

# Charing Church of England Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118739
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313071
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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.

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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 (total)	105
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	12
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lucy Nutt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	School Road Charing Ashford TN27 0JN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01233 712277

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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**Fax number**

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school is smaller than average. Around a quarter of the pupils come from a range of different minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest minority group is of Romany origin. A relatively high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An above average number of pupils join and leave the school part way through their primary education. The school is currently led and managed by an advisory headteacher seconded by the local authority. She joined the school in September 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching and learning, and the standards and achievement of the pupils.

Charing is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. Standards are too low and not all pupils are making the progress they should. This is because the tracking and assessments made of pupils' progress have lacked rigour. As a result, pupils' work has not been closely matched to their different capabilities. This has had a negative impact most notably on the progress of more able pupils and those who join the school partway through their primary education. It is these pupils, in particular, who have not generally done as well as they should. By contrast, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been helped to make better progress because staff monitor how well they are doing and set out clear 'next steps' to move their learning on. Attempts to involve pupils of all abilities in assessing their own learning have been impeded by the lack of clarity of many of the learning intentions set out at the start of lessons. Too often, these identify the tasks pupils are expected to undertake rather than what they are expected to learn.

Leaders and governors have not always had an accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. This has hindered school improvement, so that Charing is not as effective as it was described in its last inspection report. Initiatives to raise attainment, such as the Intensifying Support Programme (a Government scheme aimed at boosting performance in schools where standards are low), have had little impact because staff have not all known how they should be implemented and followed up. Although it is very early in the term, there are already clear signs that attainment is now improving. Under the sharp guidance of the advisory headteacher and drawing on well-focused support from the local authority, governors and staff now have a much more realistic picture of the school and of the steps needed to secure improvements. They have identified, for example, that staff have been insufficiently involved in leading subjects and sharing in the responsibility for ensuring that pupils make appropriate progress. Several key improvements have already been made, for example, in identifying earlier those pupils who need extra help with their learning and in successfully tackling the shortcomings in marking that were identified by the local authority in a visit last term. Together, these show the school's satisfactory capacity for improvement.

One of the school's key successes is the strength of its partnership with parents and the local community. Parents rightly commend the wide range of clubs and other activities on offer to supplement a curriculum that generally meets pupils' needs, although the school caters less well for its more able pupils. Many parents voice justifiable concerns, however, over the quality of the buildings, whose substantial refurbishment or replacement has not improved since the last inspection. Parents are very supportive and are full of praise for the way in which the school looks after their children, from the Reception Year through to Year 6. One summarised the views of many in commenting that, 'The caring ethos of the school is demonstrated daily'. Another made the point that, 'What the school lacks in modern facilities, it more than makes up for in dedication and integrity of its staff.' Parents are especially pleased with the way in which the school encourages pupils' personal development. It is this that is the main strength of the school. Pupils get on well with each other and behave well. In lessons, they concentrate

hard and are keen to learn. Staff do not fully capitalise on pupils' enthusiasm so that they achieve as well in their academic studies. Improving this already forms part of school leaders' forward planning.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is satisfactorily led and managed, with a particular success in the close partnership that has been forged with parents. In turn, parents recognise that, as one explained, 'The friendly atmosphere has eased my son's transition to school.' With a relatively small number in each year group, there is variation from year to year in the skills and capabilities that children have when they start school. In most years, children start school with skills below those expected for their ages, particularly in speech and language. They make satisfactory progress, and standards at the start of Year 1 are in the broadly average range. Children make good progress in their personal development and well-being, gaining a good understanding, for example, of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise. Children are looked after appropriately and staff make effective use of the resources available to help the children make the progress expected for their age group within the mixed-age class which they share with those in Year 1. School leaders are aware that the current facilities restrict children's choices of outdoor

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

- Raise standards and achievement by ensuring that all teachers carefully monitor pupils' progress and use the information to plan work that is matched to each pupil's different capabilities.
- Develop teachers' subject leadership skills so that initiatives to raise standards and achievement are followed up with rigour.
- Help pupils to make better progress in lessons by making sure they all know what it is they are expected to learn rather than simply what tasks they are supposed to complete.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Standards are too low and pupils have not been achieving as well as they should, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In 2007, the most recent year for which national comparisons are available, the school's results in national tests in English, mathematics and science were the equivalent of a year behind national averages. Unvalidated results were lower in 2008. Able pupils, in particular, make less progress than they should, with very few attaining higher levels in the national tests. Pupils, who join the school part way through their primary education, including some of Romany origin, make less progress than others. The school's results have consistently been a long way below the targets set by school leaders.

