

Paddock Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118270
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326796
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	572
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Parkes
Headteacher	Michael Olley
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Old Kent Road Paddock Wood Tonbridge TN12 6JE
Telephone number	01892 833654
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all the pupils at this very large school are from families of White British heritage. Other pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage at the start of the school year by entering one of three Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Paddock Wood is satisfactory. However, it is an improving school, where the good quality of the displays provides an insight into a number of the school's strong features, particularly pupils' performance, sporting and creative skills. Pupils' learning experiences successfully nurture their skills in music and physical education, and promote creativity and quality in art and design. This celebration of achievement shows the value the school places on each pupil, whatever their ability, and reflects the school's good quality pastoral care.

The headteacher provides the school with resourceful leadership and a determination to raise standards. Responsibilities within the leadership team have been revised to strengthen monitoring roles and help identify areas for improvement, although their implementation is at a very early stage. The structure of the governing body is also under review to help members find out in more detail how well the school is performing and hold it to account. Achievement is satisfactory, but a number of initiatives have been introduced in mathematics and in English, particularly reading, which have already led to improvements to the rate of progress and pupils' performance in these subjects. The school is also looking to improve the rate of progress made by pupils in science and writing by focusing on weaknesses, such as the use of subject-specific vocabulary in science, and by increasing the opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. Pupils have positive attitudes and say that they enjoy school. These factors make an important contribution to their progress, particularly in good lessons, although such lessons have yet to have a full impact on raising standards in all subjects.

Standards are broadly average by Year 6. Children start in Reception with a range of knowledge and skills that is usual for their age, although their skill levels vary substantially from year to year. These children make good progress and are well prepared for entry into Year 1. Achievement is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, with good progress in aspects of English and mathematics. This uneven picture of achievement reflects the variation in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall. Some lessons capture pupils' interest and motivate them with stimulating and well paced activities. On occasions, however, not all pupils are fully involved because activities do not demand enough of them. As a result, a very small number of pupils become distracted and inattentive. The use of worksheets, particularly in science, inhibits progress and provides few opportunities for pupils to develop their reporting skills and use of key vocabulary.

Strong pastoral support has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. This is evident in their mature and helpful approach, politeness and good behaviour. Pupils know a lot about keeping healthy and safe. Good attention is given to meeting the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to their learning in Reception, where they benefit from a spacious, stimulating and positive learning environment. As one parent wrote, reflecting a typical view, 'I have seen my daughter's confidence grow.'

Children make good progress from their starting points and reach broadly average standards. As a result of good teaching, they are well prepared for their entry into Year 1. The well planned curriculum ensures that children benefit from using covered and outdoor areas. Activities

include a good mixture of teacher-led tasks alongside opportunities for children to explore and investigate for themselves, so gaining confidence in their own abilities. Many activities encourage thinking and reasoning, with the help of creative stories and the use of different shapes to help children with problem solving. There are many opportunities for children to play together, work cooperatively within small groups, and to learn how to behave. These strategies successfully promote children's personal and social development and their interest in learning. Children's attitudes are good and they delight in organising themselves and showing what they can do.

Good leadership and management ensure that assessment information is used very well by staff to identify particular educational needs. Close monitoring of how children are learning also makes certain that activities build positively on what they already know and can do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunity to consolidate and develop their writing skills across subjects and focus particularly on the use of subject- specific vocabulary in science to raise standards.
- Ensure that teaching engages and challenges pupils at all times in lessons.
- Strengthen the monitoring roles of the leadership team.

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

Standards are broadly average in English and mathematics by Year 6. Below average standards in science are the result of past underachievement in this subject, which the school is tackling. From starting in the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. This picture represents satisfactory achievement.

Pupils in Year 6 are on track to exceed their challenging targets in mathematics, but not for English, where writing remains a relative weakness when compared with reading. The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1, and in some classes during Key Stage 2, is good and at a more rapid rate than in the past due to the well-targeted support. While progress in science and writing is satisfactory, it has not improved as well as in mathematics and in reading. The school recognises the urgency to ensure that all pupils reach at least their expected levels in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school because they like the practical activities and the opportunities to take responsibility in helping to run the school. Some concerns regarding behaviour were expressed by a small number of parents. However, strong moral and social development is demonstrated in the good behaviour of the majority of pupils. Respect and consideration, which are central to the school's values, are reflected in the caring approach taken by pupils, who get on well with each other. Pupils thoroughly enjoy opportunities for practical activities in, for example, music and sport. Take up of other out-of-school activities is also very good and pupils enjoy participating in additional activities.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and a very strong awareness of how to stay healthy. They are clear about what constitutes a healthy diet. Their attitudes and efforts are recognised by the Healthy School award and the Activemark award for sport. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in above average attendance. The school council provides pupils with good opportunities to represent the views of others and help the school make decisions regarding playground equipment, for example.

