

# Lady Boswell's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Sevenoaks

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118721
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313062
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Carpenter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Lacon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Plymouth Drive Sevenoaks TN13 3RW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 452851
<b>Fax number</b>	01732 465069

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated the progress pupils make in science, the academic guidance given to pupils and the impact of school leaders on maintaining and improving standards. The inspector met with pupils and some of the staff and governors. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. In some cases, the school had been unduly modest in its self-evaluation. The inspector otherwise 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 the report.

## Description of the school

This school is a little smaller than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, but a relatively high number have a statement of special educational need, including pupils with visual impairment and some with autism. Lady Boswell's lays claim to having been the country's first state primary school, founded in 1675. It is still supported with funds from its 17th century trust.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. A parent aptly summed up what makes the school so successful in saying, 'My children love the school and have a fantastic time, whilst learning loads too.' The headteacher, leadership team and governors have together ensured that pupils benefit from an exceptionally rich curriculum, within an attractive and very well-resourced site, where talented and enthusiastic youngsters are helped to excel in music, sports and other activities, as well as in more academic subjects. The number and range of after-school and lunchtime clubs are impressive, with almost every pupil taking part in at least one. Pupils also greatly appreciate the regular themed weeks, where they focus on a specific topic, and the many trips. Year 6 found their recent residential trip to be 'awesome'. These many varied activities, and the way teachers 'make our learning fun', contribute to pupils' great enjoyment of school and their outstanding personal development.

Pupils' attendance is excellent and they are exceptionally eager to learn. They love the opportunities they are given to take on responsibilities within the school community, for example as buddies – with Year 6 pupils helping and looking out for those in Reception. They also develop a very strong sense of caring and concern for others in the wider world, as evident in the commitment they have made to supporting a school in Malawi. Pupils feel safe at school because behaviour is excellent and because 'you can always go to a teacher and they will help you if you have a problem'. The school's arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support are good. Welfare arrangements are especially strong, and pupils all know and routinely refer to the targets that they have in English and mathematics. The guidance they receive through marking is more variable, however. Although much is good, giving pupils clear pointers on what they need to do to improve their work, this is not uniform across the school. Sometimes marking includes questions posed to the pupils which remain unanswered.

Regular and rigorous monitoring from school leaders has helped to maintain the consistently high quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Teachers have high expectations and they motivate their pupils to work at a very good pace and with sustained concentration. Although it has not always been the case in science, teachers generally match work carefully to pupils' different capabilities. The cumulative effect of these positive features is that the achievement of pupils of all abilities, including the very able and those with visual impairment and autism, is outstanding. Standards in English and mathematics have been consistently high throughout the school in the years since the last inspection. In the 2007 Year 6 national tests, for example, they were the equivalent of a year ahead of pupils nationally. Results in science have historically lagged behind, however. In 2007, they were only average. School leaders have correctly focused attention on raising standards in science by giving pupils more opportunity to learn through investigation and discovery, and to improve their scientific vocabulary. There are strong signs from pupils' current work, both in the present Year 6 and in other year groups, that this push in science has been successful, with two thirds expected this year to have attained the higher level in the Year 6 tests that were taken last month. Pupils' high standards, especially in their key literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, prepare them very well for their future education and the eventual world of work.

The school's considerable success is due in no small part to its outstanding leadership and management. The leadership team has a generally accurate, if sometimes overly modest, view of how well the school is doing. Actions taken, for example to raise standards in science, have been effective, showing the school's excellent capacity for continued improvement. Governors

contribute very well to this process because they play a very active role in directly monitoring the school's progress against the challenging targets set, for example, for academic achievement. These help to drive school improvement because they are in turn reflected in the performance targets set for school leaders and other staff. Lady Boswell's has developed a good partnership with parents, the vast majority of whom are extremely supportive of the school and of their children's education. Some, however, would like to see further improvements in the already good communication between school and home.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children join the school from a wide range of different pre-school settings and with quite a broad range of capabilities, although overall these are generally above what is expected for their age. They are helped to quickly settle in the Reception class, and high quality teaching ensures that they make good progress in all areas of learning, so that their standards are significantly above average by the start of Year 1. Standards in mathematical development are especially high, but parents are particularly pleased with their children's social development and their growing maturity. One expressed delight that 'from the age of four, my children have used and understood the words perseverance and independence'. Facilities for the Foundation Stage are very good, with a large and well-resourced outside play area. Its use, however, is limited by the lack of any covered area. This means, as Reception children explain, 'We usually have to stay indoors when it rains.'

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

- Ensure that all marking gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their 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>	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	1
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

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

<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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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



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**Annex B**

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

5 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lady Boswell's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Sevenoaks  
TN13 3RW

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. Several of you told me that you thought your school was great. You are right. Lady Boswell's is an outstanding school where you all do very well indeed. The standards you reach in your work are high. It is also good to see that you also develop very well as responsible young people. I was impressed by the number of you that take part in all the clubs on offer and how you go out of your way to help each other. I admired all the vegetables you were growing in your class vegetable boxes. Year 2's onions smelt particularly delicious!

I was struck by how keen you all are to learn and do well. It means you behave very well and your attendance is excellent. You get on well with each other, and the Reception children told me how much they appreciated the help they got from their Year 6 buddies.

The school is very well run and staff take good care of you and help you to feel safe. Your teachers do an excellent job in helping you to learn a lot in lessons, and your targets too are helping you to make such very good progress. Not all of the marking gives you additional help in making your work even better, so that is something that I have asked the school to improve. You can help too by reading your teachers' comments carefully and making sure you answer their questions and follow their advice.

Best wishes, Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector