

Bapchild and Tonge Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118730
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313067
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	194
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	28
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynn Mann
Headteacher	Teresa Homan
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Lane Bapchild Sittingbourne ME9 9NL
Telephone number	01795 424143

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few are in the early stages of learning English. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of one class of Reception children. The school has gained a number of external awards recognising its commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles and environmental awareness.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides a sound education for its pupils. Pastoral care is a strength of the school, and is recognised as such by the vast majority of parents. Pupils and parents alike praise the school's friendly atmosphere. An effective focus on pupils' moral and social development results in good personal development and well-being. This, alongside positive relationships with staff, means pupils really enjoy coming to school, have extremely high levels of attendance, develop good attitudes towards learning and behave well.

Children get a good start in the EYFS and achieve well. Previous underachievement, particularly for the most able in mathematics and science, has been tackled. In Years 1 to 6, all pupils now achieve satisfactorily but do not fully build on this good start made in the EYFS. This is because teaching overall is satisfactory. The school is working to raise the quality of teaching although inconsistencies remain and pupils' progress is better in some lessons and classes than others so they do not build consistently well on their good start. There was a significant dip in standards for Year 6 pupils in 2007 in mathematics and science. This has been overturned and standards in these subjects rose in 2008. The current Year 6 is making satisfactory progress and pupils are on track to achieve above average standards. All teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing, but not all make sufficient use of this information to plan lessons that challenge pupils all the time. Whilst better in English, teachers' marking does not refer sufficiently to the pupils' targets to raise standards further and secure good progress. This prevents achievement from being better than satisfactory and leads to care, guidance and support being satisfactory overall.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets pupils' needs. It has successfully secured improvements in writing since the last inspection. Actions to raise standards and remedy recent underachievement in mathematics and science have been successful. However, opportunities to let pupils build upon what they have learnt in lessons and explain new concepts and ideas are still missed and so pupils' progress could be greater. This also affects pupils' ability to develop systematic enquiry skills in mathematics and science needed to improve their understanding.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and other leaders carry out checks on a regular basis to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although these are not yet sufficiently rigorous to secure consistently good teaching and ensure pupils achieve well in all their learning, they are used successfully to help leaders know where to focus to bring about improvement. Consequently, they have already made changes to address the relative weaknesses in science and mathematics. Given the track record of recent improvement, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the EYFS with skills, knowledge and understanding typical for their age in most areas of learning. However, their competence in problem solving, reasoning and number is lower than typical. Improvements in the effectiveness of the EYFS in recent years are ensuring that overall achievement is now good. By the end of the Reception year, most children have reached an above average level of development compared with levels expected nationally. Children's behaviour is good due to the strong focus on personal development and children

learn to sort out their differences and soon play well together. They also settle very quickly because the Early Years team has good links with the local playgroup and communicates very closely with parents. The children learn well because they are soon at ease with the Reception class adults and thoroughly enjoy the interesting, well-planned activities. These are well balanced, with opportunities to make independent choices as well as those guided appropriately by adults. However, whilst the children enjoy learning outdoors this environment is rather limited and restricts the opportunities staff are able to offer on a daily basis. The Early Years is managed well and checks on how well new strategies and ideas are doing are carried out with increasing rigour. Each child's progress is closely watched from the start, so the school can gauge how well children are doing and pass on accurate information to the Year 1 teacher. Children are safe and secure because staff look after each individual child's needs well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Check the consistency of teaching more rigorously so that assessment and lesson planning help teachers challenge and engage pupils of all levels.
- Provide greater opportunities in mathematics and science for pupils to talk about what they have learnt to help them use and apply their knowledge.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking and their use of pupils' targets so pupils understand what to do next to improve their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children get off to a good start in the EYFS. This means that by the end of the Reception Year last year they reached levels above average for children of this age. They develop particularly well in their personal development skills, though the development of their mathematical and reading skills is less strong. Across the school in Years 1 to 6 the school has not been capitalising on the good start pupils get so their progress is currently satisfactory rather than good. Pupils' achievement in English is stronger than in mathematics and science where fewer pupils reach the higher levels. Although improving, pupils do not generally use their skills and knowledge confidently enough in these subjects. Progress overall is uneven, however, and for some of the oldest pupils there have been periods of underachievement in recent years. This is currently being tackled by the school through the more careful use of information to keep a check on pupils' progress and pupils are now on track to make the expected progress from their starting points. The school's own checks show that whilst standards in Year 6 in 2008 were average, this represented satisfactory progress for this group of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are reflected in their enjoyment of school, outstanding level of attendance and good behaviour. They quickly form relationships with friends and grown-ups, and develop a good understanding of right and wrong. These values and attitudes are fostered well in the EYFS and set the pattern for the rest of their time at the school. Pupils make a good contribution to school life, for example through the school and Eco

