

Lympne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 118680 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 326867 |
| Inspection dates | 5–6 November 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | David Curtis |

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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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 208 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 28 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Glen Clark |
| Headteacher | Joyce Rhodes |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 December 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Octavian Drive Lympne Hythe CT21 4JG |

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|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 5–6 November 2008 |
| Inspection number | 326867 |

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a one-form entry primary school. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in the Reception class. Following a fire in September 2006, which destroyed the school building and all its contents, the school was in temporary accommodation eight miles away in Folkestone. For two years, pupils were bussed from the village to the temporary school. From September 2008, pupils have returned to a brand new school in the village. As a result of the fire, using temporary accommodation and the closure of a local school, there has been an increase in the number of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the expected times.

The vast majority of pupils in the school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. These pupils have a wide range of additional learning needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. At the heart of its success are the very effective leadership and management of the headteacher. Together with the senior leadership team and governing body, she successfully maintained a good quality of education for pupils in the traumatic period following the fire in September 2006. Parents are appreciative of the continuity of education for their children during this difficult period. As one wrote, 'Despite the upheaval of moving schools due to the fire, everyone has worked together to provide the children with a stable environment to learn in.' During this period, the school, through its effective self-evaluation, has tackled successfully the identified need to raise standards in mathematics and writing, especially for more able pupils. The significant increase in the proportion of pupils in Year 6 achieving the higher Level 5 in the provisional results of the 2008 National Curriculum tests is testimony to the school's success and to its good capacity for future improvement.

Good teaching and learning, coupled with an exciting and effective curriculum, are the key factors in pupils' good achievement. From their first day in Reception, children make good progress because of the high quality of provision in the EYFS. The classroom is an exciting and stimulating learning environment, although the outdoor learning area does not ensure children regularly access all six areas of learning. Good progress continues in Years 1 to 6, with pupils reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils greatly enjoy their lessons. They benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge and the very effective use of interactive whiteboards to introduce new learning. Explanations are clear and pupils understand the learning objective for each lesson. While teachers plan extension work in their lessons, they do not ensure on a consistent basis that pupils complete it. As a result, on such occasions, pupils, especially the more able, do not maximise their progress. A small minority of parents are therefore justified in their concern that their children do not make sufficient progress in all lessons. Curriculum enrichment is particularly strong, including the teaching of French and a good emphasis on sports and the arts. The successful introduction of the social, emotional and attitudes to learning (SEAL) programme, together with strategies for improving learning, have a significant impact on the strengths in pupils' personal development.

Excellent care, guidance and support underpin pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils are polite, friendly and very welcoming. They show great pride in their new school and thrive in the exciting learning environment. Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. Relationships with each other and adults are excellent. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles. Teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they make good progress. Pupils know and understand their targets in literacy and numeracy. Importantly, they know when they reach their targets and then have a new target to strive for.

Most parents are supportive of the school's work and its positive impact on their children's learning. The school is very proactive in seeking pupils' views and acting upon them, especially through the school council. Lympne's very effective links with other local schools, especially in relation to in-service training and curriculum development, support pupils' good achievement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with standards expected for their age. They make a flying start to their school life because of the good provision in the EYFS. Children settle very quickly into the day-to-day life of the school and are happy, secure and confident. Because of consistently good teaching, especially of key skills, children make good progress in all areas of learning and reach above average standards by the time they start Year 1. The successful teaching of letters and sounds has a significant impact on encouraging boys to write. In addition, it is improving standards in writing as pupils move up the school. Planning includes good extension activities for children. For example, in one session, pupils were challenged to read, write and order numbers to 20 after they had succeeded in completing this task to 10. Currently, the indoor classroom promotes effectively all six areas of learning, but this is not reflected as strongly in the outdoor learning area.

Assessment of children's learning is a significant strength, with teachers using successfully a range of computer programs to build a complete picture of progress. When necessary, quick action provides additional support for those children identified as at risk of falling behind. The EYFS team works in close partnership to ensure that children are safe and well cared for at all times. Relationships with parents are good, as are the strong links with the village playgroup from which most children transfer. Effective links with other EYFS settings in local primary schools, including shared in-service training, contribute to children's good achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the outdoor classroom for children in the EYFS to increase opportunities for learning in all six of the Early Learning Goals.
- Ensure that in lessons, all pupils, especially the more able, are challenged and extended in their learning

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. In English, pupils achieve very high standards in reading. There is clear and discernable improvement in writing, especially amongst boys and those achieving the higher Level 5 in the National Curriculum tests. The extension into Years 1 to 4 of teaching a letters and sounds programme has had a significant impact on motivating boys to write successfully. The school's rigorous analysis of its own performance identified that too few pupils reach the higher Level 5 in science. Inspection evidence supports the school's findings that pupils do not receive sufficient challenge in the investigative and experimental aspect of the subject. Improving standards in science is the key focus of the school improvement plan.

