

# Furley Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132235
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	315981
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Watson

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Ketley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 December 2002
<b>School address</b>	Reed Crescent Kingsnorth Ashford TN23 3PA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01233 501732
<b>Fax number</b>	01233 501797

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Furley Park is a larger than average primary school which has grown rapidly since its opening in 2000. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is low. Most pupils are of White British ethnicity.

The school works closely with a cluster of schools in the local area including a local secondary and a special school. It has gained a number of awards in various areas of the curriculum including Healthy School and Partnership Development Status amongst others.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school in which pupils achieve well. 'Both my children have thrived at Furley Park' is a comment echoed by the majority of parents. Most pupils start school with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, by the end of which most attain the goals set for children of their age. They continue to make good progress, attaining above average results by the end of Year 6, with all groups of pupils achieving well. Science was a relative weakness in 2007 but the school recognised this, and the inclusion of more investigative work is having a positive effect on the progress of current pupils. A combination of initiatives in reading and writing are having a very positive impact on pupils' achievement in both areas. Other subjects, such as history, allow the pupils to use their writing skills to good effect, resulting in interesting and informative pieces of work. The school is developing a more creative curriculum and has productively linked subject leadership to aspects of this. The curriculum is proving beneficial to the pupils in raising their level of enjoyment; 'I really like topics because it connects up the learning' was a comment from an articulate Year 2 pupil on the playground. Much of this enjoyment comes from the way in which staff include pupils in determining the content of the topics, whilst careful planning ensures appropriate skills are also being taught. The pupils are somewhat passive in their learning, and a greater level of involvement in the classroom is needed to improve performance further. Pupils with specific needs are well guided and supported in class. In both the Foundation Stage and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, too little evidence is retained to demonstrate the pupil's progress and to help identify the next steps in their learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives and make a good contribution to the school and local community. The school council has a positive impact on the facilities in the school. Older pupils give good support to the younger ones and those with physical disabilities in the playground. Pupils' behaviour is good, and they report that there is little bullying, but any that does occur is dealt with effectively.

The good teaching is characterised by strong planning, positive relationships and high levels of questioning. Teachers have high expectations and work hard to ensure the pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils understand their targets and work hard to achieve them and then move forward to the next stage of their learning. Staff monitor individual targets well and often refer to them in their marking. Lesson objectives are generally clear and work is carefully planned to ensure it is appropriate for all levels of ability in the class. The curriculum is broad and balanced with a particular strength in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils are very well cared for in all respects. Many parents would support the comment from one that 'all staff put children first and see to their needs'.

A feature of the good leadership and management is the combination of experience, enthusiasm and secure communication between leaders and managers at all levels. All teaching staff are involved in developing and improving the curriculum. The school shares its expertise with others. Aiding adult development is a strong aspect of the school and it is proud of its reputation in this area. The governing body is well organised, well informed and able to support and challenge the school at all levels. The school has good links with many other organisations such as feeder nurseries and one special school. A significant minority of parents feel the school does not communicate with them effectively. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Pupils get a good start at the school. They start with skills and knowledge below the levels expected, especially in their social and emotional development and early writing skills, and most reach the expected levels by the time they leave Foundation Stage. Good relationships and appropriate, interesting activities enable pupils to make good progress, including the more able and those who find learning more difficult.

Pupils are encouraged to contribute their ideas for future topics, promoting their thinking and reasoning as well as developing their ability to make choices. The caring team of adults are knowledgeable about child development and ensure good coverage of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Induction for new entrants is strong and utilises a wide range of information to ensure pupils feel secure in their earliest days in school. The children are well prepared for the transition to a more formal curriculum in Year 1. There is a good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities although some opportunities for the latter in the early morning are lost. Limited evidence is retained to support the assessments made. Foundation Stage staff work with other schools and the local authority to moderate assessments, thus confirming their accuracy.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve communication with all parents.
- Improve the systems for recording the progress of pupils in the Foundation Stage, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children start school with knowledge and skills below the levels expected, especially in their social and emotional development and in aspects of communication, language and literacy. They make good progress in the Reception Year and most attain the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. At the end of Year 6, pupils leave school having attained above average standards in English and mathematics. In 2007, pupils' attainment in science was a little below average but there is good evidence from their work and the school's own assessments that current pupils are attaining higher standards in the subject. Overall, achievement across the school is good. All pupils, including the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve equally well.