Achievement has generally been satisfactory in the infant and EYFS years. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2, but this represents satisfactory progress in relation to these pupils' starting point. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities now achieve satisfactorily because their needs are being identified earlier and they are increasingly benefiting from having the next steps in their learning clearly set out for them.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The school's greatest success has been in the way it has encouraged pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils enjoy school, and this is seen in their attendance, which has improved since the last inspection and is now broadly average. They get on well with each other, so that relationships throughout the school are friendly and based on mutual respect. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Thanks to the regular planned visitors to the school from the emergency services, pupils learn how to keep safe and they feel safe because bullying, which they say used to be a problem, has been eradicated. Pupils have a strong appreciation of the need to keep healthy, and they were keen to ply inspectors with the juicy tomatoes proudly produced by the gardening club. Through Pupil Voice, the school council, pupils get to play a part in the school community, and they participate with enthusiasm in the many village and parish events through the course of the year. Pupils take part in activities, such as fundraising, that contribute to their learning about the world beyond school, but low standards in key literacy and numeracy skills mean not all are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

Pupils have been making inadequate progress in their learning. Class numbers are relatively small and teachers generally know their pupils well, but the tracking of pupils' progress has not been frequent or rigorous enough. This has led to work not being closely enough matched to all pupils' different capabilities. More able pupils and those joining from other schools are those who have mainly underachieved as a result. This is despite the fact that relationships in lessons are good and pupils work with enthusiasm and show that they are keen to learn. Although the pupils like their teachers, they confess that 'you don't have to work as hard as you could, because work is often repeated that you already know'. Although teachers are increasingly trying to involve pupils in assessing their own learning by setting out learning intentions at the start of each lesson, these are very often just an outline of the tasks for the lesson. This means that pupils are much more readily able to explain what they have done in the lesson than what they have actually learnt.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum broadly meets the needs of most pupils, although it caters less well for the more able. It draws well on links with the village community, and parents and pupils alike, point to the wide range of clubs and other enrichment activities, which go beyond what might commonly be expected in a school of this size. The leadership team has pursued a range of different initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness of the curriculum in raising pupils' attainment. Some have been more successful than others. Measures taken to engage pupils better in reading have yielded positive results. For example, following the school's book weeks and activities such as the visit to a bookshop in Ashford, pupils are developing a better interest in books and are increasingly reading for pleasure.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare are robust, and this contributes strongly to pupils' feeling of safety and well-being. Procedures to reduce avoidable absence have yielded success. The school makes good use of its links with outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers have responded well to advice from the local authority on how to raise the effectiveness of marking. Much marking now gives pupils helpful feedback on their work and how to improve it. However, pupils do not all routinely refer to or make use of the targets that they have pasted into the front of their exercise books. This limits the contribution that targets make to improving pupils' progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Although the school's most recently completed self-evaluation form painted an overly rosy picture of Charing's effectiveness, leaders and governors now have a much more accurate picture of where improvements are needed. This has helped them to make good use of the training and support provided by the local authority to begin to move the school forward. There is, for example, recognition that staff have not all been involved enough in leading subjects and in implementing planned improvements.

Where leaders have had greatest success is in encouraging pupils' personal development and in creating a genuine sense of community within the school. They worked hard to encourage community cohesion following the controversial closure last year of a school in a neighbouring village. Meetings held to welcome and involve families of children transferring to Charing helped to smooth their transition. However, opportunities are missed to promote pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own.

The advisory headteacher, staff and governors are aware that the key challenge for the school is to maintain and build on what it has traditionally done well so that pupils' enthusiasm for learning is translated into swifter rates of progress and much greater academic success.



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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
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?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
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	4

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	4
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

<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	4
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	4
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?	Yes

**Annex B**

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

22 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Charing Church of England Aided Primary School, Ashford TN27 0JN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school.

Charing is already beginning to change for the better but it is not yet doing enough to make sure that you all do as well as you should in lessons. We are asking the staff and governors to make some more improvements and we are recommending that the school gets some extra help over the next year.

The school takes good care of you and it is pleasing to see that you are now getting better guidance on how to improve your work. You can help, too, by making sure you know and do your best to achieve your individual targets. You are very enthusiastic about all the clubs on offer. My particular thanks to the gardening club for letting me taste their delicious tomatoes!

It was good to see how well behaved you are and how keen you are to learn and do well. What is disappointing is that you are not all making as much progress as you should. That is because work is not always matched closely enough to your different abilities. For some of you, that means the work is too easy. We have also asked the school to look carefully at the learning intentions that teachers set out at the start of each lesson. Often, these just tell you what you are going to be doing but it would help you more if they showed you clearly what you are expected to learn.

Some of the ideas that have been tried in the past to help you do better have not been as effective as they should because staff have not always fully understood how to use them to best effect. We have therefore asked the school to develop all teachers' management roles so that they are all involved fully in helping you all to achieve your very best.

Yours sincerely Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector