

Hythe Bay CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131020
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	315700
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Litchfield
Headteacher	Carolyn Chivers
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cinque Ports Avenue Hythe CT21 6HS
Telephone number	01303 267802
Fax number	01303 267802

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2007
Inspection number	315700

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school was established in September 2006 as a result of the amalgamation of two previously separate schools. It was relocated into new buildings in September 2007. It incorporates a children's centre for very young children as well as extended provision for school-age pupils before and after the normal school day. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, principally because the school incorporates a unit for up to 20 young children and pupils who have a statement of special educational need for their speech, language and communication difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hythe Bay is a satisfactory school with many good and some outstanding features. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have been remarkably successful over the past year in forging a school with a shared philosophy from the very different schools from which staff and pupils have come. Parents certainly recognise this. They describe how it 'has really moved forward since combining onto one site and bringing facilities for the school and the community up to date'.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage and they make very good progress in their infant years. Standards in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2007 were significantly above average in mathematics and were broadly average in reading and writing. This was an impressive achievement given that 10% of the pupils had a statement of special educational need for their language learning difficulties. It shows just how good the progress is for these pupils, in particular, as a result of the outstanding provision for their needs. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory rather than good because pupils do not sustain their rapid rate of progress through their junior years. Older pupils joined the school with much lower standards than those of pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 and the school has not yet had time to remedy this. Standards in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests last year were below average. This represents satisfactory achievement during their year at Hythe Bay. Pupils made least progress in writing, which had not been an area of focus for the school. School leaders recognise that, though pupils have opportunities to write in many different subjects, not enough emphasis has been placed in presenting work neatly and teachers have not all insisted on technical accuracy in spelling and punctuation.

Pupils and their parents praise what they describe as 'a stimulating curriculum'. They are very proud of the new school buildings. A parent explained that, 'New ways of engaging the children are always being implemented, for example, the Hythe Bay University.' It is innovation such as this, where pupils throughout the school work together every Friday morning on a specific topic or area to research, that have helped to get pupils 'switched on to learning'. In lessons, when working individually or in small groups, pupils work with sustained effort and concentration. Teachers are not all successful, however, at ensuring that pupils listen well to them or to each other. It is this that limits pupils' progress.

Parents strongly value the care and support given to their children, both during the school day and through the extended provision. Many refer to the 'very supportive and caring ethos' which helps children to grow in confidence and self-esteem. One summed up the views of many in saying, 'I have every confidence that my child is happy, safe and well cared for whilst she is at Hythe Bay.' Pupils confirm that behaviour has improved significantly over the past year and that any bullying is quickly sorted out.

The school has come a long way in its first year. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school and they know that it has further to go to raise standards and achievement, particularly for older pupils. The school's many early successes demonstrate its good capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children benefit from a well organised, rich curriculum. This, together with consistently good teaching and learning, results in outstanding provision. Staff understand very well the needs of young children and devise activities that stimulate their curiosity and desire to learn. Parents represented the views of many in explaining, 'Our daughter has had a great first half term. She comes home excited to tell us what she has done at school.' Children take part enthusiastically and they get on very well with each other. Their individual needs are catered for exceptionally well. As a result, children's achievement is exceptional, particularly in their personal development. Because of their low starting points, however, many still fall short of the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year. There are very close links with pre-school providers on site. This particularly pleases parents, who say they are 'pleasantly surprised at the smooth transition from Nursery to Reception'. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved with their children's education through initiatives such as the Learning Journal, which combines photographs and examples of children's work to give them a clear ongoing picture of how well their children are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other when information is being shared with the whole class.
- Consistently reinforce the need for accurate spelling, punctuation and neat presentation for pupils' writing in all subjects.

A small proportion of 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 progress exceptionally well in their Reception Year and make rapid progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards in the Year 2 tests in 2007 were above average in mathematics and average in English, even though this included pupils with language learning difficulties. These pupils make very good progress because they benefit from high quality provision and support.

Results in the Year 6 national tests were below average. They were lower than should be expected in relation to how well the pupils did when they were in Year 2. Even so, this represents satisfactory progress over these pupils' year at Hythe Bay. Pupils did least well in writing because of weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and the presentation of their work.

The progress pupils make in their key literacy and numeracy skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils themselves say how much behaviour has improved over the last year and especially now that the school is in its new buildings. It is good in the playground and in lessons. Pupils greatly enjoy school. They find lessons interesting and describe them as 'fun', particularly when they involve practical activities,

such as mathematics games and role play investigations into the lives of Second World War evacuees. Though they concentrate hard when working individually and in small groups, pupils do not always listen as carefully as they should to their teacher or to each other's contributions in lessons.

Pupils feel really safe in school, and safe from worries of bullying. If any incidents do occur, they are confident that they will be sorted out. They particularly appreciate the 'Beach Hut', which offers a place of refuge for anyone who feels low. 'It makes you happy when you feel sad,' they say. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, and most eat healthily at school. They understand the importance of exercise for good health, and everyone starts the morning with some physical exercise in the school's 'wake up and shake up' session. Pupils contribute satisfactorily to the school community through the school council, and further afield by collecting harvest gifts for the elderly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school's monitoring records show how teaching and learning have improved over the past year. Planning is thorough, with different work being set for different ability pupils, although more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Teachers are good at motivating pupils so that they are eager to learn. For example, Year 6 pupils were excited at the prospect of making a film of the poems they are writing. The pace of lessons is often brisk, but there are occasions when this dips, pupils' attention wanders, and their learning suffers. Some teachers have very effective strategies for encouraging good listening by, for example, praising those who are attentive. Too often, however, pupils do not listen well to their teacher or to each other during whole-class teaching sessions. Particularly for older pupils, this slows their progress because it means that they do not always reinforce at the end of lessons what they have learnt during activities at the start. Teaching assistants are used well. They provide particularly good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a rich curriculum covering all the required elements, plus a lot more! The Foundation Stage curriculum is particularly stimulating and is very well matched to the needs of the children when they first start school. Creative links are often made between subjects, which help make learning fun, but sometimes opportunities are missed to develop writing and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils especially enjoy the way teachers succeed in bringing subjects to life. For example, when studying the Second World War, Year 6 pupils actually went to the railway station wearing their names and carrying 'gas masks'. Good links are forged with other schools and outside agencies to enhance the curriculum, including through the weekly 'Hythe Bay University' sessions. There is a very good range of after-school clubs, offering pupils opportunities to develop academically and socially. Through its extended school provision, Hythe Bay reaches out to parents as well as pupils, enabling families to access a wide variety of activities, including, for example, opportunities for parents to gain GCSEs in English and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care shown to the children is outstanding. Staff know the pupils very well and relationships are very good. This creates a climate in which pupils are helped to grow in confidence and self-esteem. The very high quality of support they receive is a key factor in pupils' good personal development. Procedures for safeguarding all pupils are securely in place. Any pupils who suffer bumps or grazes during the school day are well cared for. There is a strong commitment to supporting pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this is particularly evident in the Speech and Language Unit. Close links with other professionals help to successfully supplement the school's expertise and help these pupils make good and sometimes remarkable progress. Additional support is also given to parents; for example, staff visit children at home before they start in the Reception class and popular family learning programmes are run in the on-site children's centre. Academic guidance is helping to drive improved standards. Pupils know and refer to their targets, and the school's tracking system provides teachers with a very clear picture of how well their pupils are doing. Teachers use this information well to tailor their lesson planning to meet individual pupils' needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has successfully steered the school through the transition of amalgamation of two very different schools and relocation in new buildings. Parents greatly appreciate how far the new school has come in such a short time, describing it as 'going from strength to strength'. Much has been achieved which has already had a positive impact on pupils' personal development, and particularly the behaviour of the older pupils. Rigorous monitoring, including some carried out in partnership with a neighbouring school, has helped to drive improvements in teaching and learning. These are beginning to have an impact in raising academic standards so that older pupils catch up on previous years of underachievement. The school appreciates that there is still further to go and older pupils' progress needs to accelerate before they catch up fully on previously lost ground.

The headteacher has built a strong management team, with one senior manager talking about 'the buzz of the learning environment' which they all feel. It is a feeling that is shared by pupils, parents, governors and all who work in the school, and is a testament to the headteacher's drive and vision. Academic progress is monitored carefully and, where analysis shows weakness, such as with pupils' writing, good strategies are put in place for improvement. Governors have a good knowledge of the school. They are kept well informed and make regular visits. This enables them to challenge and support the school well.

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
---	----------------

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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	2

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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hythe Bay CofE Primary School, Hythe CT21 6HS

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited you. You and your parents told us how proud you are of your school and of the brand new buildings.

We think the school is giving you a sound education, with much that is good and some things that are outstanding. The children who join the Reception Year get off to a cracking start and you make very good progress in the infant classes. Those of you who need extra help with learning make especially good progress because of the very good support you get. You do not all do as well as you should in the junior years because some of you have fallen behind in the past. You are beginning to catch up, but your writing, in particular, is not as good as it could be. We have asked the school to help you with this by making sure you pay attention to correct spelling and punctuation in all your written work, and that you take care to present your work neatly.

Your school is well run and it takes exceptionally good care of you. Your parents really appreciate all the extra things the school offers, including the breakfast and after-school clubs that many of you attend. Some of you told us how behaviour has improved, and especially since you moved into the new school buildings. We were very pleased to hear it. Keep it up! We could see how well you get on with each other and how you concentrate hard and work sensibly together in lessons. We were disappointed, though, that you are not all so good at listening to your teacher and to each other, for example, at the end of lessons when you are talking about what you have learned. We have asked your teachers to find ways of helping you to be better listeners, because we are sure that this will help you to make better progress in future.

We were impressed with all the exciting things you do at school. Your 'wake up and shake up' sessions each morning are certainly helping to keep you fit and, quite literally, on your toes. We were sorry not to be able to see the 'Hythe Bay University' for ourselves, but you told us how it was making learning interesting and fun.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Best wishes Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector

19 October 2007



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hythe Bay CofE Primary School, Hythe CT21 6HS

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited you. You and your parents told us how proud you are of your school and of the brand new buildings.

We think the school is giving you a sound education, with much that is good and some things that are outstanding. The children who join the Reception Year get off to a cracking start and you make very good progress in the infant classes. Those of you who need extra help with learning make especially good progress because of the very good support you get. You do not all do as well as you should in the junior years because some of you have fallen behind in the past. You are beginning to catch up, but your writing, in particular, is not as good as it could be. We have asked the school to help you with this by making sure you pay attention to correct spelling and punctuation in all your written work, and that you take care to present your work neatly.

Your school is well run and it takes exceptionally good care of you. Your parents really appreciate all the extra things the school offers, including the breakfast and after-school clubs that many of you attend. Some of you told us how behaviour has improved, and especially since you moved into the new school buildings. We were very pleased to hear it. Keep it up! We could see how well you get on with each other and how you concentrate hard and work sensibly together in lessons. We were disappointed, though, that you are not all so good at listening to your teacher and to each other, for example, at the end of lessons when you are talking about what you have learned. We have asked your teachers to find ways of helping you to be better listeners, because we are sure that this will help you to make better progress in future.

We were impressed with all the exciting things you do at school. Your 'wake up and shake up' sessions each morning are certainly helping to keep you fit and, quite literally, on your toes. We were sorry not to be able to see the 'Hythe Bay University' for ourselves, but you told us how it was making learning interesting and fun.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Best wishes

Selwyn Ward
Lead Inspector