

Chevening, St Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118715
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313059
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Johnson
Headteacher	Ruth Bowers
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2004
School address	Chevening Road Chipstead Sevenoaks TN13 2SA
Telephone number	01732 452895
Fax number	01732 741044

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues. • Pupils' progress in writing and science. • Pastoral care and pupils' contribution to the community. • The use of assessment information to check pupils' progress. Evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, members of staff and governors, observations of teaching and learning, views of parents, scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. 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

Pupils come to this average sized primary school from the village of Chipstead and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils who take free school meals is well below average. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has permanent 'eco school' status in recognition of its outstanding contribution towards protecting the environment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well at this good school. Members of staff provide excellent care, guidance and support ensuring that pupils' personal development is outstanding and that they are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. Pupils enjoy school immensely and say that 'everyone is friendly' and 'teachers are fair'. They are especially proud of the way they contribute towards looking after the environment. For example, they help the meteorological office to monitor rainfall and put up nest boxes to encourage birds to stay in the area.

Children make a good start in the Reception class and good teaching ensures that this good progress continues in other year groups. Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average overall, although they are higher in reading and mathematics than in writing and science. This is because teachers do not always expect enough from average attaining pupils when they are writing, resulting in some careless errors and untidy work in English. Written work in science does not consistently reflect the pupils' good knowledge. Teachers ask interesting and challenging questions during class discussions and consequently pupils listen carefully and answer clearly. Teaching assistants provide valuable support, especially when helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to make good progress.

Whilst the school sets challenging targets, leaders do not monitor information on pupils' progress rigorously enough to detect any minor dips in progress when they first arise. The school is right in having identified this as an area for development and has improved assessment systems to make this process more straightforward.

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in the way they support others and their excellent knowledge about safe and healthy living. They are conscientious about attending school regularly, behave exceptionally well throughout the school day, cooperate with each other sensibly and are keen to take responsibility. Older pupils are pleased to support Reception children by being their 'buddies'. They raise funds for charity by writing persuasive letters to local businesses for prizes for their photography competition. Pupils enjoyed growing daffodils to give to a special person.

Teachers are successful in making lessons interesting and provide a variety of tasks that are well matched to the pupils' differing needs. They involve pupils in their learning well by explaining what they are to learn clearly, praising good effort and providing written comments on how pupils can improve their work next time. Members of staff ensure that procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and pupils say that they feel safe. Good opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology, reading and numeracy skills contribute well to the good curriculum and the school is right to develop opportunities for pupils to write more purposefully in other subjects. Interesting additional activities, such as visits and visitors, make a very good contribution towards the pupils' personal development and their thorough enjoyment of school. For example, pupils in Year 6 are enthusiastic when describing the value of the team-building activities during their 'enhanced curriculum' week.

Good leadership and management ensure that the school maintains its success and high standards from the time of the last inspection and that it has a good capacity to improve further. Good systems for self-evaluation enable leaders to have a clear understanding of what works well and how the school needs to be improved. Members of staff and governors work exceptionally well with other schools, the church and parents to enhance the pupils' education and the level of care they receive. Most parents are very appreciative of the work of the school.

One parent summed up the views of many others by saying, 'This school is like an extended family and my son loves coming here'. This demonstrates the warm welcome the school provides for all its pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) is good. Almost all children are working at or beyond the level of skills expected of children at this age when they start in the Reception class. Good teaching enables children to learn quickly and to reach above average standards when they start in Year 1. Children make outstanding progress in learning how to become independent because members of staff support them very well in planning their own work. There are good opportunities for children to develop speaking and listening skills and they enjoy explaining what they have done to the rest of the class. Children like taking part in creative activities such as making snakes from recycled materials and role-playing as veterinary surgeons. Children become confident and friendly. The good curriculum includes a wide range of activities inside and outside, although opportunities for writing have a lower profile outside than inside and children do not always form letters correctly. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and members of staff are using assessment information well to help identify and tackle any comparative weaknesses.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make greater use of information on how well pupils are doing to identify, monitor and tackle dips in progress swiftly.
- Raise teachers' expectations for average attaining pupils' written work in English and science.

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?	1
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 ¹ 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?	1

¹ 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

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 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 Chevening, St Botolph's C of E VA Primary School, Sevenoaks TN13 2SA

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for sharing your work with me. I am pleased that you thoroughly enjoy coming to this good school.

- Here are some other points about your school.
- You make good progress, although you could do even better written work.
- You behave very sensibly and take responsibility exceptionally well. I was particularly impressed with the way you look after the environment and act as 'buddies' for children in the Reception Year.
- Teaching is good and your teachers help you to learn quickly by making lessons interesting.
- You study a wide range of worthwhile topics and I am pleased that you learn how to stay safe and healthy.
- All adults in school are kind and caring and look after you exceptionally well.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working together well to make your school even better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.
- What I have asked your school to do now.
- Ensure that you are all learning quickly enough by checking that you are making as much progress as you can.
- Make sure that teachers always expect you to do good writing in English and science.
- How you can help your teachers.
- Make sure you always do your best writing.

I thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn, and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge Lead inspector



19 March 2008

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TN13 2SA**

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How you can help your teachers.

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