

Hornbeam Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135133
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	329034
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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)	221
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 Tancock
Headteacher	Barbara Beraet
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mongeham Deal CT14 9PQ
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hornbeam Primary School was established in September 2007 following the amalgamation of two primary schools and established on the site of one of these. The percentage of minority ethnic groups is much lower than that usually found. The proportion of pupils who have either emotional difficulties and/or learning difficulties approaches twice the national average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Taking the intake as a whole, attainment on entry to the Reception Year is below expectations and often well below.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Under the passionate and very caring leadership of the headteacher, it has very successfully come through the difficulties of the amalgamation. The effective support of the whole staff team, from the kitchen and caretaking staff to the teachers, ensures that the school is unified in moving forward. The school has settled down very well. Staffing difficulties in Year 2, which affected these pupils' progress in 2008, are being overcome. The particular pupils affected are picking up quickly. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6. Most pupils reach standards expected for their age in Year 6 and those capable of doing so reach higher standards.

Pupils' personal development, the staff's care of the pupils and the support and guidance pupils receive are outstanding. The pupils adopt very mature attitudes to work which assist their good progress. They are extremely polite and show a great deal of consideration and practical support for each other and for others in the world. However, they are not yet as familiar as they might be about the diversity of modern multicultural society. The school's very high levels of care also extend to families. Excellent systems track pupils' progress and are used well to provide help for those who have emotional problems or difficulties learning basic skills. These systems ensure that all individuals are supported to make good progress.

Pupils practise their excellent knowledge of keeping themselves safe and living healthily. They participate enthusiastically in school activities that promote these aspects and in other available opportunities out of school. They know the difference between the wise use of drugs as medicines and the serious consequences of abusing drugs. They are well prepared for their future education and develop important life skills, such as respect not only for others but also for themselves. This is seen, for example, in their tidy dress and pride in their work. They contribute extremely well to the school and local communities and to national, local and world charities.

The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school. They rightly regard it as a very well-run school with the happiness and welfare of their children uppermost. As one parent commented, 'My child really enjoys school and looks forward to going in every day. She is improving in all subjects and enjoys the methods used by her teachers.' Another parent stated that her child enjoys school so much she wishes she could go at the weekend.

The children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) because they are taught to be independent in a secure and loving environment and work is well planned to stimulate learning. However, the outside environment does not yet develop children's learning to the same degree as the exciting work indoors.

Members of the governing body have played a very significant part in amalgamation procedures. They have been involved fully in developing good systems and policies to guide the school's work. They have appointed a staff who produce effective, and sometimes outstanding, teaching and this plays a significant part in pupils' good progress. The school clearly has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The EYFS is well led and managed. Teaching is good. Care and welfare of the children are exceptionally good. Staff use well maintained records effectively to plan good quality learning

and so children achieve well. Many children come close to, and about half reach, the standards expected at the end of the Reception Year. The classroom is particularly well ordered, attractive and welcoming. It provides a clean, safe, calm environment where children feel welcomed. The 'Polar Expeditions' role-play area, complete with sledge, tent and polar bears, stimulates the children's talk and extends their knowledge. Outside activities, while varied, do not inspire the same high quality of learning as those inside. This is because staff do not always utilise the full potential for learning that the outside activities could bring about. Indoors, a wide variety of well-planned activities with good links between areas of learning support learning very effectively.