In the current Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics, with the school's focus on writing and problem solving clearly bearing fruit. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' excellent attitudes and relationships reflect strongly the school's Christian ethos. Attendance is above average and the introduction of a daily (and very popular) 'Wake and Shake' session encourages pupils to arrive on time to join in. The school council plays a strong role in school life. Currently, it is working hard to explore ways of supporting fellow pupils who, at times, feel lonely in the playground. Pupils in Year 6 take their responsibilities as librarians and as recyclers very seriously indeed. They are very keen to raise funds to support charities. Pupils are safe in school and treat their new building with great respect. The colourful range of slippers worn shows their enthusiasm for keeping the new carpets clean. Pupils enjoy achieving merits and 'Headteacher Awards'. They celebrate their own successes and are spontaneous in their recognition of the successes of their peers, both in and out of school. Pupils are prepared well academically and socially for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers establish good relationships with their pupils. As a result, pupils' excellent personal development contributes strongly to their learning. Teaching has many strengths. Carefully considered learning objectives are shared with pupils and good questioning skills are used to check pupils' understanding. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to ensure that learning is interesting. Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed converting units of measurement after watching a video comparing athletes' achievements in the Olympic Games. Teachers are usually well supported by teaching assistants, although sometimes opportunities are missed for them to support learning at the start of lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points. A relative weakness in teaching, which affects a few lessons, is that tasks do not always sufficiently challenge the more able. Expectations that pupils complete planned extension activities are inconsistent. Throughout the school, there are good examples of teachers' marking that helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning. They understand their targets and confidently talk about 'a wish and a star' when explaining what they had achieved and what they still needed to do.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school is rapidly overcoming the difficulties caused by the fire when planning documents, records, resources and equipment were all lost. Work is planned in detail for age groups on a two-yearly cycle. Teachers plan together to ensure continuity in learning and to tackle any gaps in pupils' previous learning. There is a strong emphasis on planning for the teaching of basic skills. Pupils particularly enjoy using the new information and communication technology (ICT) suite that so enriches their learning. Personal, social, health and citizenship education and SEAL are part of the success story behind pupils' excellent personal development. Links with local schools and external experts are used effectively to improve provision and widen the skills and knowledge of staff. Pupils say learning French, the arts and physical education are great. Special topic days, such as 'India Day', when Years 1 and 2 studied artefacts and sampled

different spices and foods, help make learning fun. A good range of popular extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors further enrich learning. In 'banded classes' (classes where pupils are set by ability), pupils benefit from smaller classes and increased adult support. However, sometimes in lessons, more able pupils are not challenged enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is most successful in providing a stimulating and safe learning environment. Aware of the trauma experienced by pupils, staff and parents because of the fire, the school has focused on providing as much support as possible and parents expressed their thanks for this. Central to this is the excellent care, support and guidance pupils receive. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and interventions are put in place quickly to support them. Strong links with external agencies and parents provide additional expertise as needed. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are rigorous. Marking is supportive and, at its best, helps point out what pupils need to do next to improve. Pupils are set challenging targets and they are clear about these and about what they need to do to improve further. Their progress against these is carefully monitored and checked regularly. Any pupils likely to fall short of their targets are given additional support and often benefit from smaller classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, with the strong support of senior leaders, staff and governors, ensures that the school is focused on continued improvement and, as a governor commented, 'to build on quality'. The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate but the judgements senior staff make about achievement and leadership and management are too modest. Priorities to raise standards are identified in the school improvement plan and these are tackled systematically, with challenging targets set in order to raise standards and achievement. The measures used to check the school's work are rigorous; a result of a shared determination and teamwork to provide the best learning environment. Subject leaders have a positive impact on the standards and provision in their subjects. This is confirmed by the improvements in the latest school results at the end of Year 6. Governance is supportive and well informed. Governors and leaders were instrumental in managing the immense disruption after the fire. Communication with parents and the local community was successfully maintained throughout this period. Governors challenge the school in its performance and undertake regular training. However, they are not sufficiently clear as to how they measure the impact of their work on school performance. The school's links with a wide range of partnerships in the local community make a good contribution to raising pupils' awareness of issues in the local and wider world.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 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

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

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| 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**

7 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lympne Church of England Primary School, Lympne CT21 4JG

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when Mrs Browning and I visited your school. It was lovely to meet such friendly and polite young people. We must say a special thank you to the school council and those of you from Year 6 who met us at lunchtime. I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school, but I think you know that already.

In addition to your wonderful new building and the great care and pride you show in it, these are the things that really impressed us:

- you make good progress in your learning and reach standards that are higher than lots of children of your age
- your behaviour is excellent
- lessons are interesting and you told us how much you enjoy them, especially when you can do practical things
- you enjoy taking part in after-school clubs
- all adults in the school look after you and care for you extremely well
- those who lead and manage your school are determined to give you a really good education.

There are two things which we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do in order to make your school even better:

- to give those of you in Reception (or the EYFS as we call it now) an outdoor classroom that is as good as the indoor one
- to make sure that in all lessons you work as hard as you can and to expect you to start and finish the extension work your teachers plan for you.

Keep up the good work and look after your new school. I know that everyone is pleased that you no longer have to go on the bus to Folkestone every day.

Yours faithfully

David Curtis Lead inspector