

Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	118622
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326860
Inspection date	15 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	141
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	Einir Roberts
Headteacher	Julie Silk
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	West Street Harrietsham Maidstone ME17 1JZ
Telephone number	01622 859261

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	15 May 2009
Inspection number	326860

Fax number

01622 859372

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	15 May 2009
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to Ofsted notification

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

In this small village school, almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage. Across the school, an average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties, but the number in each year group varies widely. Most of the children who join the Early Years Foundation Stage transfer from the pre-school that shares the school site and which has been separately inspected. the school site and which has been separately inspected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Harrietsham provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils and parents especially praise the positive atmosphere in the school's attractive new building. One parent described how: 'All staff have worked hard to create a positive learning environment for the children.' Another recognised with appreciation that: 'There is a strong focus on the happiness and well-being of the pupils.' Good arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support contribute greatly to this and to pupils' good personal development and achievement. The pupils feel exceptionally safe in school and learn how to keep safe. This is echoed by parents who say, 'We know our children are in very safe hands.' Pupils also show an excellent understanding of the need for a healthy diet and exercise. This is very evident in the high take-up rate for the very good range of sports and other clubs that the school offers. These enrich a curriculum that appropriately meets the pupils' learning needs. Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem at Harrietsham, and they take a pride in their school. Not all, however, take sufficient pride in their handwriting or in the presentation of their work. Sometimes, untidy and careless presentation detracts from the quality of some of the pupils' work and causes them to make otherwise avoidable errors.

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked tirelessly to secure and embed improvements over the last four years. Quite apart from the move to new buildings, they have succeeded over this period in bringing the school out of special measures. The school is now one where pupils achieve well and the majority reach standards that are above those expected for their ages. School leaders and governors have an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing and the capacity to improve is good. Self-evaluation of provision is sometimes a little generous but careful tracking of pupils' progress and perceptive monitoring of teaching and learning have helped staff to improve their practice. Leaders have successfully tackled the issues from the school's last inspection. Facilities for and use of information and communication technology (ICT) are much improved, attendance rates are up and pupils benefit from good opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures, including other beliefs and ways of life in Britain and around the world.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year as a result of good provision that meets their needs. Lessons in Years 1 to 6 include several good features but work is not always matched closely enough to the often wide range of abilities in each class. Nevertheless, evidence drawn from a scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own monitoring of the progress of pupils demonstrates that the majority of pupils make good progress overall. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties is good because these pupils usually benefit from well-tailored support. One of the strengths of teaching is the way most pupils are motivated and involved but, in some lessons, a small minority of pupils make less progress than they should. This is because they are not sufficiently engaged and staff do not always notice quickly enough that there are pupils who are quietly inattentive. Teachers routinely set out learning objectives at the start of each lesson but these are sometimes too broad to be meaningful or to facilitate the intended evaluation by pupils of their own learning.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

'My daughter is thoroughly enjoying her first year at school. She is happy, settled and has made good progress.' This view from a parent aptly sums up the good provision in the Reception Year. Children's welfare and well-being are paramount. Children who need additional support

are quickly identified. Parents are encouraged to become fully involved in their children's learning. A home-school diary keeps them informed about what their children have been doing and enables them to add their views and observations. The variety of stimulating play opportunities across all six areas of learning, both inside and in the secure outside area, results in good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage varies from year to year, as might be expected in a school with small numbers. In most years, children join the school with skills and capabilities that are in line with those expected for their ages. They make good progress. Standards at the end of the Reception Year have improved and are now above average. Children's progress is rigorously tracked by thorough, focused observations of children's play and by listening to what they and their parents say. In this way, planning, in this very well-run provision, is clearly focused on moving children's learning forward whilst taking account of their individual interests and preferences. There is a close working relationship with the pre-school from which the children transfer. Staff recognise that there is scope for further strengthening the liaison with the pre-school so that children are best helped to build on what they have learnt before.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that in all lessons, pupils are fully attentive and involved, that they understand precisely what they should be learning, and that the work they are given is carefully matched to their abilities so that each is fully challenged and extended.
- Focus more attention on pupils' handwriting and presentation so that they do justice to their work and avoid making errors through carelessness or misreading their own writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils generally attain above average standards by the time they leave the school. This represents good achievement in relation to the pupils' broadly average starting points when they join the school. Small numbers in each year group mean that there is some fluctuation in standards from year to year, and the school has projected that the current Year 6 will attain higher standards this year. The progress that pupils make, particularly in their key literacy and numeracy skills, prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Many of the pupils with learning difficulties also make good progress because they benefit from well-directed support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in the personal qualities which they demonstrate and which are summed up in the aspirational words that make up the 'Harrietsham' acrostic prominently displayed in the hall. Empathy is much mentioned by the pupils, and one girl explained to inspectors that the inappropriate behaviour of some may be due to things that were affecting their lives. Although behaviour is good, pupils are not all as attentive as they could be in lessons. Pupils do not all take enough care in the presentation of their work and this is sometimes the cause of silly mistakes. Pupils are confident and articulate. They say that they enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They appreciate that their teachers listen to them and that their opinions are valued. The School Action Squad members take an active role in the life of the school and make a valued contribution to its improvement. It was their decision that the school should support a national charity that works with children in The Gambia