Children quickly learn to respect each other and to listen to others. They sing action songs that teach them about healthy lifestyles. The organisation of activities is most thorough and hugely supports the children's independence. Links with parents are very strong and parents are encouraged and taught to play a full part in their children's early education at school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of the learning opportunities in the outside area of the Reception class matches the good quality of those inside.
- Provide more experiences for pupils that develop their understanding of modern multicultural society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2008, Year 6 pupils exceeded very challenging targets and achieved well in reaching broadly average standards. However, results in Year 2 were low, affected by frequent changes of teacher and the high number of pupils who had difficulties learning basic skills. The pupils who were in Year 2 last year are now making much better progress in more settled circumstances in Year 3 and recovering well. Current Year 2 pupils are making good progress in reading, mathematics and science, and satisfactory progress in writing, an aspect that the school is already working to improve. Year 2 pupils look set to reach broadly average standards at the end of the year. Current Year 6 pupils are achieving well and are on track to attain higher standards than the previous Year 6 pupils. All groups of pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour is excellent in class and around the school. Their thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance. They are very polite and most helpful in carrying out various school duties, such as when older pupils look after the younger ones. The school council takes a very real interest in improving the school. Staff and governors listen to its suggestions and act on them. Its recent suggestion to refurbish the toilets has brought about very hygienic facilities, which the pupils really respect. Pupils raise money for charities at home and abroad and recently donated their previous school uniforms to Nepalese children. However, they do not yet fully appreciate the diverse nature of multicultural Britain. They sing to the elderly locally and this is a valued part of their work in the local community. Pupils take immense pride in their work and presentation is excellent. They have an excellent understanding of living safely and healthily and practise their knowledge, eating vegetables and fruit regularly and walking to school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Very good relationships between staff and pupils foster effective classroom learning environments in which pupils work successfully. Staff manage pupils very well and in a naturally calm manner. The very good ratio of adults to pupils and carefully planned provision facilitate small group tuition for those who find learning basic skills difficult. Pupils strive hard and make good progress as a result. Teachers show good skills and some of the teaching is outstanding. Lessons are well prepared, with a focus on what pupils need to learn and also on motivating pupils. For example, staff select texts for analysing story characters that appeal to pupils and arouse their interest and participation in discussion. Questioning is good in many lessons, keeping pupils fully engaged. Science is taught well, with a good focus on investigation, and pupils do well because they enjoy the practical approaches. However, teachers do not always get pupils to think through their predictions carefully enough before they are involved in investigating. The effective use of modern technology in lessons in many subjects supports good demonstration by teachers, which promotes pupils' concentration well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is adapted well to the pupils' needs and interests. Staff organise the work for pupils who have difficulty learning basic skills very carefully and match it well to their needs, fostering their good progress. In addition to the good provision for English and mathematics, art and music are particular strengths. There is a good and developing range of extra-curricular activities. Older pupils particularly appreciate the residential visits that help them to learn team skills, independence and trust. Staff plan personal, social and health education very effectively. This contributes to pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe and supports the development of their positive relationships with others. Visitors, such as the local police and the nurse, add to the quality and effectiveness of pupils' personal development. Themed weeks, such as modern foreign language week, infuse a variety to the usual routines, keep the curriculum fresh and foster pupils' interests. Pupils have good opportunities for physical education activities, including use of the school's own swimming pool.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school makes rigorous arrangements to secure pupils' safety and well-being and all pupils are known extremely well. The school not only works with children, but works very successfully with whole families to ensure that pupils' personal and welfare needs are met. Home visits prior to the children starting the Reception class get the links between home and school well established. The family liaison worker provides excellent support for vulnerable children and their families. A Dads' Club has brought fathers and their children together working on exciting projects, such as making land yachts. Excellent links with local professional agencies help to address pupils' particular individual needs ensuring, for example, that pupils with emotional difficulties are given high quality support.

Excellent tracking arrangements ensure that staff monitor pupils' progress very regularly. Staff take swift action to support pupils who are not making expected rates of progress. Marking is

very good and helps pupils know how they can improve their work. It also indicates very clearly where pupils have obtained success against the learning intention for activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher sets an excellent tone and high expectations, which are permeating the whole school. Accommodation improvements, high quality displays of work and pupils' neat presentation in their books indicate success. This is a very orderly place of learning. Phase and subject leaders are developing well in their new roles. They keep abreast of their responsibilities and regularly review pupils' progress. There has been delay in the oversight of history and geography because of staffing difficulties, which have hindered developments in these subjects. This is now being rectified, with a new member of staff having taken over responsibility for these subjects.

The governing body is well organised and fulfils its responsibilities effectively. Governors are keen, committed, and challenge and question. Their visits keep them informed of what is happening in the school. The large carry-forward on the budget, as a result of the amalgamation, is being used judiciously to improve information and communication technology facilities and to provide a very favourable adult-to-pupil ratio, which is benefiting pupils' good rates of progress. The school gives good attention to community cohesion, although with scope for helping pupils to understand better modern day multicultural Britain. The school's self-evaluation is very accurate and effective, as seen in the improvements made for Year 2 pupils recently.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	3
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?	1
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	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

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**

22 January 2009

Dear Children,

Inspection of Hornbeam Primary School, Deal CT14 9PQ

It was a pleasure to meet you when we visited your school. You have blended so well together after coming from two differently named schools into the new Hornbeam School. I noticed the hornbeam tree as soon as I arrived. What a good name you have chosen for your new school! Thank you for talking to us about your school and letting us see your work. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour, your politeness and kindness, and the way that you look after one another. We were also very pleased with the neatness of your work and the great care that you take with it. You are developing skills that will stand you in good stead in the future. Keep it up!

You attend a good school and you are making good progress. Most of you reach the expectations for your age and several of you are reaching an even higher standard. The staff take excellent care of you and are interested in each one of you. They want you to do the best that you can and they are providing you with good opportunities so that you can do so. The teachers are equipping you with learning and personal skills that are important for your future success.

There are just two things that we have asked the school to do to improve. Firstly, to provide you with more experiences so that you understand better the many different beliefs and customs of people living in Britain. Secondly, the outside activities in the Reception class need to be developed so that they are as exciting as the activities inside the classroom. We wish you all a very successful and happy future. Thank you again for your help.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector