

# Herstmonceux Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114506
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338384
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lindsey Diamond

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alec Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Cottingham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	Hailsham Road Hailsham BN27 4LG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited ten lessons, observing all eight class teachers, and had meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation documentation, monitoring and assessment information and lesson plans. During the course of the inspection the team analysed 58 parental and 17 staff questionnaires, as well as talking informally to groups of parents and carers. Additionally, the school had made available 115 Key Stage 2 pupil questionnaires for analysis. The school's safeguarding procedures were also investigated and evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the quality of learning in lessons on pupils' attainment
- the role of assessment in supporting pupil learning
- the development of the curriculum since the previous inspection
- access to all areas of learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in the outdoor learning environment
- the impact of leaders and managers, at all levels, on driving improvements across the school.

## Information about the school

Herstmonceux is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils attend from the immediate area, although some come in on buses from further afield. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils are from a White British background. Since the last inspection the school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark 4 and has achieved Dyslexia Friendly Status.

Although Herstmonceux is a one-form-entry primary school, extra funding has enabled the Early Years Foundation Stage to be split into two Reception classes. Children join the school from several different pre-school settings.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Herstmonceux is a satisfactory school with many good features. There are areas of strength but also areas that the school acknowledges need to be improved. Whilst achievement is satisfactory overall, learning and progress are inconsistent between different subjects because teaching does not always make the same positive impact on pupils' learning as it does in the best lessons. The key strengths of the school are as follows:

- the school ethos is friendly and welcoming, relationships are good and pupils make good gains in their personal development
- care, guidance and support are strong so pupils behave well and are sensible and enthusiastic learners
- the quality of teaching, currently satisfactory overall, is improving
- links between subjects help make learning relevant and interesting
- the headteacher and senior management team lead the school well and have a clear vision for its future improvement.

The developing systems for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the school are playing their part in improving its performance, and middle managers have been trained to support this process. The school has worked hard to redress the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection and has been successful in several areas, although some issues around matching work to pupils' needs still exist. Key weaknesses are as follows:

- progress is not yet consistent across the curriculum or between year groups
- teachers do not consistently use assessment information to match tasks closely enough to the learning needs of pupils
- there is not yet a robust enough whole school system to ensure that senior staff are fully aware of strengths and areas for development in subjects and/or year groups, and their ability to actively promote high quality learning is therefore limited.

Pupils' behaviour is good. This is reflected in the classrooms, as pupils move around the school, during assembly and at play and lunch times. On the very few occasions when it was seen to be less than positive, it was in lessons where teaching was not as stimulating and pupils were seen to go 'off task'.

Senior staff and governors have begun to develop a process designed to improve school self-evaluation. Alongside this they are working to embed a vision based on values whilst improving attainment, learning and progress. This, together with recent evidence of improvement, demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve and to fulfil its emerging vision for the future.

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**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that by July 2011 pupils are able to maintain good progress across all year groups and subjects by:
  - setting up systems to ensure that planning for learning fully caters for the needs of individuals and groups of pupils, including using information from assessments to plan next steps in learning
  - assessing pupils' learning needs accurately and regularly as a part of day to day lesson delivery
  - regularly tracking the impact of teaching on pupil outcomes and modifying as necessary.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels are more actively involved in promoting learning by:
  - enhancing the professional development opportunities for all staff involved in pupils' learning through a rigorous programme of observation and feedback
  - ensuring that the performance management of these staff has measurable outcomes that directly relate to pupil learning
  - ensuring that a system is set up in which teachers take direct responsibility for tracking pupil progress and reporting back to senior staff.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Lesson observations, together with other evidence gathered during the inspection, show that the quality of learning and progress are satisfactory. Attainment over the last three years has shown a variable picture, but is satisfactory overall. Pupils' attainment when pupils enter Year 1 is usually above average and is broadly average by the end of Year 6, with attainment for some being above average. This indicates satisfactory progress overall. Pupils who make the most gains over the year tend to come from classes where assessment, including pupils' own assessment of their work, is strongest. As one Year 4 pupil explained, 'We use our tick sheets to make sure that we have finished all of our learning.' The tracking of pupils with specific special educational needs, together with evidence from observations, shows that pupils make good progress overall.

The large majority of pupils say that they feel safe in school. All pupils know that they can go to a trusted adult and that there are systems and procedures to deal with their concerns. Pupils show an awareness of school expectations and behave considerately towards each other. They clearly value the school community and are willing to participate in school life, for example by being school counsellors, play leaders and peer mediators. Most pupils showed an awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and the school participates in the 'fruit for schools' scheme. Pupils also show an awareness of emotional health, with one pupil reporting that 'smiling is healthy'. Clubs are available to support health and fitness, but are mainly offered to Key Stage 2 pupils. Most of these are team sports and have low uptake from girls. The school shows an awareness of the need to develop this area.