councils, whilst older pupils proudly talk about their role as school play activity leaders (PALS) and first aiders.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and is another key factor in their good behaviour and positive relationships. However, pupils' understanding of Britain as a multicultural society, and what it means to live here, is less strong. This, along with pupils' greater involvement in the wider community, is an area the school has identified as being in need of improvement. The importance of leading a healthy lifestyle is well understood and demonstrated by pupils' keen take up of the sporting opportunities on offer. In these, as in other aspects of their school life, they show a good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils' adequate progress in basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), provides a satisfactory foundation for pupils' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The uneven progress of pupils is closely linked to the quality of teaching found throughout the school, which varies between classes and subjects. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. However, lessons do not always engage and motivate all pupils or involve them actively in learning. The result is that the pace drops, pupils become restless and progress slows. Teachers are increasingly effective in using assessment information to group pupils and plan work. In practice this does not occur in all lessons. This means that work is not always adapted closely enough to all pupils' capabilities to enable them to achieve well, particularly in mathematics and science where fewer pupils reach the higher levels. In groups and on a one-to-one basis teaching assistants appropriately support pupils with learning difficulties to make similar progress to other pupils. During the start of lessons, they are less effectively deployed and consequently their impact on pupils' learning is reduced. Marking is inconsistent and teachers' comments do not always make clear to pupils how they can improve their work. The school has identified this themselves as an area for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Across the school, assessment information has recently been used to adapt the curriculum appropriately to provide for the needs of different groups of pupils, including those who find learning difficult and the gifted and talented. Information gained from checking and evaluating pupils' progress is aiding the development of the curriculum in tackling areas of relative weakness. For instance over the last year, the school has reviewed the provision for mathematics and science and increased the amount of investigative work pupils are doing. However, opportunities for pupils to practise and use the skills they have learnt or to express their ideas and demonstrate their understanding are still missed and progress is inconsistent. Although pupils' learning is good in some lessons that are engaging and relevant, this is not yet the norm. Plans to address this through developing greater links between subjects and an exciting curriculum are beginning to take shape. A well-planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education helps to promote pupils' good personal development, whilst the wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended, add to pupils' enjoyment of school. There is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The strength in pupils' care, guidance and support lies in the good pastoral care provided for pupils. A significant majority of parents, who expressed their views in the questionnaires they returned, are supportive of this aspect of the school's work. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are all secure. Pupils feel very safe and secure and are adamant that bullying is not a problem in their school. Support for different groups of pupils, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English, is satisfactory. The pupils' academic guidance and support are satisfactory. In response to the last inspection report, the school implemented appropriate systems to collect information on pupils' attainment and monitor their progress. However, the use of this is still being refined. Consequently, it is now being analysed sufficiently well to identify what needs to be done to ensure pupils do not underachieve and to challenge them to accelerate their progress throughout their time at the school. All pupils have targets, although they are not referred to regularly enough in all classes to raise standards or ensure pupils understand just how their targets will help them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management by the headteacher and other leaders, including governors, are satisfactory. They regularly analyse the school's results and monitor teaching to see where it is most effective and what needs to be improved, so that they have an appropriate understanding of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses. They have identified the need to develop pupils' learning in both mathematics and science. However, although subsequent actions are evaluated, they are not followed up rigorously enough to help improve the consistency of teaching and ensure older pupils build on their good start made in the EYFS. Pupils' good personal development and well-being are strengths because leaders have made this a priority for the school. Whilst pupils are encouraged satisfactorily to play their part in the life of the school and village, leaders are aware of the need to develop community cohesion further to include other cultures and the wider world.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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

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	1
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bapchild and Tonge Church of England Primary School, Sittingbourne, ME9 9NL

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear that you like school and that the adults are kind and look after you well. You all get on well with each other and are good at helping one another, for example through training to be PALS or being part of the school council. We think you are good at knowing how to keep healthy and safe, are polite to adults and behave well.

We think your school is satisfactory. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs and your teachers do what is expected to help you make satisfactory progress in your work, although you do better in English than in mathematics or science. We agree with you that you do best when your teachers plan many interesting things for you to do and get involved in. Your headteacher and senior staff do a suitable job of running your school and know what needs to be done to make your school even better. In order to make learning even better, we have asked the adults at your school to do three things.

- Keep checking to make sure your work is always challenging enough and interesting.
- Help you get better in mathematics and science by giving you more chances to talk about your ideas and what you have learnt.
- Make better use of targets and marking to help you understand how to improve.

You can help by always using the advice teachers give you on how to improve your work. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall Lead inspector