoyment of school is enriched by visits to local places of interest such the River Watch Programme and to an Arts' Day at a local school. Residential trips locally and abroad help develop independence. There are many clubs available to pupils including a wide range of sports and other interesting activities such as arts and crafts and fabric technology.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Pupils benefit from and greatly appreciate the school's good pastoral care and support. A strong emphasis is placed on their welfare, through well-managed systems. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good pastoral support by teaching assistants in classrooms and are fully integrated into the life of the school. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are given group targets in literacy and very recently in numeracy, but are not yet given enough information about how they are progressing towards them. Good tracking systems to follow pupils' progress now enable teachers to target those pupils who would benefit from additional support. Although still in the early stages, there is already some evidence of its impact.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The current headteacher and deputy headteacher already form a strong partnership committed to raising standards and rooting out underachievement. However, having suffered several years of disrupted leadership, there has been much to do in a short time. Nevertheless, a strong vision for the school, sensitively imparted to staff, and a careful management of change has led to a renewed sense of enthusiasm in the school. New initiatives brought in to improve standards have been embraced wholeheartedly and are beginning to impact on achievement. Challenging targets are in place and are used to highlight what pupils are capable of.

The roles of middle managers have been enhanced recently and whilst still developing, there is a clear sense of striving towards a common goal. Well-organised monitoring of teaching by senior leaders has helped teachers improve, although there needs to be more focus on gauging the impact on learning and involving middle managers more. Governors have also improved their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and therefore are now in a position to better challenge the school.

The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is sound. This, coupled with signs of improvement in achievement and standards after several years of decline, gives the school a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	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?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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	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

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tenterden C of E Junior School, Tenterden, TN30 6RA

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, coming into lessons and assembly and having a chat with you about your school. Your school is a satisfactory one that has some good things about it and we can see that it is improving.

Here are some of the things that we found out during our visit to your school:

- The headteacher has a good understanding of what improvements need to be made in the school so that you make better progress. We can see signs that this is having an effect already.
- You all enjoy school and attend regularly. You feel safe and secure thanks to the care that adults take of you.
- You behave well and, because you get on well with each other, you are ready and willing to learn.
- You know how to keep healthy and you can do this through the range of clubs available to you. You have many other opportunities to do fun things like the trip Year 5 went on to Dover Museum.
- The school has good links with your parents and other schools and this helps you learn as well as enjoy life at school.

What we have asked the school to do next:

- Improve your skills in mathematics and in writing. In mathematics, we feel that girls need to be given a bit more help so they do as well as the boys. We think it would help if you had a better idea of what you need to do to improve by teachers using your targets more and writing more in your books.
- Make sure that in all lessons, teachers use questions well, keep the lesson moving quickly, check through the lesson that you remember what it is you should be learning and then ensure at the end that you have all understood.

You can help your school by continuing to work hard and behave well. Thank you again for a very enjoyable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely Joan Lindsay Lead inspector