Pupils also make significant contributions to the wider community through raising funds for national and international charities, including a project with Tanzania that encourages the sharing of resources. Pupils' strong personal skills are beneficial qualities for the future, and their improving skills in literacy and numeracy provide a satisfactory foundation for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching varies a good deal. Strengths in the teaching lie in the collaborative approach taken by staff, the attention that is given to individual pupils, whatever their needs or abilities, and the range of interesting and motivating activities. Teachers and their assistants, working effectively within teams, provide well focused support for small groups. However, teaching assistants are not always used as effectively as they could be at the start of lessons. Pupils make particularly good gains in their learning when memorable activities capture their imagination. However, on occasions when introductions are too long and teachers spend too much time talking, pupils are not given enough to challenge them early in the lessons. As a result, some pupils are distracted, and one or two become inattentive and fidgety.

The effective use of learning targets and success criteria extends pupils' knowledge and skills and involves them in learning. Teachers use marking effectively to provide pointers for improvement. In lessons, pupils can explain their tasks with confidence and how they are going to improve. Information and communication technology (ICT), including computerised whiteboards, is used effectively to engage pupils and give them a broad range of interesting learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a sound balance between basic skills in literacy and numeracy and the good development of pupils' performance and creative skills in subjects such as physical education and music. One parent typically commented: 'The work on singing that has been done this year is a credit to the school.' The teaching of French adds a further positive dimension. The focus on literacy and numeracy skills reflects the school's priorities and it has been particularly successful in raising achievement and lifting standards in mathematics and reading. However, the school knows it still has more to do to boost pupils' writing and overcome significant weaknesses in scientific skills. ICT is used effectively to support learning across the curriculum.

The very good range of out-of-school activities, including a residential trip for pupils in Year 5, is much enjoyed by pupils. The school makes very effective use of visits and visitors, including a theatre group and community representatives, to enrich pupils' experiences and extend their

learning on topics such as recycling. Links have also been established with local schools to provide further challenges for the most able pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Its caring ethos provides a strong foundation for the school's work and gives rise to good relationships between pupils and staff and among the pupils. Arrangements to safeguard and protect pupils are firmly established. With the help of staff who liaise between school and families, the school has been resolute in introducing different strategies to raise attendance, and these proved to be successful.

Staff know the pupils well and academic guidance is much improved. Assessment procedures provide the school with detailed information on each pupil's stage of learning. Marking is supportive and helps pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good quality care and attention, particularly through the help of support staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Initiatives introduced by school leaders have brought about a number of improvements, although the school recognises that it has further to go to lift academic performance. However, the school has already successfully created an ethos where pupils' personal development features strongly. The large majority of parents are pleased with most aspects of the school's work and, as one parent wrote, 'I feel that the whole well-being of my child is being considered and that is why she is happy to go to school.'

The self-evaluation shows that the school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Close attention is paid to raising standards and pupils are making a more rapid rate of progress than in the past. Important outcomes are that standards have improved in mathematics and reading. The school has recognised the need to strengthen leadership and has revised the structure of the team in time for the next academic year. Knowledgeable governors are closely involved in the school's work and are developing a good understanding of its performance. They bring a wide range of expertise to their role of holding the school to account for the standards achieved by pupils. The structure of the governing body is also under review to strengthen this role. Consequently, the capacity for moving the school forward and bringing about improvement is satisfactory.

Community cohesion is good. The school has a good knowledge and understanding of the community it serves and seeks the views of parents. It has extended its work through, for example, the engagement of parent support advisors. The school is actively engaged in promoting links with local schools and a project in Africa to share expertise and develop the pupils' awareness of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

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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?	3
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	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?	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?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	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	3
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?	No

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

3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Paddock Wood Primary School, Tonbridge TN12 6JE

Thank you for making us feel so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the inspection. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found out about your school. Importantly, yours is a satisfactory, and improving, school where staff and governors are working hard to make it even better. We were pleased to hear that you and a large majority of your parents like the school. You behave well and get on with each other.

Here are some important things about your school:

- You make satisfactory progress and reach average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Those in charge of the school have already made improvements that are helping you to make faster progress in mathematics and reading.
- You talk proudly about your achievements and the range of after school activities.
- You feel safe and secure in school.
- All staff take good care of you, and make sure that you know what to do to keep safe.
- You have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better:

- Help you to improve your skills when you write in other subjects and use subject vocabulary when writing in science.
- Make sure that teaching always challenges all of you to do your very best so that you always make good progress.
- Ensure that the staff who help to run the school keep a close check on how well you are doing so that they can help you do even better.

You can help to make things better by trying hard in all lessons.

We wish each one of you every success in your future education.

Yours faithfully

Paul Canham

Lead inspector