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The school prepares children well for the next stage of their education and transition arrangements for Year 6 have clearly supported these pupils in moving on to secondary education. The development of pupils' basic skills is satisfactory, as is attendance. Spiritual, moral and social education is a strength of the school. The cultural aspects are less well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although some good practice was observed. In the best lessons, assessment was used effectively as a tool to support learning. However, this was inconsistent across the school. In most of the lessons observed, insufficient attention was paid to matching work to pupils' needs. This was also evident in lesson planning. Some groups of pupils were insufficiently challenged in their learning, meaning that they could not always achieve all that they were capable of.

Since the previous inspection, the school has made efforts to enhance the curriculum and give pupils greater opportunity to make choices in their learning. This is yet to become fully established across the school. Where this is strongest, there are clear links

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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between subjects, enabling learners to apply skills more freely across the curriculum. The provision in information and communication technology has been significantly enhanced since the last inspection, with the school now able to provide computers in every classroom, as well as a whole class set of laptop computers. These are used to support learning across the curriculum.

The school staff know their pupils well and ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils are well catered for. Children with special educational needs are particularly well cared for, with support specifically targeted to support their needs.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and is fully supported by the senior team. Much has been achieved in her three years at the school, including the clearing of a significant deficit budget, but it is recognised that there is still much to do. Performance management targets are not always sufficiently linked to outcomes for pupils. The school recognises that these need to be developed alongside a programme to enhance the overall quality of teaching.

During the period since the last inspection, a team spirit has been developed that now sets the tone for the future of the school. Any significant underachievement by pupils has been recognised and plans are in place to support all groups of learners. However, this has not yet had time to fully embed and impact positively on learning. There is no evidence of discrimination. The school has made a successful start to the broadening of responsibilities, including the analysis of whole-school data by the leadership team. This has supported their understanding of strengths and areas for development in teaching. Teachers themselves have had less experience, and therefore have less of an understanding, of how the analysis of data can support them in moving learning on. This is an area for development. The governing body has undergone significant changes in membership over the last year, but is now well organised into committees with clearly defined strategic roles. As a result it is becoming more aware of school issues and providing a higher level of challenge as well as support. The arrangements for safeguarding are good. All procedures and policies are fully in place and systems are effective. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of themselves as citizens in the local and global context but their knowledge of the national context is less well developed.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress and move into Year 1 with skills that are generally above the national average, with key strengths in all aspects of personal, social and emotional development. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and are able to discuss the benefits of a balanced diet, one child reporting that 'I eat fruit because it is good for me'. However, no evidence was seen during the inspection of the children being able to freely access drinking water. The provision in both the indoor and outdoor learning environment is variable, with some exceptional practice seen, for example in the role play bistro where children could order food from menus, be served, eat and pay for their purchases. However, provision in other areas was not as strong, with children being directed to work in areas where they could not access all areas of learning. Access to the spacious outdoor environment was sometimes limited. Senior staff are aware that this is an area for development and the team leader is working closely with colleagues to enhance provision.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Just over a quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The results are generally supportive of the school. There are few concerns in the comments received. Most refer to individual rather than generic problems, although several parents state that they would like communication between home and school to be improved. However, evidence gathered showed that parents are kept well informed about their children's attainment, progress and well-being.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Herstmonceux Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 212 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	60	20	34	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	66	20	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	55	24	41	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	62	21	36	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	64	20	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	57	22	38	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	53	26	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	35	60	20	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	57	23	40	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	60	18	31	4	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	50	22	38	5	9	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	29	50	21	36	5	9	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	60	23	40	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Herstmonceux Church of England Primary School, Herstmonceux BN27 4LG

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and observing the lessons, assembly, lunch times and play times. You and your parents told us that most of you enjoy school. We found that your school is satisfactory, but that things are improving.

These are the things we found that your school does especially well.

- You get off to a good start in Reception.
- You generally then make at least satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 6 and reach broadly average standards by the time you are ready for secondary school.
- Most of you enjoy learning, although your attendance is satisfactory rather than good!
- Your behaviour is good and you are sensible.
- Your governors, headteacher and senior managers have a clear view of how they want the school to improve. ? Staff work well together

We have asked your staff and governors to work on two key areas that will make your school even better. Firstly, we have asked staff to assess your learning as it is happening, and then use this information carefully to plan your next learning steps. Secondly, we have asked that the school's leaders visit your classrooms more often so that they can support your teachers in helping you with your learning.

You can help with these improvements by asking questions in learning time and making sure that your teacher knows if work is too easy or too hard, and of course by ensuring that you come to school regularly and on time!

Thank you for a very enjoyable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Lindsey Diamond

Lead inspector

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