

# Ninfield Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114515
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338387
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacque Buttriss

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	179
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janet Pattisson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2010
<b>School address</b>	Church Lane Battle TN33 9JW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. About two thirds of time was spent looking at learning. Inspectors saw seven lessons, one in each class, which included all the teachers. Discussions were held with parents, pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at key documents, including the self-evaluation form and the school development plan. Questionnaires returned by 85 parents and carers were analysed.

Inspectors looked in detail at the following:

? the reasons for the apparent underperformance of Year 6 pupils in their national tests in 2009 and the progress and attainment of the current Year 6

? what reasons there may be for the downward trend up to 2009 in the national tests at the end of Year 2, and how well these younger pupils are doing now to see whether this is still the case

? the skills children have when they first join the school in order to ascertain the progress they make in the Reception class

? the quality of teaching throughout the school and its impact on the learning of pupils of all abilities ? the effectiveness of work being done to improve pupils' writing skills across the school.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are very few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than in most schools and few pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is a daily breakfast club run by the school in its small hall. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Artsmark awards. The new headteacher has been in post for one year.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Inspectors agree with the many pupils who told us that 'this is a good school'. Ninfield provides a good standard of education. There are several significant strengths. Principal among these are the imaginative curriculum, the high quality of care, guidance and support and the excellent provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children have an excellent start and make outstanding progress in the Reception class. Pupils achieve well as they go through the school, so that they leave at the end of Year 6 with above average attainment. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons so that they also make good progress. Writing is the current focus for development and writing standards are steadily rising as a result. However, writing still falls a little behind attainment in other aspects of literacy, mathematics and science. Pupils are effectively taught how to write for a range of purposes, but some of the older pupils do not have sufficient opportunities for extended, imaginative writing.

Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school. As one parent put it, reflecting the views of many, 'My children always slip into school with a smile on their faces.' A small child beamed proudly as she exclaimed, 'I love my school.' Attendance is good and pupils have highly positive attitudes to their learning. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are strongly caring of each other. As a result, they feel extremely safe in school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy, as the Healthy Schools award indicates. They are very keen to adopt good eating habits and to keep physically fit. They enjoy taking responsibilities for each other as peer mediators and as 'buddies' to younger children.

The good and sometimes dynamic teaching, together with the exciting curriculum, inspires pupils to develop a true love of learning. Most lessons are very stimulating so that pupils are well motivated to work purposefully towards their learning goals. However, in a few lessons, more able pupils are not challenged to achieve as highly as they could because expectations are not always high enough. Excellent care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils feel valued and confident. As one pupil put it, 'This school is very respectful and caring about us.'

The strong and enthusiastic leadership team works hard together to drive forward school improvement. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and candid. Leaders have been successful in improving assessment and raising attendance rates since the last inspection. Over the past six months, progress has accelerated and attainment is rising throughout the school. These successes demonstrate the school's good capacity for further sustained improvement.

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

- Help the more able pupils in all classes to achieve as highly as they could by:
  - communicating higher expectations and setting higher targets for these pupils
  - ensuring greater challenge so that work is well matched to their needs and abilities.
- Raise pupils' standards in writing by providing older pupils with more extended opportunities for the writing of imaginative prose and poetry.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In previous years, children joined the Reception class with skills below expectations, but due to improved local nursery provision, this year's children entered the school with skills in line with those expected at this age. Excellent progress means that this group are already working well above age-related expectations. Progress rates have varied throughout the rest of the school, but over the past few months have accelerated more consistently. The evidence in school shows a great improvement in both progress and attainment over the past six months, which is reflected in pupils' work. Consequently, they are well ahead in the levels of attainment reached by their age groups at this stage in the previous year. For example, Year 6 pupils' standards were lower in 2009 than has been the norm for this school, as a result of frequent changes in teaching due to staff secondment and movement. However, the current Year 6 pupils are now attaining above average. Indeed, they relish opportunities to show how well they are doing. One pupil commented: 'Yesterday we had a really, really hard challenge in maths. It was fun.'

Pupils of all ages demonstrate evident enjoyment. Their excellent behaviour is praised by visitors. As one parent put it, 'I have never met children as polite and considerate as the children at this school.' Another commented, 'This is a happy school – all the children help and look out for each other.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. They enjoy taking responsibilities and have a strong voice through the school council. Indeed, the school eagerly acted on the school council's idea to stagger break times, to allow more space for movement in the cramped playground. Their good acquisition of basic skills, the impressive way they work together and their growing independence prepare pupils well for the next stages in their learning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Good teaching motivates pupils to make good progress and enjoy their learning. One pupil said, 'School is fun. I love literacy.' Another commented, 'I have been to a lot of schools. This school has taught me the most.' In one outstanding lesson, Year 2 pupils were highly enthusiastic in their joint retelling of a familiar story in unison, using 'Kung-fu' punctuation. This was learning at its liveliest! Pupils take an active part in the very good self-assessment of their work. All pupils have individual learning targets. Teachers mark pupils' books well with regular assessments and good suggestions for how they can improve their work.

