

# Netherfield CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114514
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	326026
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Chadwick

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	120
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brett Lampitt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Barbara Gill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 December 2005
<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>	Darvel Down Netherfield Battle TN33 9QF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 838323
<b>Fax number</b>	01424 838323

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The evenness of good achievement across the school and impact of mobility on standards attained.
- The extent of good and better teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement.
- The impact of leadership and management on the initiatives to improve pupils' achievement.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, a review of the assessment data the school uses to track pupils' progress, and analysis of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors 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 this report.

## Description of the school

Netherfield is smaller than most primary schools. It serves a mixed population from the local and outlying villages as well as from further afield. Most children are White British. An above average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including the ones with statements of needs. These are mainly concerned with speech, physical, emotional, and literacy learning difficulties. A high proportion of pupils join the school other than at the usual time; more than one third of the current Year 6 began at the school in Years 3 to 6. The 18 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 6 are taught in single age classes. The other three classes contain two age groups.

The school has gained a number of awards reflecting its commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles, sport, creative work and preventing bullying. The school provides a daily before-school breakfast club for pupils in Reception through to Year 6. There is also a pre-school in the same building but this is separately managed.

## 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. It has some outstanding features. Pupils achieve well and from the minute they set foot in the school, they are nurtured and receive exceptional levels of care. This is a significant reason why their personal development, including their behaviour, is outstanding and pupils feel extremely safe and well looked after. The excellent curriculum caters for a wide range of interests and talents and stimulates pupils' love of learning. It enables pupils to achieve well in English, mathematics and science, and to excel in art and design. An excellent international education activity programme encourages pupils' keen awareness of life beyond their own environment. They have very strong learning opportunities in music, drama and sport. The school is still improving under the very good leadership of the headteacher. She is innovative in her approach to school improvement and promotes close staff teamwork so they are keen to try out new ideas and constantly improve. Parents justifiably hold the school in high regard. As one parent commented, 'My child is very happy at the school where we feel she is making very good progress. We would not hesitate to recommend this school to others.' From starting points that are similar to those seen in most schools, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and standards on entry to Year 1 are generally above average, except in writing, where they are average. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 have recently improved and pupils' progress accelerated because previous performance has been rigorously reviewed and there have been improvements in the quality of teaching. The school recognises that a further rise in expectations is necessary as these pupils move through the school.

Good progress continues in Years 3 to 6. Standards are generally above average. They are, however, average in English, mathematics and science for the current Year 6, although pupils achieve well compared with their starting points. There was a high number of later entrants for this year group and pupils often entered Years 3 to 6 with gaps in their skills and knowledge or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because there are robust and effective programmes for helping these and any pupils who have previously underachieved to catch up.

Strong senior leadership is key to pupils' good achievement. Good arrangements for self-evaluation, including efficient assessment systems, enable the school to successfully evaluate strengths and weaknesses in its performance. Staff are empowered to play a full part in raising achievement and this is particularly important in a small school where each one has many responsibilities. They are given strong professional development opportunities and share their knowledge so subject expertise is kept up to date. Teachers are increasingly adept at measuring the impact of their own teaching on the progress pupils make towards their demanding targets. Governance is good. Governors are developing their capacity to challenge the school well under the knowledgeable leadership of the chair. However, the school improvement plan does not show enough precise targets for raising attainment for different groups. This limits the ease with which staff and governors can evaluate the impact of initiatives on raising achievement.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Staff have high expectations for the pupils and expect them to achieve well both socially and academically. They manage pupils well and lessons are very interesting. Very positive teaching in Year 6 accelerates pupils' progress. However, in a minority of lessons work is not fully matched to the wide range of attainment and then lower

attaining or more capable pupils' progress occasionally slows. Teachers' marking does not always sufficiently inform pupils what must be improved, for example in spelling or punctuation. The excellent curriculum is planned so that one subject enriches another. Parents and pupils comment on how much pupils enjoy the theme-based curriculum. This enables pupils to see links between different aspects of their learning and to develop their decision making, problem solving and enterprise skills extremely well. Art and design and information and communication technology (ICT) are used particularly well to underpin learning in other subjects. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the exceptional enrichment activities such as after-school clubs and the visits, visitors and video links abroad which bring the curriculum alive. Pupils develop a very good understanding of how regular exercise, a healthy diet and plenty of fresh air help their bodies grow strong. The breakfast club supports working parents well and gives a good start to the day.

Strong support from the local church and excellent partnerships with parents, the community and other schools help to promote pupils' exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school strives to reach out to all different groups and this is particularly effective in promoting pupils' local and global awareness. It is currently extending pupils' understanding of multicultural Britain through links with an urban school in another part of the UK. The school works very closely and effectively with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those later entrants to the school. Pupils have a very good sense of responsibility in respect of caring for others, their school and local environment through engaging in charity work and ecological activities, such as litter picking, recycling and gardening. The thriving school council enables pupils to have a say in improving the school. The school rigorously promotes pupils' good attendance.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Close links with pre-schools and parents ensure that children settle in well. Children arrive with a wide range of skills. Overall, their attainment on entry is typical for their age, although below that expected in their writing. They achieve well in a stimulating and colourful learning environment. By the time they leave they reach above average standards, except in writing, where they are average. Assessment information indicated some underachievement in the past in both literacy and numeracy but children's attainment has substantially improved over the past two years through improvements to teaching, which is now typically good. Well-trained and qualified staff ensure that routines are well established and that children are exceptionally well cared for. There is a careful balance between purposeful play and adult-led tasks. However, opportunities are occasionally missed to encourage children in reading during whole-class literacy activities. Adults plan a wide range of worthwhile and stimulating learning activities indoors and outside. Children are given extremely good opportunities to develop their imagination through role play in the 'Fairy Tale Castle' and their creativity through art and design. Children in the breakfast club are very well cared for and enjoy suitable activities whilst waiting for school to start. Assessment is good and the Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed.

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

- Ensure that teachers accurately match activities to pupils' ability levels to improve their progress and that teachers' marking enables pupils to improve their own work.

- Sharpen the targets on the school improvement plan so staff and governors can more easily evaluate the impact of initiatives on raising attainment.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

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

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

4 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Netherfield C of E Primary School, Battle TN33 9QF

I am writing to say thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school recently. You certainly seem to enjoy school and it was good to hear about all the extra activities in which you are involved. Your views are important, as you are the school's customers.

You said your school is a good one and we agree. Here are some good things about your school.

- You make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Those of you in the Reception class make a good start and have plenty of interesting things to do both indoors and outside.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are a credit to your school. This helps to make your school a happy one.
- You very much enjoy taking responsibility and making decisions and develop your enterprise skills really well.
- You take good very care of your school and local area so it keeps tidy.
- Your curriculum is excellent and gives you really good opportunities for art, music, learning about other countries and for after-school clubs.
- All adults take superb care of you and ensure that you are safe.
- Your headteacher leads you all very well and teachers and school governors are working hard to make the school even better.

This is what we are asking the school to improve.

- Make sure your work is never too hard or too easy and teachers' marking always tells you how you can do better.
- Set clearer targets in the school improvement plan so school staff and governors can more easily check how well they are improving your progress.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and continue to work hard in all you do.

Yours faithfully

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector