

# Cecil Road Primary and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 118258             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Kent               |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 326795             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 27–28 January 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Gavin Jones        |

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>  | All-through                         |
| <b>School category</b>   | Community                           |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 3–11                                |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed                               |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |                                     |
| School (total)   | 452                                 |
| 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>   | Grant Reeves                        |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Andrew Sparks                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 1 January 2006                      |
| <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>  | Cecil Road<br>Gravesend<br>DA11 7BT |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 01474 534544                        |

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| <b>Age group</b>         | 3–11               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 27–28 January 2009 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Cecil Road is a larger than average primary school. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has been extended with a new nursery facility. Eighty-one children attend, on a part-time basis, nearly all of whom transfer into the school. A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with many speaking a first language other than English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, as is the number of pupils with statements for their special needs. There have been some changes to staff recently, including at middle management level.

## 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 significant strengths in pupils' personal development and the school's care, guidance and support. Parents are almost universal in their praise for the school. 'Children are the number one priority,' writes one parent. Children enter with skills and abilities well below those for children of their age. Through effective teaching, pupils make good progress across the school and reach average standards by the time they leave. This exemplifies their good achievement. Teachers plan their lessons well and deploy their teaching assistants effectively to achieve maximum impact. They are often used to support pupils with learning difficulties and those who would otherwise make slower progress. Parents are very appreciative of the school's good support for these pupils, who therefore achieve well. Indeed, one parent notes that there is 'a high standard of teaching and care' in the school. At the same time, the large group of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds receive close support in improving their English, and also make good progress in their learning. A significant minority of boys enter the school with a lower level of skills than girls. The school is aware of this issue and puts in place a number of strategies to support their progress. The curriculum for example, has been adapted to support boys. By the end of pupils' time in school, any gender differences are minimised. The curriculum is good, with outstanding enrichment opportunities for all. Alongside the good progress made by all groups of pupils, their personal development is excellent as a result of outstanding care, guidance and support. Pupils feel safe and thoroughly enjoy school. Their behaviour is exemplary and their very positive attitudes support their work in class.

Leadership and management are good. It is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported by able senior managers, which is the driving force behind the school. These leaders are regularly looking for ways to improve provision still further. New members of the school's middle management group are still coming to terms with their roles and responsibilities. The school recognises the need for this group to receive further support, not least to be able to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects in order to improve both teaching and standards. Whilst teaching is good, it is still inconsistent in quality, thus inhibiting the potential for accelerating progress further and reaching even higher standards. Community cohesion is promoted well, although global links and awareness are rather more confined to curriculum topics. Governors give good support to the school and appear knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Skills on entry to the Nursery are well below those expected for this age. This is especially so for many children in language and communication skills and in personal and social development. In addition, a significant number of children are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Children make a good start in the very recently completed Nursery. Children are eager to learn. Good progress in the Nursery continues into the Reception classes, bringing standards to broadly average levels when they enter Year 1, although with weaknesses still remaining in communication and language. Planning is detailed and the curriculum fully embraces Early Years Foundation Stage principles. As a result, teaching is good. Although the progress of boys has been noted as a concern and strategies are in place to support their progress, they still leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with standards below those of girls, especially in language and literacy skills.

The outside area for learning in the Nursery is stimulating, well resourced and utilised by the staff to good effect. The outside area for the Reception classes is unavoidably small and less challenging and interesting, although equally well used. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed, with staff evaluating what they do and identifying ways in which they might improve. Welfare arrangements are good, as are links with parents. Parents are supportive. They feel the new Nursery is a 'welcoming and secure environment'. The school plans to strengthen links with local organisations and similar school settings, in order to enrich children's learning opportunities.

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

- Secure consistently good or better teaching and learning, in order to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Ensure all subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects to help raise standards.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Despite entering school with skills and abilities well below the levels expected for this age, children make good progress across the EYFS. In Years 1 to 6, pupils progress well, including the large number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. By the time pupils reach Year 6, standards are broadly average. Pupils write in a range of genres and their speaking and listening skills are good. Improvements to mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) mean that standards in these subjects are now broadly average. For example, there is good coverage of number work, resulting in an above average proportion of pupils achieving higher than national expectations in this subject in the most recent national tests. Pupils are learning new ICT skills and putting them to good use in their topic work. Pupils whose home language is not English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as their needs are identified early and support is well coordinated.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and take great delight in learning. 'I've never had a day when I have thought I don't want to go to school,' said one pupil. Because they very quickly gain an understanding of right and wrong, they develop excellent behaviour in lessons, at play and at lunchtime. These qualities support their social and moral development extremely well and equally give much support to their learning. Awareness of deeper issues is keen, fostered in assemblies, art and poetry and discussions in class. Pupils have a strong awareness of their place in a multicultural society, showing respect for each other's background and cultures. They explain very confidently the dangers of drugs and the positive effect of a healthy diet. When asked if they felt safe at school, pupils were insistent that they did. They show much responsibility towards the school and its buildings and take on such tasks as members of the school council, play leaders and 'buddies'. A small group of Year 6 children were spending playtimes teaching younger children playground games and explained happily that they had been play leaders for two years and 'loved it'. Pupils say that such activities as the school's version of 'The Dragon's Den' help prepare them for life after school. This is also one of the projects which help the school raise money for good causes linked with the local community.

