

Hurst Green Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114508
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338385
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Maynard
Headteacher	Matthew Sandaver
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons and five different teachers were observed. Discussions were held with the headteacher, teachers, support and administrative staff, governors, parents and carers, and pupils. The school's documentation was scrutinised carefully; this included school improvement plans, records tracking pupils' progress, minutes of meetings held by staff and the governing body, and documents relating to safeguarding. In addition, 64 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, 10 staff questionnaires and 38 pupil questionnaires were analysed.

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

- pupils' achievement based on their skill levels on entry, the effects of mobility within groups and any other factors
- whether there are any differences in the achievement of the girls and boys in all classes
- the impact of the school's provision for pupils' personal development and its safeguarding procedures
- the effectiveness of the school's strategies for assessment and analysis of progress, and the extent to which pupils are involved in assessing their own learning
- how effectively leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are enabling improvements.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average, rural primary school. Pupils come from the local village and those surrounding it. The five classes are all mixed-age. Many of the children enter the Reception class having previously attended the village pre-school, which is located on the same site.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average and only a small number of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection, including the headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, and the deputy headteacher. A new school building is scheduled for completion by the end of October 2010.

There is an acting deputy headteacher and a temporary Key Stage 2 teacher.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Over the last two years, the organisation of the school's curriculum and the use of assessments to gauge the impact of teaching have been ineffective. As a result, expectations of pupils' achievement have been too low. This has resulted in inadequate progress and a decline in attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. Although the majority of pupils' attainment is average by the time they leave the school, it is clear from their above-average starting points, that many are capable of achieving much higher levels. There is a lack of consistent planning based upon assessment information and insufficient guidance is given to pupils, as a result of inadequate teaching. Consequently, pupils make uneven progress. An inadequate curriculum contributes to the lack of challenge for more able pupils. Girls make significantly better progress than boys. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make sound progress as they have clear targets for improvement and effective support from capable teaching assistants.

Leadership and management are inadequate. The headteacher, other staff and the governing body do not have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is weak. As a result, staff have not implemented successful strategies or rigorous enough monitoring and evaluation systems to raise attainment and ensure that all pupils make sufficient progress. A significant proportion of staff, parents and carers lack confidence in how the school is run. This comment from one parent is typical of others received by inspectors: 'We have significant concerns over our child's current development, teaching standards and management. We believe that the school has deteriorated significantly since the last inspection.'

Where the school has begun to implement consistent strategies, such as in the Early Years Foundation Stage through the good work of the acting deputy headteacher, teaching has improved and progress is better. However, the core business of the school, to ensure that all pupils achieve their academic potential, has not been a high enough priority. With the help of the local authority's support programme, improvement planning is becoming more sharply focused on raising attainment and accelerating learning. Although there are some positive early signs of increasing clarity of purpose, the school does not have the capacity to bring about the urgent improvement that is required.

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There are some strengths in the school's work. The school is characterised by warm relationships where the safety, pastoral welfare and emotional well-being of each pupil are given high priority by all staff. As a result, pupils behave well, get on well together and enjoy school. Expectations are high regarding pupils' social and moral development and behaviour, and pupils respond well to these challenges.

Although procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are satisfactory, safeguarding is inadequate as there are some policies and records of safety tests, for example, those relating to electrical equipment, that are not up-to-date. The school does much to promote its place in the local community. The contribution of the Hurst Green School Association is greatly appreciated by all involved. Displays around the school show that these links make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in culturally diverse national and global communities are being developed satisfactorily.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the next year, and raise pupils' achievement by focusing on:
 - embedding the use of assessment information to set accurate, understandable and challenging targets for all pupils
 - giving pupils clear guidance during lessons and through marking of their work so they know how to improve.
- Improve the opportunities for learning for all pupils by:
 - creating a common and shared understanding of the school's curriculum
??????ensuring lesson plans are always focused on what pupils need to learn next
 - taking pupils' interests into account and adapting teachers' medium-term and daily planning accordingly.
- Ensure that leaders and managers accelerate the pace of change by:
 - evaluating the school's performance with greater rigour and planning carefully for improvement
 - monitoring and evaluating all initiatives so that effective practice becomes embedded and inconsistencies are eliminated
 - giving subject leaders opportunities to develop teaching and learning in their subjects so they can provide targeted support for staff.
- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that safety testing records are immediately up-dated.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

In the lessons observed that were satisfactory or better, pupils were very attentive, worked together well and enjoyed activities. In a Year 5/6 class, pupils listened carefully

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and considered their responses after hearing a chapter of their current book. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class clearly enjoyed their art lesson based on a visit to an allotment the day before. However, in all cases, it was not clear how these, and other lessons, were being used over time to consistently accelerate pupils' progress and achievement. Many pupils' attainment is too low. A significant number of pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points and achievement is therefore inadequate. The opportunities for pupils to understand how to improve their work by assessing their own and others' efforts are very limited. As a result, pupils are not aware of what is expected of them as they move through the school.

Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They respect others and socialise well. Pupils are proud of their school and, although they are pleased about many aspects of its life, they are anxious about their own progress and would like more trips and visits to enhance their learning experiences. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory and improving because most pupils want to come to school. Pupils' contribution to the local community is good, particularly in their support for a range of charities and local activities. The school council has been responsible for important initiatives, such as the promotion of recycling activities. These efforts, and the healthy schools initiative, have ensured that pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of diet and exercise. Pupils assert that any incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are dealt with and they feel safe in school. They say that there is always someone who will listen to them.

