

Queenborough School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118345
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326810
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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	5–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	327
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	Steve Barber
Headteacher	Barbara Conroy
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Edward Road Queenborough ME11 5DF
Telephone number	01795 662574
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Age group	5–10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Formerly Queenborough First School, this is an emerging, two-form entry primary school, established in September 2008 as part of the reorganisation of schools in the residential communities for Queenborough and Rushenden. It currently has Early Years Foundation Stage provision for Nursery and Reception children and for other pupils up to and including Year 5. It will provide for Year 6 pupils from September 2009. It serves a small residential community, close to Sheerness. The percentage of pupils eligible for free schools meals is above average. The pupils are predominantly White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, although a significant number have more complex learning needs. An increasing number of children enter school with weaknesses in speech and language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Queenborough School provides a satisfactory education at present. However, it has many strengths and is working hard in a period of change to ensure that its provision for older pupils has the consistency and quality evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Parents greatly value the positive ethos, the commitment to individuals and the outstanding pastoral care. As one commented, 'My children's self-confidence has grown and their learning has progressed as a result of dedicated, enthusiastic teaching.' Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and their personal development is good. They behave well. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. However, while pupils certainly seem to enjoy school, attendance is below the national average. In spite of its efforts to promote the benefits of good attendance among pupils and parents, the school has not yet been successful in raising attendance to a higher level.

Pupils achieve well in Nursery and Reception. The well-planned curriculum, together with effective teaching, enables most children to build rapidly upon their limited initial skills. Assessment, teaching and overall provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. With rigorous teaching, pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with additional learning needs, continue to make good progress, so that standards are above average in Year 2. Thereafter, progress is satisfactory because the quality of teaching in these year groups is more variable than in other years, including for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Slower progress in Years 3 to 5 is most evident in mathematics. There is a lack of individual targets in this subject, so that pupils have less direction in their learning. Academic performance is further affected by the significant proportion of pupils joining the school for the first time in Year 5. As a result of all these factors, standards are broadly average in Year 5. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils satisfactorily and they enthusiastically support the good range of extra-curricular activities.

The leadership team is relatively new. However, although some inconsistencies have emerged as the school adapts to its new status, the strong leadership of the headteacher has ensured that there is a significant body of embedded good practice upon which to draw. Recent innovations, such as the detailed tracking system, more rigorous target setting and a range of effective support programmes, indicate the proactive response of school leaders when weaknesses are identified. School self-evaluation is satisfactory, providing a clear sense of direction. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's work and readily challenge the leadership team. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. They settle quickly in the well organised, caring environment. Good teaching, a well planned curriculum and targeted support help most children, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make good progress in Nursery and Reception. By the end of Reception, children have skills that are broadly in line with national expectations, representing good achievement from a relatively low starting point. The children are well cared for and staff have high expectations of their progress. Children develop independence, enjoy their learning and behave well. Although the resourcing of the outdoor learning space has improved, there is not a sufficient range of planned learning opportunities to complement indoor activities. Leadership

and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Adults carefully monitor each child and use assessment information well to modify the curriculum to meet individual needs. However, the school recognises the need to provide greater challenge for higher attaining children in Reception. More effective teaching of the linking of letters and sounds has supported recent improvements in reading and writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils in Years 3 and above achieve more consistently and rapidly, particularly in mathematics and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Work closely with pupils and parents to improve attendance.

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

Pupils make good progress during Years 1 and 2, but progress is relatively slower in Years 3 to 5. As a result, achievement overall is satisfactory. Standards in national tests at Year 2 have risen steadily since 2004. Standards in the current Year 2 group are above average. In some cases these younger pupils make outstanding progress, particularly some boys and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Progress has been closer to satisfactory in Years 3 to 5, though with greater gains in reading and writing than in mathematics. The school has responded quickly to tackle the weakness in mathematics and is now teaching this subject in groups according to pupils' prior attainment. Nevertheless, while younger pupils with additional learning needs benefit from highly effective interventions, support is not as well targeted for these pupils in Years 3 to 5 and is also less rigorously monitored. As a result, the progress of these pupils as a whole is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning and eagerly support clubs and activities. They feel secure, have confidence in adults and have no concerns about bullying. Exclusions are rare. Pupils' moral, spiritual and social development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory. While some opportunities for promoting global awareness are developing, pupils' engagement with the ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary Britain is not as strong. Pupils contribute eagerly to the school community through classroom responsibilities, as playground buddies, through environmental activities and the school council. They are confident that their views are listened to. Pupils' good personal qualities, positive attitudes and basic skills, which are at least satisfactory, provide a sound foundation for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While much of the teaching observed was good, the school is still getting to grips with the extended age range and recognises that expectation and outcomes have been more consistent in Years 1 and 2 than for the older pupils. Planning is detailed, drawing upon good subject

