

Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114524
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338389
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Marr
Headteacher	M E Sharpe
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and observed all five teachers teaching. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, subject leaders, teachers, other staff, governors, groups of pupils, members of the parent/teachers committee (PTA) and other parents and carers. They looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessment files, school statutory policies and the school's improvement plan. Added to this, inspectors scrutinised curricular planning documents, pupils' tracking records and class assessment records, evaluations of teaching carried out by the school and the minutes of governors' meetings. Observations were made of pupils in lessons, on the playground/playing field and at lunchtime. The team also analysed questionnaires, including 60 returned from parents and carers, 43 from pupils and 21 from staff.

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

- the effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting the rise in attainment and achievement for all pupils over the last year and how effectively this strategy is being continued to maintain recent performance
- how effectively the school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in class and small group sessions in order that these pupils can make good progress.

Information about the school

Ticehurst and Flimwell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a small primary school serving the two villages of Ticehurst and Flimwell. Some pupils come from further away. Pupils are taught in the Reception class and in four mixed-age classes. Only Reception age children are included in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a privately run pre-school group on site and this meets in two classrooms within the school. At the rear of the school grounds, the building of a new children's centre to provide permanent pre-school facilities has just commenced

Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also very high and four pupils have statements of special educational needs. Their needs mostly link to specific and moderate learning difficulties and emotional and social difficulties. The school has gained awards for a Sustainable School (bronze), Artsmark (gold), Sing Up, (silver) and the Quality Mark.

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

This is a good school. The care, guidance and support given to all pupils are excellent, and are some of their many outstanding features. The dedication that the school demonstrates to help the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, through the nurture groups, is outstanding. The school makes a substantial impact upon improving pupils' attitudes, attainment and achievement.

The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. The robust monitoring and accurate evaluations of the work of the school provide an effective basis for determining the priorities identified in the school development plan. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies the correct areas to promote further improvements across the school. In the past two years, the school has experienced some disruption due to staffing problems and the significant behaviour problems presented by a small minority of pupils. This resulted in some inconsistency in the quality of education for older pupils. However, with decisive actions from the headteacher, senior staff and governing body, the school has successfully resolved these problems. Staffing is now stable and pupils with challenging behaviour are supported very effectively. As a result of these improvements, the decline in the last two years in pupils' performance at the end of Year 6 has been eliminated and attainment is currently broadly average. Progress of all pupils in Year 6 has accelerated this year, and is currently good from the time of their entry to the school. These determined efforts by the leaders and managers clearly demonstrate that the school's capacity for sustained improvement in the future is good.

Teaching is good and tasks are adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils in each mixed aged class. However, there are some inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work. Often teachers do not give pupils sufficient guidelines to help them understand exactly how they can reach their targets. The curriculum is good and cross-subject links and visits to local places make learning for all groups of pupils more meaningful.

Safeguarding procedures are currently excellent. Almost all pupils feel safe and say they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is outstanding and behaviour is good. Many pupils behave excellently. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. Nearly all have an excellent understanding of the need to remain healthy and this is reflected in the Healthy School and Activemark awards.

The school's efforts to promote community cohesion are good overall. The vast majority of parents are fully supportive of the school. However, sometimes the leaders and managers do not make certain that all groups of parents feel confident that their ideas and views are taken into account.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers use marking strategies to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve and to reach the targets set for them.
- Develop a robust partnership with all groups of parents so that everyone is confident that their ideas and views are considered.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Inspectors' observations in the classroom and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm that the rate of progress has improved and that pupils' attainment continues to rise. Older pupils have made up for their lack of progress earlier in Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected levels for their age is slightly above average. They have secure basic skills in English, mathematics and science. However, some pupils do not understand how to reach the targets set for them. Their extended writing illustrates that the pupils transfer their writing skills across different subjects effectively. For example, visits such as the winter excursion to the local Lapland event inspired pupils to write at length about their experiences. There is no significant difference between the attainment and progress of the boys and girls.

The pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress even though the attainment of most is below average.

Pupils are polite and enjoy coming to school. They often spontaneously applaud the efforts of others. The pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. They know that their views, especially through the well-organised school council, are listened to and taken seriously by the school. The behaviour of almost all pupils is outstanding and these pupils make sure that their positive attitudes make a strong contribution to good learning. Those who face challenges in their behaviour control themselves well for most of the time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2

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

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	
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	2
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The staff have excellent relationships with the pupils and many pupils say they are cared for really well. Commitment to all pupils as valued individuals is exceptional, resulting in the growth in their confidence and self-esteem. This is a strength of the school. The nurture groups play a very important role, which is greatly appreciated by the pupils, and, because of this, pupils are successfully integrated into the normal smooth running of the classrooms. The art displayed around the school and the drama production of 'The Wizard of Oz' are very good evidence of the accomplished way through which the school raises pupils' self-esteem and widens their interests.

Planning of lessons is consistently good and teachers maintain a brisk pace to learning. The tasks are modified effectively to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. Teachers and assistants encourage pupils to talk about their work in order to develop ideas and to rehearse answers as preparation for their written work. Assessment strategies are deployed well and pupils' self-assessment routines enable pupils to judge how well they are doing. The school's tracking records are well established and are used effectively to identify those pupils who might need further support to move them on. Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly, there are some inconsistencies across the school as teachers' comments do not always help pupils to understand what they need to do to move towards their targets.

