

# Wadhurst CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114532
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338392
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Marshall

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	318
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Fox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Marks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Sparrows Green Wadhurst TN5 6SR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons and 11 different teachers were observed. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teaching and support staff, governors, parents and carers and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, and minutes of governors' meetings. In addition, 127 questionnaires from parents and carers, 20 staff questionnaires and 95 pupil questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the attainment and progress of the current pupils, especially in writing, and the school's assessment and tracking procedures
- pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of the school's measures to enhance pupils' social and emotional development
- the contribution of the curriculum, and extra-curricular activities, to overall outcomes for pupils
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governors, in enabling improvements.

## Information about the school

Wadhurst Church of England Primary is a larger than average primary school, with an attached Nursery. Pupil numbers vary greatly from year to year. The large majority of pupils live in the Wadhurst area with the rest travelling from nearby towns and villages. Almost all pupils come from a White British background. A smaller than average number of pupils is known to be entitled to free school meals. An average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These mostly relate to language, literacy and communication, and emotional difficulties. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is above average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery, a Reception class, and a Year 1/Reception class.

Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed. The long-serving headteacher is retiring and leaving the school at the end of this term.

**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

Wadhurst Church of England Primary School is a good school. It has a considerable number of strengths. In the last three years, the headteacher, with the deputy headteacher appointed during that time, has initiated a number of changes and steered the school forward very effectively. The school's view of itself is accurate and its track record of raising achievement and implementing change shows it is very well placed to build on its strengths and has a good capacity to improve. One parent summed up the views of almost all by writing, 'I cannot rate the school highly enough. Great education, excellent on manners and caring for other people. My child's confidence has soared since she has been at this school. I am extremely pleased

Although it has varied, pupils' attainment has been above average at the end of Year 6 for a number of years. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Due to the effective organisation and careful early assessments, pupils begin to make very good progress immediately. National test results in Year 6 in 2009 were above those in 2008, and were in line with the school's own carefully formulated targets. Achievement is good throughout the school due to the rigorous systems to track the progress of each pupil and to identify where additional teaching will be most beneficial. There was, however, as the school recognised, a difference in pupils' achievement in writing when compared to that in other areas. There are now good programmes in place to address this, and school assessments show that these are beginning to be effective. Pupils achieve well across a wide range of subjects.

The quality of teaching varies throughout the school, but overall it is good. Lessons are planned to make sure that all pupils enjoy learning. Teachers' planning is thorough and in most classes is based on the use of careful assessments. This ensures that tasks are generally pitched at the right level for all pupils. In the best lessons, activities move at a good pace and pupils are given the maximum opportunities to reinforce their skills and learning in English and mathematics, with exciting and relevant activities that are linked across subject areas. However, these features are not always present in the teaching. The excellent whole-school approach to curriculum planning is not implemented consistently, and pupils are sometimes not provided with sufficiently challenging work. In less effective lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and assessment is not used to help pupils understand the next steps needed to improve their work.

The pastoral support, guidance and care provided for all pupils are very good, and as a result, by the time pupils leave the school, they are mature and thoughtful young adults, who make an extremely effective contribution to the school and the local community. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and feel very safe, reflecting the staff's high expectations and their very effective level of care and moral guidance. They

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have an excellent awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle. One particularly notable aspect of the school's care for individual pupils is the work of the special educational needs team. The very effective learning support assistants ensure that those pupils with specific learning needs are very well cared for through identifying their needs early and providing support so they make outstanding progress.

The school does much to promote its place in the local community. The contribution of the home?school association is greatly appreciated by all involved. The many displays in the school show that while these links with the local community, and with schools overseas, are good, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom are not developed sufficiently well.

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

- Use the school's current monitoring systems to improve the proportion of good teaching by focusing on:
  - improving the pace of learning in some classes
  - further strengthening day-to-day assessment and marking to give pupils clear guidance during lessons
  - extending opportunities for staff to observe the best practice in the school
- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse United Kingdom and extend the school's provision for community cohesion by:
  - instigating the findings of the recent analysis
  - implementing plans to link with schools in other localities

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Observations of lessons showed that all groups of pupils, regardless of their ability, are now making at least good progress. The school's own monitoring confirms inspection findings that although there are many strengths, outcomes are good rather than outstanding. There are still aspects of learning, although planned for carefully in the curriculum, which have still to become embedded in some classes to improve outcomes further. Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding that vary but are usually broadly in line with those expected for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is generally above average and the more able pupils do especially well. Much of the pupils' success in reading is due to the school's strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. Pupils' achievement observed in the Year 5/6 classes is above expectations for their age. This was evident in an excellent Year 5/6 lesson where the teacher very skilfully drew pupils' attention to what 'being the same but different' meant by making them listen carefully to each other's responses.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. They benefit from tailored individual or small group sessions that successfully help to plug the gaps in their writing skills. Activities that involve them using all of their senses

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to learn letter sounds and clusters of sounds aid their confidence in writing for different purposes. This has a positive effect on their learning in all other subjects.

The pupils' keenness to succeed at school and in later life was demonstrated admirably in an assembly on the use of 'talents'. Such experiences make a significant contribution to pupils' good standards in speaking and listening, and overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils consistently showed good standards of behaviour and social skills. Their knowledge of how to keep safe is impressive. They are given an excellent grounding in citizenship and in contributing to the community through being buddies, or members of the school council. The school council has been responsible for many initiatives, including helping to design the play equipment at the recreation ground. These efforts, and the healthy schools initiative, have ensured that pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. The standards reached by pupils, combined with their keen appetite for teamwork, and their interest in learning, prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>1</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>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

<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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In most lessons observed, teaching was effective and so pupils made good progress. They were well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and were keen to please their teachers and other adults. This was evident in a Years 3/4 mathematics lesson where the pupils had to estimate in millilitres and litres for the first time. The liquids were all different colours and very appealing. As one said boy said, 'I'm really excited, I've never done this before.' As in the best lessons observed, the pupils could hardly wait to get on with the task.

Through the many well-developed innovations, and a common planning format, the school provides a detailed 'creative curriculum' that enables subjects to fit together seamlessly. Pupils have many opportunities to use and develop their writing, mathematical and information and communication technology skills in all subjects. The work of the Years 5/6 pupils in an English lesson based on their interpretation of audios of river sounds for personification was excellent. Pupils make very good progress in a range of subjects. The quality of the art work around the school is very impressive. Another outstanding example of this approach is the singing and the impact that this has on pupils' self-esteem. All pupils are welcomed to the Singing Club. Their recent successes in national choir meetings are a reflection of this approach and the enthusiasm it engenders.

Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning and progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics is thorough. Staff use this information well to identify pupils who need additional support programmes. Day-to-day assessment has also improved but it is not yet consistent. In the large majority of lessons where assessment and pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own progress are well established, group work is much more closely matched to pupils' individual needs and therefore more effective.

*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>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides quietly successful leadership. This, in partnership with the extremely effective deputy headteacher, ensures that complacency is not tolerated. Teamwork is very good and the administrative team is a considerable asset to the school. The school knows itself very well and sets the right targets to become even better. All subject leaders and governors are closely involved in monitoring the school's work, which they do with tremendous enthusiasm. Staff work very well together, and are aware that there are differences in the quality of teaching on which they have to

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focus. Documentation is impressive and the evaluation of the school's work is honest and accurate. The outstanding governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. It holds the school to account in a challenging but supportive manner.

Excellent attention is paid by managers at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safety and care for the pupils. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are good because all members of staff are trained and they show good care for pupils and work closely with a range of organisations to support pupils. Staff and governors ensure that discrimination in any form is not tolerated, and the school is very effective in promoting equal opportunities.

The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very well. The need to expand its links to provide a national perspective, which is currently underdeveloped, is well understood by the school.

*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	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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</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

Children make an excellent start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. The high level of commitment and care shown by the class teachers and all the staff is evident in the way that all children settle into the school so well, and immediately begin to learn. Home visits and induction meetings enable the staff, children and their families to get to know each other and help make sure that starting school is a happy event.



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These visits lead to the full involvement of the local community that continues right through the school. As one parent said, 'My child has had a brilliant time at the Nursery. He is very well prepared to move into the Reception class here. He loves school and would be going all day if he could □ you can't ask for more than that!'

Staff know the children very well and they ensure that the least able and most vulnerable progress well. All children are given a real sense of determining their own way forward, which guarantees their full involvement in all activities. The way that children in the main Reception class could decide on what they wanted to do, get out the required equipment, and get on with their task, was excellent. The fact that they could say why they had made their choices was inspiring.

Children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well, especially in communication, language and literacy, and in their personal, social and emotional development. Adults have high expectations, provide very clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. At all times, the class teachers engage and stimulate the children's interests. The enjoyment and concentration of the children as they made their snails from dough, complete with antennae, and observed a large African snail through magnifying glasses so they could write about it, was particularly impressive. The classrooms are stimulating and resources are used exceptionally well as children move from one activity to another. The outstanding outside areas provide the same exciting level of challenge and stimulation, especially for the more capable children.

*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**

The majority of the high numbers of parents or carers who returned questionnaires, or who spoke to the inspection team, were happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and that it has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere. The majority feel their children make good progress. Inspection evidence confirms that most pupils are now making good progress. Parents and carers are particularly impressed with the pastoral support their children receive. Inspectors fully endorse these views. Inspectors do not agree with the very small number of parental criticisms with regard to the help they are given with their children's progress or how they are kept informed of their children's progress. These, and all other comments, 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 Wadhurst 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 127 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 318 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	59	51	40	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	74	58	52	41	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	37	67	53	11	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	39	62	49	12	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	58	46	64	50	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	34	68	54	14	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	40	71	56	3	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)	68	54	50	39	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	34	73	57	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	34	73	57	4	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	29	69	54	12	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	68	54	57	45	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	51	57	45	4	3	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.**



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wadhurst Church of England Primary School, Wadhurst, TN5 6SR

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is a good school with many strengths, and we agree with what you told us  it is a really fun place to learn. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are really good.

- The school looks after you extremely well and you all make good progress in your learning.
- You behave very well, get along with each other and feel very safe in school.
- You all have very good ideas on how to make things better and the teachers always listen to what you want.
- You find lessons interesting and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do both in school and on visits and in clubs
- The headteacher and staff manage the school very well.

Even in good schools, there are some things that could be better. We have asked your teachers to make sure that no matter which class you are in all your lessons are as good as the best. We also want your headteacher and staff to make sure you are given the chance to find out more about people in other parts of the country that are different from where you live. In turn, you must all carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teachers say. Then you will all continue to make good or even better progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall

Lead inspector

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