knowledge. Teachers generally motivate pupils well and the environment for learning is well organised. Many lessons have a brisk pace which moves learning on quickly. However, work is sometimes not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils. Teachers occasionally do not monitor group activities closely enough and this slows the pace of learning. Teachers encourage independence, giving pupils opportunities to record work independently. Regular checks on progress ensure that staff know what pupils need to do to move forward, although questioning times is not incisive enough at times.' Pupils are increasingly encouraged to evaluate their own work. Teaching assistants are well prepared, although their support for younger pupils with additional learning needs appears more effective than for those who are older.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for Years 1 to 5 is broad, engaging and effectively enhanced by an impressive range of out-of-class clubs, sport, visits and themed events. There is a good emphasis on the effective teaching of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, both discretely and through other subjects,. Intensive support programmes in reading, writing and in speech and language have significantly boosted pupils' progress. Practical science activities are developed well. Although provision for pupils who need additional support is satisfactory overall, it is good for pupils up to Year 2. Provision for pupils identified as potentially gifted or talented is not developed fully. The school successfully implements a programme to enhance the social and emotional aspects of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is outstanding. Procedures in relation to child protection, fire prevention and first aid are rigorous. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Staff know individual pupils extremely well and ensure that their welfare needs are met effectively through, for example, the well attended Breakfast Club. This contributes strongly to pupils' good personal development. The school has strong links with external agencies. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, but its strategies have not yet proved to be sufficiently successful to raise attendance above its current below average level. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The introduction of individual targets is relatively recent. Most pupils have targets in literacy and some can evaluate their progress, but this is not the case in numeracy. Currently, the impact on standards is limited. Teachers' marking generally offers appropriate guidance to move learning forward.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear vision for improvement. With good support from the recently restructured leadership team, she has established a nurturing environment, which meets pupils' and community needs well and has progressively raised standards at Year 2. The school recognises the need to extend the rigorous and systematic approach and the consistency of expectation which underpins the success of the lower school. Challenging targets are used well to raise standards with younger pupils, but less effectively in the older year groups. Monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work is increasingly rigorous. Better systems for checking on pupils' progress ensure that staff are closely focused on improving

learning. The school has a clear understanding of its areas for development. Governance is good. Governors are knowledgeable and play a full part in strategic planning. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion and is now evaluating recent initiatives, including the emerging link with a school in China.

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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	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?	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	3
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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

9 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Queenborough School and Nursery, Sheppey ME11 5DF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and spending time in your lessons. We found that your school, though satisfactory overall, has some significant strengths.

- The main things that we found are these:
- You behave well in lessons and most of you work hard. However, some of you could attend more regularly.
- Although standards are broadly average in Year 5, they are above average, at least, in other years. Older pupils do better in mathematics than they do in writing.
- While much of the teaching we saw was good and teachers are really enthusiastic, the pace at which you learn is generally better for the younger pupils. Some of you find the work quite easy and could learn at a faster rate.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide well for the youngest children. The outdoor provision should be developed further.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for extremely well. You conduct yourselves safely and you are very aware of how important it is to eat healthily.
- The curriculum is satisfactory, with lots of out-of-school activities.
- Those in charge of the school make sure that it runs well. They are giving the school clear direction through a period of change.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that you do even better:

- Ensure that those of you in Years 3 to 5 make more rapid progress, particularly in mathematics and those with additional learning needs.
- Ensure, in partnership with parents, that you miss fewer days of school.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

George Logan

Lead Inspector