Although pupils' ability to work in groups and teams is good, their attainment in literacy and numeracy is below their capabilities, and most have little idea of how to improve their own learning or use their initiative to make progress. As a result, pupils are not adequately prepared for their next school or adult life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2

¹ 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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

In the lessons observed, pupils almost always concentrated on their work and were keen to please their teachers and other adults. However, the curriculum is not planned in sufficient detail to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning. Attempts to revise the curriculum and whole-school planning to encourage creativity and practical learning experiences have been ineffective. Teachers are aware that the lack of rigour in finalising these new approaches to the curriculum does not ensure that pupils' precise needs in relation to their skills in English and mathematics are properly met.

Teachers' understanding of the use of assessment is underdeveloped, so too many opportunities to plan for specific outcomes for individual pupils are missed. In discussion, most pupils were unable to explain how their targets worked or how they could use these to improve their work. Too many pieces of work are unmarked or receive very little attention and opportunities to move the pupils forward are therefore missed.

On occasion, the careful planning of an individual lesson or series of lessons on a topic was implemented with enthusiasm and care. This was clear in a good Year 4/5 lesson on the dangers of waste and the need for recycling. The pupils were enthusiastic as they set about creating their own solutions to the problems they had been introduced to so well. The teacher's good use of praise reflected the way the school constantly encourages good behaviour, and the quality of the relationships between staff and pupils. This is further evidence of the satisfactory care, guidance and support offered to pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

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Leadership and management, including governance, are inadequate because there is no common sense of purpose, or clear drive and ambition to improve provision. The school's self-evaluation is incomplete and not well documented and, therefore, ineffective. The partnership that has developed recently between the headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher, through the support of the local authority, has begun to help the school to address the important issues. There is now a timetable to produce an effective improvement plan with clear guidance for raising attainment. However, this work is still too recent to have had any beneficial impact on pupils' learning. The school administrators are considerable assets and help to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school.

The governing body has been diligent in supporting the school in addressing weaknesses in leadership, but it has not provided sufficient challenge or held the school to account for pupils' inadequate achievements. Its members are now becoming more zealous and show genuine concern; they have begun to challenge decisions and request explanations about the outcomes for pupils. Staff and the governing body ensure that discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Although the school takes its duty to promote equal opportunities seriously, it has failed to eliminate differences in achievement between groups of pupils.

Safeguarding policies and other related documents do not meet requirements and are therefore inadequate. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory and pupils are beginning to have a wider understanding of different faiths and cultures. The link with a school in Malawi is a particular source of enjoyment to the pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The Reception/Year 1 class is led and managed well by the acting deputy headteacher. Clear priorities have been set and appropriate actions taken to improve this provision. For example, all Early Years Foundation Stage staff are now involved in planning and in the assessment of children's learning.

Children play together amicably and are very well-behaved. They enjoy learning. Data show that children's skills and abilities when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage are usually above those typically expected. Overall, they make satisfactory progress and at the end of Reception, the majority exceed the levels expected for their age. Their progress is regularly reviewed, and tracking the progress made by different groups of learners is becoming more consistent. The teaching of letters and sounds has improved. Learning is linked to the next steps children need to make maximum progress in these areas.

Staff provide well for children's welfare. Both inside and outside, children have access to a varied range of activities that support their personal and creative development, communication and language skills, and knowledge and understanding of the world. The balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities is carefully organised.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

About a quarter of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire had concerns about the quality of education provided by the school. This view was reiterated by those who spoke to members of the inspection team. Although they consider that the school has a warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere, many do not feel their children make adequate progress. A small minority of parents and carers also expressed dissatisfaction over their ability to be involved in their own children's learning and how their suggestions and concerns are considered by senior staff. Inspectors endorse these views. The large number of concerns raised by parents and carers were shared and discussed with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hurst Green Church of England 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 129 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	30	39	61	6	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	39	33	52	4	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	27	31	48	11	17	4	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	20	39	45	13	20	5	8
The teaching is good at this school	17	27	28	44	13	20	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	27	30	47	11	17	4	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	33	27	42	12	19	2	3
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)	7	11	32	50	16	25	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	20	34	53	11	17	5	8
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	14	32	50	13	20	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	19	34	53	10	16	4	6
The school is led and managed effectively	12	19	35	55	5	8	8	13
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	27	31	48	10	16	4	6

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). 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hurst Green Church of England Primary School, Etchingham, TN19 7PN

I am writing to thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We spent time in some of your lessons and talked to some of you. We also looked at the work of the school and talked to all of the staff and some of the school governors. We were interested in what your parents and carers think of your school, and we enjoyed listening to what you had to say. There are good points about your school but some important things are not working well enough. We think the school needs some extra help to put them right as quickly as possible. We call this 'special measures'.

There are some things about your school that you should be proud of.

- Adults take very good care of you. They listen to you and make sure you feel safe and happy.
- You behave well and get on well together.
- Children in the Reception/Year 1 class make satisfactory progress.

Our main concern is that you are not achieving well enough in your lessons and this must be sorted out quickly. Your school needs to raise your attainment in English, mathematics and science, and make sure you learn at a faster pace. We think the work in lessons is too easy for some of you and that you could be doing much better. We have asked teachers to look carefully at how they plan lessons and give you more challenging work to speed up your learning. We have asked the school leaders to make this their main priority and to make sure that all lessons are good enough. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that you know exactly what you need to do to improve your work. You will all have to show that you are able to meet the challenge and really try hard!

Other inspectors will visit you regularly in the future to check on the school's progress.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall

Lead Inspector

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