Pupils' writing shows increasing accuracy and sophistication, and older pupils can write in a range of styles, and use mathematics to solve problems such as the winner of a throwing game in Year 4. Pupils demonstrate high standards in subjects, including ICT, where they use laptop computers with ease, and in history where pupils write from the perspective of historical characters.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Their attendance is good and the school has good strategies to improve it further. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils appreciate the safe, caring environment that the school

provides. The rewards systems are used effectively to encourage pupils to achieve. Older pupils act as buddies to ensure that younger pupils and those new to the school feel safe and enjoy school life. School council suggestions are valued and those that are appropriate are adopted, such as healthier lunches and the introduction of a fruit trolley. Pupils make a good contribution to and develop better understanding of the wider community in part through excellent links with a school in Africa. These confirm the excellent understanding displayed by all pupils about how to live more healthily. Older pupils enjoy the residential trip to the Isle of Wight, which aids their good understanding of how to keep safe, and appreciate the other activities which aid their transition to the next stage of their education. The development of the skills pupils will need in later life is good. ICT is particularly strong and the recent improvements in reading and writing strengthen their ability to speak articulately and reason maturely.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

'Teachers are caring and funny.' This quote from a pupil sums up the very good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils. Staff make good use of their expertise, and that of visitors to the school, to plan work that generally meets the needs of pupils very well. They use ICT especially well, making good use of the school's excellent resources for this. They are good at using questions to encourage self-confidence and concentration in pupils. On occasions, tasks need more structure to ensure pupils make the best of their learning opportunities, as when dissecting a flower to identify its parts. Teaching assistants provide very good support to the pupils they work with, especially in delivering the successful phonics programme.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad and balanced often providing exciting learning opportunities for pupils, enriched by visitors and out of school visits. The pupils are involved in planning the curriculum, with links between subjects that engage their interest and enthusiasm. Curriculum leaders ensure that this provides a good opportunity to develop skills. The provision for ICT is particularly strong across the school, but especially so in the older year groups where pupils have their own laptops and use a learning platform to share their learning. The opportunity for older pupils to use video conferencing with other schools at home and abroad as well as with organisations such as NASA is an exciting aspect of the curriculum. There are some clubs provided by the school for older pupils, but none for the younger ones apart from breakfast club.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The care given is outstanding and all staff evidently care for the pupils in both pastoral and academic terms. Teachers know what their pupils need to learn and share this information with them, thus target setting is strong and effective, especially in Years 1 to 6. Marking generally helps pupils to move to the next stage of their learning. Learning mentors do an excellent job in removing the barriers to learning for pupils of all ages and abilities. All pupils receive excellent support, although this is not always well documented for those with learning difficulties.

Child protection arrangements are fully in place and the school is robust in meeting all safeguarding requirements.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Parents rightly believe the school cares for its pupils well and that they make good progress. The team of leaders and managers is effective at every level and involve all staff in developing and improving the curriculum opportunities for all pupils. This involvement aids the development of staff expertise and is an important aspect to the progress made by pupils. The school is a learning environment for adults and pupils alike. Data are effectively analysed, shortcomings are identified and appropriate interventions made. The school sets itself demanding targets which are generally achieved. Resources are used well to improve the school. There are various opportunities for parents to visit, often organised by the very effective learning mentors. A significant minority of parents feel that communications, both written and verbal, are poor, although the inspection found little evidence to support this view. The governing body is well informed and effective in challenging and supporting the school.

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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?	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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

### 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

<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>	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**

23 May 2008

■ Dear Pupils

Furley Park Primary School, Ashford, TN23 3PA

We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We want to thank you for spending time with us. We especially enjoyed talking to you as we found you confident, friendly and able to express your views clearly.

Yours is a good school. These are some of the most important things about it.

- You make good progress during your time in school and pupils in Year 6 get good results in tests and assessments. You do particularly well in ICT and history.
- Teaching is good. Teachers make sure the work is not too hard or too easy. Teaching assistants also help you well.
- You know a lot about how to keep healthy by eating the right food. You have a good understanding of right and wrong and of how to keep safe.
- Your behaviour is good and we were particularly impressed with the way you listen to teachers and each other.
- You told us you enjoy school a lot, especially all the different trips and visitors.
- Teachers tell you how to improve your work by setting you targets which you understand well.
- You are well cared for in school and many of you appreciated the help of the learning mentors in this.
- The headteacher, other staff and governors lead the school well. All staff play an important part in making Furley Park a good school.

We have asked the school to make sure they communicate well with your parents and to ensure all the paperwork they have to do shows how well you have learnt. You can help by contributing more in class.

Yours sincerely

Janet Watson Lead inspector