Most pupils have good attendance, and just a few families take their children out of the country for extended periods to visit their distant families. The school has done all it can to improve this situation.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good, but with some variability across the school. Typically, pupils enjoy their lessons. Good quality planning, with clearly defined outcomes, ensures a constant approach through the school. Activities are challenging for all groups within classes, with extension activities often available for the most able. Lessons are lively and well paced although, on occasions, too much time is given to introductions or adults speak for too long. Where this happens, time available for activities is much reduced, so that progress is satisfactory rather than good. Teaching assistants are well deployed, and well briefed and give good support to lower attaining pupils, for example, so that these pupils make similar progress to their classmates. Teachers assess knowledge and understanding through skilful questioning and their relationships with pupils are very good. Outstanding behaviour allows work to be carried out in pairs, groups and alone. The school recognises that if standards and progress are to be increased, good and better teaching needs to be more consistent.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well, and in many areas it has been successfully adapted to support the progress of boys. The school has gained several curriculum awards, including one for sport. Planning is interesting and relevant, while also focusing closely on literacy and numeracy. The new ICT suite provides a very good base for pupils to learn new skills, with further opportunities to put these into practice in their topic work. Not as much use is made of the same skills in their work in literacy, numeracy and science. Themed weeks add further interest to the curriculum. Visits to the Golden Hynde, art galleries and castles provide much good first-hand experiences for pupils. At the same time, residential visits for adventurous activities and sampling the French way of life not only provide interest and opportunities to extend pupils' skills, but also give good support to their personal development. Club activities are carried out at lunchtime and after school, covering an extensive range of sport, art, music and general interest activities.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding care, guidance and support given to pupils provide an extremely firm foundation of support for pupils, helping them to make good progress and increase academic standards. The routines of school life are well understood and create a very orderly and safe environment in which pupils say they feel very safe. For example, the school's safeguarding policies and actions are rigorous. Information about academic performance is very well collated and used effectively to provide pupils with clear guidance through tracking, assessments and target setting. Staff have a clear picture of child protection issues and the school site is secure, all of which is very much appreciated by parents. Those responsible for supporting the needs of the school's most vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those

learning to speak English as an additional language work extremely hard and very effectively to support pupils and their families. Particularly exciting is the school's Intranet site through which pupils can access homework and share work with their parents, giving further support to their learning. Links with outside agencies are very strong and the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress are robust and link closely to target setting for next steps in learning. Marking is carried out very regularly and often helps pupils to see what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good overall leadership, prompted by the vision and determination of the headteacher, has prompted such developments as the new Early Years Centre and, importantly, has secured steady improvement in standards over time. The strong senior leadership team has a clear view of the school's priorities for improvement, with focused attention on gender differences, community cohesion and further developments in Early Years Foundation Stage provision. It has also noted the need for further development of middle managers, particularly so that they can play a full part in monitoring the school's effectiveness and securing further improvement, especially to teaching and learning. The school has made good use of challenging targets in order to raise standards incrementally year on year.

The school's caring and supportive ethos promotes equal opportunities well and by the end of Year 6 both boys and girls achieve equally well. The school's contribution to the community is good, with an effective strategy at both local and national levels, helping pupils understand others and value diversity. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. In order to increase their effectiveness, they have recently reviewed some of their practices, especially those of monitoring the school in action. As these are still comparatively new they have not yet had time to be fully implemented.



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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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 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?                          | 2 |
| 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   | 3 |
| 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 |

<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                                    | 2 |
| 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? | 2 |
| 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**

29 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cecil Road Primary and Nursery School, Gravesend DA11 7BT

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome when we visited your school. We were pleased to see how happy you were at school and how much you enjoyed being there.

Cecil Road is a good school and you and your parents know this to be the case. Children get off to a good start in the new Nursery and the Reception classes. Teaching is good in most classes and, because of your excellent attitudes to work, you make good progress and achieve well. You were able to tell us about how to eat healthily and of the dangers of taking drugs. You feel very safe in school because you are extremely well looked after, and your parents agree with this. Those of you who need extra help and support with your work receive it from a range of adults. As a result you make good progress too.

There are an amazing amount of extra elements added to the curriculum with visits, visitors, residential visits and numerous club activities out of school time.

All the staff and governors lead the school well. We have asked the school to make sure that lessons are always well taught. We have also asked it to help teachers who look after subjects to be given opportunities to check that the school is doing everything it can to help you make even more progress in your work and raise standards even higher than they are now.

We would like all of you to attend school regularly, especially those who have long holidays in term time, because it is very hard to catch up on work you have missed.

With best wishes

Gavin Jones

Lead Inspector