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers get on well with their pupils. Classes are managed well, and pupils confirm that any misbehaviour is quickly dealt with. Teachers are successful in motivating the great majority of pupils and in maintaining a purposeful working ethos. They can sometimes be slow to notice the small number who sit quietly but are relatively disengaged. Lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties benefit from well-targeted support that helps them to make often good progress, but work in a few lessons observed did not always fully challenge middle ability and more able pupils. Teachers set out learning objectives at the start of lessons but these are sometimes too broad to help pupils to be clear about what they should be learning or to reflect on how well they are doing. The involvement of older pupils in evaluating their own and each other's work is helping to accelerate their progress, but younger pupils have fewer such opportunities. For example, although, in a physical education lesson, pupils in Year 1 and 2 were asked to watch the ideas of other children for balancing beanbags, they were not invited to comment on what they were seeing or to suggest ideas for improvement. Homework was a topic that attracted a number of criticisms from parents, who complain that it is only set irregularly and that it goes unmarked. Inspectors looked at this but found evidence that homework is helping to reinforce what is learnt at school and to promote research skills. Homework diaries set out teachers' expectations for homework quite clearly. Expectations over the acceptable standard of handwriting and presentation vary between classes. In some classes, staff are too accepting of untidy work. Although inspectors judged teaching and learning as satisfactory overall, the strength of academic guidance in the school and an appropriate curriculum, allied with good learning attitudes, has contributed to pupils making good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been appropriately refined to better meet pupils' needs. For example, the school took the decision to focus on developing and reinforcing pupils' basic skills, including through the creation of additional classes in the mornings. This means that pupils can be taught English and mathematics in single-age rather than mixed-age classes. School leaders have not as yet had the opportunity to formally evaluate the impact of this change. Provision for, and the pupils' use of, ICT is much improved since the last inspection. Pupils also enjoy the opportunities they have to learn through topics that link subjects together, but some of this topic work relies heavily on the use of worksheets. These are sometimes uninspiring and do not always cater for the full range of different abilities. Pupils and their parents are especially appreciative of the extra-curricular activities on offer. As one very satisfied parent wrote, 'Harrietsham provides so many wonderful after-school clubs and runs many events such as fairs and discos that my son loves.' Older pupils take an active role in running some of these activities. A Year 6 pupil took the attendance register for the choir club and then ably led the pupils in a voice warm up. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were eagerly looking forward to a residential visit to an activity centre in June. One girl revealed that she had already packed her suitcase!

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school knows its pupils well and cares deeply about their welfare. There are very effective and thorough procedures in place for keeping pupils safe and dealing with any problems or concerns. Academic guidance is good and has led to improvements in achievement. Marking is thorough and provides pupils with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. Sometimes, teachers pose questions to pupils that go unanswered, but there are also examples of staff and pupils engaging in a productive dialogue that really helps to move learning on. Pupils have individual targets, and these are recorded in their homework diaries. However, some targets could be written in language that is more readily understood by the pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

School leaders and governors can rightly point to commendable achievements over the past four years. In some respects, their evaluations are generous compared with the findings of this inspection but this has not blunted the impact of their monitoring. For example, although they judged provision to be outstanding, their monitoring of lessons and books accurately identifies areas for development in teaching, and inspectors found evidence that there had been improvements as a result. Leaders keep a careful track of each child's progress as they move through the school. The measures they have used to gauge progress from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2 are sufficiently broad but also detailed enough to distinguish between high, middle and low levels in the Year 2 and Year 6 assessments. School leaders have built a close partnership with parents, and they have helped to broaden pupils' horizons and awareness of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in Britain and around the world. A large community tapestry in the hall reflects the strong links that the school has with the local community.

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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 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 ¹ 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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	2

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?	2
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?	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**

16 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, Maidstone ME17 1JZ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Harrietsham is providing you with a good education, so that you mostly reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are above that found nationally. The children in the Reception Year get off to a good start and now reach above average standards. Those of you who need extra help with your learning also make good progress because staff give you such good support.

We were pleased to see how good your behaviour is and how well everyone gets on together. This all helps to make the school a happy, friendly place to be. Staff take good care of you, and that is why you feel so very safe at school. We were also impressed by how much you know about the need for a healthy diet and exercise. Most of you listen well to your teachers, but there are a few of you who do not always pay as much attention as you should. We have asked teachers to look out for this, and you can help too by doing your very best to concentrate hard in lessons. We have also asked teachers to make sure that the learning objectives they give you at the start of lessons are specific so that you always have a clear idea of whether or not you have learnt what you should. We could see that sometimes you all do the same work in lessons, which means that, for some of you, the work is too easy. This is something else that we have asked teachers to take more account of when they plan your lessons.

You take a great pride in your school and, especially, in the many clubs and other activities that are provided for you. Not all of you take as much pride as you should in the presentation of your work. When your work is scruffy, it not only detracts from the quality of your writing but it also means that you are more likely to make mistakes. Taking more care with your handwriting and presentation is a way in which you can help to improve how well you do.

Your parents told us how much the school has improved over recent years – and not just because of the beautiful new building. Governors and school leaders are rightly proud of the school's successes. We have asked them to take even more account of areas where there could be further improvement.

Yours faithfully,

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector