

# Hever Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118718
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	326879
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacqueline Marshall

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	105
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>	Annabel Lark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynette Watts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 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>	Hever Edenbridge TN8 7NH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 862304
<b>Fax number</b>	01732 864 724

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average-sized school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The main additional learning needs relate to speech and language, behavioural, emotional and social as well as individual specific needs. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at times other than expected is above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of one class of Reception children. The school has gained the Activemark award and is a green flag Eco-school. The substantive headteacher is on long-term sick leave. Her role is being filled by the executive headteacher and leadership team from a local school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It provides an adequate education for its pupils. The well established partnership with a local school has been successful in bolstering leadership and management and provided continuity during the headteacher's absence. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The executive headteacher and other leaders carry out checks on a regular basis to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although these are too recent to have secured consistently good teaching and ensure pupils achieve well in all their learning, they are used successfully to help leaders know where to focus their efforts to bring about improvement. Consequently, school leaders have already made changes to address the relative weaknesses in writing and pupils' behaviour. Although there have been recent improvements, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory, given its continuing dependence on support from both the executive headteacher and local authority.

Children get a good start in the EYFS and achieve well. Previous underachievement has been tackled and, as a result, throughout the rest of the school, pupils now achieve satisfactorily. This is because teaching is satisfactory. The school is working to raise the quality of teaching to the level of the best, although inconsistencies remain and pupils' progress is better in some lessons and classes than others so they do not build consistently well on their good start. There has been a downward trend in standards for Year 2 pupils in recent years. This has been overturned and standards for these pupils are set to rise in 2009. Standards in Year 6 in 2008 were average, though weaker in English where pupils, and boys in particular, made insufficient progress in writing. The current Year 6 is making adequate progress and pupils are on track to achieve average standards. All teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing, but not all make accurate enough use of this information to plan work to challenge pupils to achieve well, especially in writing. There have been some improvements in teachers' marking since the last inspection. However, marking does not refer consistently enough to pupils' targets and the next steps in their learning in order to raise standards further and secure good progress. This prevents achievement from being better than adequate.

Pastoral care is satisfactory and supports pupils' satisfactory personal development and well-being. Leaders' appropriate focus on tackling the behaviour of some disaffected pupils has been effective and behaviour is now satisfactory and, at times, good. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets pupils' needs. Whilst actions taken to raise standards and remedy recent underachievement have proved successful, writing remains a relative weakness in the curriculum. Resources to encourage boys as writers and support to increase teachers' subject knowledge are now in place. However, these actions have not had time to become established sufficiently to enable all pupils to achieve well.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children join EYFS with skills, knowledge and understanding typical for their age in all areas of learning. Improvements in the effectiveness of the Early Years in recent years are ensuring that overall achievement is now good. By the end of the Reception year, most children have reached an above average level of development compared with levels expected nationally. Children's behaviour is good due to the strong focus on personal development, and children learn to sort out their differences and play well together. The Early Years team is developing its partnership with parents to improve communication further and ensure children settle

quickly. The children learn well because they are soon at ease with the Reception class adults and thoroughly enjoy the interesting, well planned activities. These are well balanced, with good opportunities both indoors and in the outdoor learning environment to make independent choices as well as those guided by adults. The EYFS is managed well, and checks on how well new strategies and ideas are implemented are carried out regularly. The team is currently focusing on providing increased opportunities to observe the children in order to plan increased challenge for them in their learning. Each child's progress is closely watched from the start, so the school can gauge how well children are doing and pass on accurate information to the Year 1 teachers. Children are safe and secure because staff look after each individual child's needs well.

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

- Ensure assessment information is used effectively by all teachers to provide appropriate opportunities for all pupils, and especially boys, to develop and apply their writing skills.
- Improve the consistency of teaching so that lessons always challenge and engage all pupils well.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking so pupils understand what to do next to improve their work.

A small proportion of the 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**

Children get off to a good start in the EYFS. This means that, by the end of the Reception year, last year, they reached levels above average for children of this age. They develop well in their personal development skills, although the development of their writing skills, as in the rest of the school, is less strong. Across the school, from Year 1 to Year 6, the school has not been capitalising on the good start pupils get. Their progress is currently satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is weakest in writing, particularly amongst boys. Progress has been patchy, and for some of the oldest pupils there have been periods of underachievement in recent years. This is currently being tackled by the school through the more careful use of assessment information to keep a check on pupils' progress. As a result, pupils are now on track to make the expected progress from their starting points. The school's own checks show that, whilst standards in Year 6 in 2008 were average, this represented satisfactory progress for this group of pupils. This is true for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, gifted and talented, and those who join at times other than the start of the Reception year.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy school, especially when the activities planned are interesting and engaging. Attendance is good. Behaviour is now satisfactory and, for some pupils, good, because of the strong priority placed on this by school leaders. Pupils feel safe at school and the majority feel that any concerns they have are dealt with appropriately by staff. They adopt safe practices and are aware that eating healthy foods and exercising regularly contributes to good health. In response to the last inspection report, the school introduced opportunities to develop pupils'

awareness of cultural diversity. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and local community. Their contribution to the wider world is more limited, although they are enthusiastic and keen about their work linked to their Eco-school status. The progress that they make in their key literacy and numeracy skills prepares the pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The patchy progress of pupils is closely linked to the quality of teaching, which varies between classes and subjects. Relationships between staff and pupils are good in the main and teachers are increasingly managing pupils' behaviour well. However, lessons do not always engage and motivate all pupils or involve them actively in learning. The result is that pace drops, pupils become restless and progress slows. Teachers are becoming increasingly effective in using assessment information to group pupils and plan work. However, this does not happen in all lessons. This means that work is not always adapted closely enough to all pupils' capabilities to enable them to achieve well, particularly in writing. In groups and on a one-to-one basis, teaching assistants appropriately support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make similar progress to others. Marking is inconsistent and teachers' comments do not always make clear to pupils how they can improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Across the school, assessment information has recently been used to adapt the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of different groups, including those who find learning difficult. The school's first priority has been to focus on developing pupils' creative writing skills. It has identified the need to increase teachers' subject knowledge and to provide enough opportunities for writing both in literacy lessons and in other subjects. There have been too few opportunities to promote boys' literacy skills, although resources have recently been purchased and steps are being introduced to encourage boys' reading across the school. An appropriate programme of personal, social and health education helps to promote pupils' satisfactory personal development. The wide range of extra-curricular activities add to the pupils' enjoyment of school. There is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are now in place. Pupils feel safe and secure. They acknowledge that there are some instances of bullying but feel behaviour has improved because of the recent focus on this area, with clearly understood sanctions and rewards. Support for different groups of pupils, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the gifted and talented, is satisfactory. The pupils' academic guidance and support is satisfactory. In response to the last inspection report, the school implemented appropriate systems to collect information on pupils' attainment and monitor their progress. However, the use of this was until recently still being refined.

Consequently, it is only now being analysed sufficiently well to identify what needs to be done to ensure pupils do not underachieve and to challenge them to accelerate their progress throughout their time at the school. All pupils have targets, although they are not consistently referred to in all classes or in pupils' work to raise standards. Pupils are not routinely given the opportunity to evaluate their own learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The executive headteacher is providing the school with effective leadership and a clear vision for how the school can move forwards. She has been successful in encouraging a positive team spirit and there is a real atmosphere of 'can do' amongst the staff. Analysis of the school's results and monitoring of teaching to see where it is most effective, and what needs to be improved, are regularly undertaken. Recent more rigorous analysis and monitoring have given leaders at all levels a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to take appropriate actions. Underachievement is being tackled and leaders are focusing on raising the quality and consistency of teaching and learning across the school so that pupils build upon their good start in the EYFS. Governors discharge their statutory duties adequately and have provided appropriate support and continuity to the school through the current absence of the headteacher. The school's commitment to community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to play their part in school and village life and links have been made to include the wider world and other cultures. Leaders are aware that there remains more to do in extending pupils' experience of the wider world and their understanding of how they can play their roles as young citizens more fully.

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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?	3
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 <sup>1</sup> 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

<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>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	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**

5 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hever Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Edenbridge, TN8 7NH

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear you like school and we agree that you do best when your teachers plan many interesting things for you to do and get involved in. You all get on with one another and are working hard to behave well in lessons and around the school. We think your school gives you the right help to know how to be healthy and safe. It provides you with opportunities to take responsibility in school and the wider world as part of your Eco-school work.

We think your school is satisfactory. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs and teachers do what is expected to help you make satisfactory progress in your work, although you do better in mathematics and reading than in writing. The leaders in the school do a suitable job of running your school. They are being helped well by Miss Tormey and know what needs to be done to make your school better. In order to help you to make faster progress, we have asked the adults at your school to do three things:

- Make sure all of you get the opportunities you need to develop and apply your writing skills. This is especially the case for some of you boys who have not always been as keen on writing.
- Keep checking to make sure your lessons are always challenging enough and interesting.
- Make better use of marking to help you understand how to improve.

You can help us by always using the advice teachers give you on how to improve your work and trying hard to always behave well in lessons and around school. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours faithfully

Jacqueline Marshall

Lead inspector