The curriculum is good and developing well to link learning across different subjects, such as history and geography being linked through a task in written English. Visits to local places such as the nearby walled garden are used extremely well to foster an interest in painting and writing. The class gardens are used enthusiastically as pupils gain an interest in growing vegetables and flowers. Residential visits effectively raise pupils' awareness of the wider communities beyond their villages and also successfully enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2

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	
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported by senior staff, provides a very clear direction to the work of the school. The challenging targets set to drive forward improvements have successfully overcome problems and once again established good teaching and learning. Subject leaders and the coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities devise good strategies to improve attainment especially of the lower attaining pupils. This has a marked impact upon raising the achievement of these pupils. The school promotes good equality of opportunity for all pupils whilst tackling discrimination. For example, the drama production this week involved all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 being on stage if they wished to be.

The governing body is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They make an effective contribution to the setting and evaluation of priorities in the school development plan. All statutory requirements are met, including child protection and risk assessment. They ensure that the safeguarding procedures are rigorous and have taken particular care to ensure that the fencing around the current building site does not pose a hazard for children at school times.

The headteacher, governors and staff work conscientiously to build community cohesion and currently it is good. There are especially good links with a school in Malawi and other schools in urban settings. Links with local organisations, including family lunchtimes, Grandparent Day and the monthly opportunity for children to show their work to their parents, are outstanding. The links with the secondary and other schools are exceptionally good. The building of a children's centre adjacent to the school illustrates the level of determination by the leaders and managers to improve the pre-school provision in the area.

The school has a wide range of methods to keep parents informed of school news and about their child's work. However, there are times when the school does not maintain sufficiently strong partnership links with all groups of parents and this can cause uncertainty about school matters for some parents

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3

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	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills on entry to the Reception class are below the expected levels for their age in their knowledge of linking sounds and letters, in their writing, calculation and creative skills and also in their knowledge of the world.

Within the classroom and in the well-resourced outdoor area, children have many opportunities to follow their own investigations, and their progress is good. The garden alongside their classroom is used well to promote knowledge of vegetables and flowers and also the benefits of healthy eating. Leadership and management are good, with well-planned tasks and assessment records maintained extremely well to plot each child's progress. Teaching is good and the six areas of learning are well established. Adults question children very sensitively to promote children's thinking and to advance their skills effectively. Children who were observed digging up their potato crop showed competence in counting and weighing and were enthusiastic as the first of their plants revealed 14 new potatoes.

Provision for children's welfare, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is very good. Attainment in the Reception class is currently in line with expected levels for their age but there are still some who show weaknesses in their personal, social and emotional development. Their skills in writing, and in linking sounds and letters, as well as in calculation, have improved markedly and, because of the good progress overall, most enter Year 1 having reached the goals expected for this age group, with many having exceeded them.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

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

The proportion of parents and carers returning the questionnaire was good. The majority who replied to the questionnaire or spoke to inspectors expressed their full support for the school and said they are proud of the school. Many commented that the school has a 'family feel' and that staff promoted interesting activities. A minority of parents expressed some concern that their children were not making the progress they expected and that the school did not fully inform them of their child's progress. Inspection evidence shows that in nearly all instances, home-school support and communication are good and all teachers are available to talk to parents at any time about problems. Inspectors judge that pupils make good progress. Some parents say that they are not always aware of what is happening in school and that they are sometimes not involved in what the school is doing and feel left out of some events. The inspectors agree that the school could do more to ensure that all groups of parents feel confident that they know what is going on in school and that their ideas and views are considered. A few parents did not think the school was well led and managed. The inspection evidence shows that there are good monitoring processes, and evaluation is used effectively by the leadership and management to set targets for improvement, which are having a good impact upon raising attainment and achievement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	42	32	53	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	29	48	28	47	3	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	20	35	58	10	17	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	25	22	37	14	23	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	35	33	55	4	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	20	32	53	13	22	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	33	38	63	1	2	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)	19	32	30	50	8	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	25	27	45	16	27	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	22	26	43	13	22	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	22	29	48	12	20	4	7
The school is led and managed effectively	12	20	26	43	9	15	8	13
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	33	28	47	8	13	1	2

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.



9 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ticehurst and Flimwell CE Primary School, Wadhurst TN5 7DH

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that the school provides you with a good education. Thank you for telling us your very positive views when you completed the questionnaire. It helped us to get a good picture of your school. Well done!

These are the things that we judged to be good in your school.

- Your headteacher provides good leadership and management
- The teachers and other staff work as a team and support your headteacher well.
- Teaching is good and your teachers encourage you to answer questions. Because of this, you make good progress and your work is improving.
- The adults provide outstanding care, guidance and support, especially for those of you who find work difficult at times.
- Your attendance is excellent and you are all developing very positive attitudes towards your work and towards each other.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to remain healthy and you know how to keep safe.
- You are very polite and your overall good behaviour helps you to create a positive family feeling around the school.
- You make an outstanding contribution to your school community and the local neighbourhood.
- It was exciting to see how well you are developing your skills in music and drama and we really thought you all did very well in 'The Wizard of Oz'.

There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- ensure that all teachers use their marking comments to help you to understand exactly what you need to do to improve and how you can reach your targets
- ensure that the school develops a stronger relationship with all parents so that they know that their views and ideas are considered.

Once again, thank you for your help. You can help further by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Bassett

Lead inspector

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