The outstanding curriculum is imaginatively enriched by the skilful use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school and pupils explore related issues such as internet safety and the leisure use of computer games with great maturity. The curriculum is well enriched by a wide variety of additional activities, including a range of sports and even Latin lessons for more able pupils. The Artsmark award confirms the lively provision for art and related subjects.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are characterised by the immense care taken by staff to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils. As one parent put it, 'The school has been excellent in both care and awareness of our son's very specific needs.' Indeed, parents asked inspectors to include in the report that the school is proactive in ensuring that all pupils are aware of the special educational needs and/or disabilities of a few and adapting the curriculum accordingly. There are good links with external specialists to provide additional support. The school's popular breakfast club gives pupils a very good start to their school day with a variety of cooked breakfasts and a good range of

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activities and games for all ages to play together. Indeed, some of the teachers have their breakfast here too.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The dynamic headteacher has a clear vision which he communicates well to other leaders and the whole staff. He leads the strong leadership team in driving the school forward and securing good improvements, for example by accelerating pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Staff morale is high, as demonstrated by one teaching assistant's comment: 'To work here is a real pleasure. There is a real sense of team value. I feel appreciated and that we are all working together to achieve the same goal, that every child achieves their potential.'

The school development plan makes clear what is being done to bring about improvements in those key areas identified through accurate self-evaluation. Good systems are in place to track and analyse pupils' progress. These are well used to adapt planning and teaching to the learning needs of most pupils, ensuring that equality of opportunity is well promoted. The school sets suitably challenging end-of-year targets for pupils, but for a few of the more able pupils these are not sufficiently high. Governors are well led and agree that they now feel much better informed about all aspects of the school's provision and outcomes. As a result, they are able to challenge leaders and hold them to greater account for the school's performance. All safeguarding procedures are fully in place, including the training of named governors in child protection and safer recruitment.

There are good partnerships with other schools and other organisations to promote pupils' learning and well-being. The good community cohesion is characterised by the excellent links that have developed with a school in Malawi, leading to regular correspondence between pupils. This helps them to gain greater awareness of the lives and experiences of others in distant lands. The school is beginning to develop a link with a school in a multicultural area of London, but this is still at an early stage. Despite the school's very cramped site and buildings, all staff work hard to make the best use of the available space and resources to achieve good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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<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	2
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding leadership and teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is characterised by passion and energy in ensuring that children have the very best start possible. Thus, it is no wonder that they thrive as they gain confidence and self-esteem, progressing fast in their learning and gaining strong and ever-increasing skills across all areas of their lively and exciting curriculum. An example of this can be seen in the spirited two-page story written unaided by a five year old, recounting with gusto the tale of the 'Little Red Hen'.

The very small outside learning environment is imaginatively used to provide a variety of stimulating experiences across all areas of learning. The classroom provides a vital, stimulating and purposeful springboard for extending pupils' skills as well as exercising their imaginations. Indeed, when one inspector visited the 'garden centre' to buy some flowers, a child confidently allayed her anxiety at the high price by explaining conspiratorially that 'it's only pretend', before putting her hand out for the money! Children are developing excellent independent and collaborative learning skills and their social skills are remarkably sophisticated for pupils of this age group. They clearly enjoy their learning. Staff continuously assess and record children's acquisition and use of new skills, in order to plan future learning activities. Good transition arrangements prepare children well for both starting school and their transfer to Year 1.



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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>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

### **Views of parents and carers**

There is a relatively high response rate of 47% of questionnaires returned by parents, of whom the great majority are wholly positive about their children’s school. There are two common concerns, voiced by a few parents in each case. The first is about lack of space and inspectors agree that, although this certainly presents many challenges, the school makes creative use of what space it has to optimum effect. The second centres on a few parents’ concerns over lack of continuity of provision in a class where there has been some inconsistency in staffing. Inspectors found that there had been some unavoidable breaks in continuity. The headteacher is updating progress data and leaders are doing all they can to minimise disruption and thereby improve provision.

Most parents were full of praise for the hard work and dedication of leaders and staff throughout the school. ‘All the staff strive for quality and keep the children at the centre of their focus,’ said one parent, while another explained: ‘My daughter’s teacher breeds a culture of “love to learn” and self-belief.’ Many parents express their pleasure at the great care staff take of their children. Some praise the continuing improvement they see, with comments such as ‘I am happy that things are changing for the better.’ Finally, one parent encapsulates the views of many: ‘I am very grateful my son has the chance to attend such a lovely school.’

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ninfield 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 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	45	43	51	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	61	30	35	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	34	49	58	7	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	28	41	48	2	14	4	5
The teaching is good at this school	34	40	36	42	7	8	3	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	37	36	42	9	11	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	40	40	47	3	4	1	1
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)	28	33	35	41	8	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	28	49	58	8	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	41	36	42	7	8	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	39	39	46	7	8	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	46	54	27	32	6	7	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	53	29	34	7	8	1	1

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.**



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26 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ninfield Church of England Primary School, Battle TN33 9JW

Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We very much enjoyed talking with you and reading the comments some of you wrote on your questionnaires. We agree that yours is a good school. These are the things that we especially like about your school:

- Children in the Reception classes have an excellent start to their school lives.
- Most of you work hard, make good progress and achieve well.
- You behave exceptionally well in school. Well done!
- You have an excellent awareness of how to be healthy and stay safe.
- The way you take responsibility and care for each other is outstanding.
- You have a very good breakfast club which feeds you well and provides a sociable start to your school day.
- Your dedicated headteacher and his enthusiastic team lead your school well.

These are the things your school could do to improve:

- Help the more able pupils to achieve as well as they could by setting higher targets and more challenging tasks to extend their learning.
- Improve older pupils' writing skills by giving you more and longer opportunities to write imaginative stories and poems.

You can help the school by keeping up your good work and continuing to enjoy your lessons. I would like to wish you all lots of success in your future learning.

Yours sincerely

Jacquie Buttriss

Lead Inspector

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