

Sir Henry Fermor Church Of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114548
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338397
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kay Smith
Headteacher	Anne Franklin
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2006
School address	Crowborough Hill Crowborough TN6 2SD
Telephone number	01892 652405
Fax number	01892 652874
Email address	office@sirhfermor.e-sussex.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and talked with a few parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including records of pupils' progress and the school development plan, assessment information, policies and samples of pupils' written work. Information about safeguarding was also evaluated. They also took into account the views of staff and pupils expressed in questionnaires. Inspectors received and analysed 98 parental questionnaires.

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

- how successfully the school is developing pupils' writing skills
- whether teaching engages, motivates and inspires boys sufficiently to achieve well
- the strengths in provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the extent of pupils' appreciation of those with differing backgrounds and cultures represented nationally
- the robustness of leadership at all levels in improving teaching, learning and pupil achievement.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average-sized school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Most of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social, or speech, language and communication difficulties. Most pupils are White British with an increasing number from other ethnic groups. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low but increasing; most of these pupils can communicate fluently in English. The school has experienced some significant changes in staffing recently, particularly in Years 3 to 6, including changes at senior management level. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage and join one of two Reception classes.

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 school ethos as a Church school is central to all that they do. Parents are very supportive of the school's work. The school's excellent engagement with parents and carers and most effective partnerships with other schools and outside agencies ensures children are nurtured from the start. As one parent noted, 'From the head down staff are very approachable and supportive'. Several aspects of the school's work are outstanding and these contribute significantly to pupils receiving a good education and achieving well. Consequently, the outcomes for pupils, especially their personal development, are good overall. Pupils' are acutely aware about what constitutes unsafe situations, whether using email, the internet or taking part in the 'walking bus'. They especially enjoy 'Activate' and swimming and show an excellent understanding of why they need to stay fit and healthy. The excellent care, guidance and support given are especially noticeable in the brilliant support for vulnerable pupils and their families and the extremely robust arrangements for ensuring that all pupils are safe. Pupils are polite, caring and well behaved. Although several pupils commented that behaviour could be even better, inspectors judged behaviour to be good.

Pupils want to learn because teaching and learning are good overall. As a result of the increasingly effective and more varied curriculum, pupils make at least good progress and some make outstanding progress. Pupils especially enjoy 'learning journeys', for example, and Year 6 pupils had great fun on 'decades day' dressed in the fashions of the 1950s to 1980s. They had researched world events, produced newspapers about lunar landings, and held imaginary interviews with 'Elvis' and 'Cliff' (famous people) and evaluated their own 'rock and roll' drama.

Children start school with wide-ranging skills and knowledge often typical for their age, although within this, quite a few children show higher than expected ability and skills. They make sound progress, although the most-able children do not make the expected gains in the key areas of personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy. This is because they are not routinely challenged or inspired and they are not sufficiently inquisitive as independent learners. In Years 1 and 2 pupils attain above-average standards. Though now resolved in Years 4 to 6, some pupil underperformance, particularly by those who are more able, led to average standards in national tests in Year 6 in the past. Recent results for Year 6 and the school's tracking data and work seen during the inspection shows a much stronger picture with pupils catching up 'lost ground' and now making good progress, so that standards are higher. Girls especially make outstanding progress, and boys' writing skills, as a result of a whole-school focus, are improving. Nonetheless, pupils' writing, problem-solving and investigational skills in mathematics

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especially by the more able, are areas for development. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in class and consequently make good progress. The headteacher has a clear vision and has built a team to share and deliver it. The evaluation of the school's strengths and drive for improvement are rooted in raising standards and achievement still further. Given that teaching and learning are rapidly improving as a result of actions taken, monitoring of the school's work is rigorous, and improvement in pupils' attainment and achievement across all classes is evident, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics especially for more-able pupils by:
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in a range of relevant, real-life situations
 - developing more opportunities for more in-depth problem-solving and investigational work in mathematics.
- Develop the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing a more exciting and stimulating range of activities so that the children, especially the more able, develop as active, inquisitive, independent learners
 - raising the attainment of the most-able learners in their personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy skills.

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

'In the classroom pupils are eager to learn and work well together. Most sustain interest and concentration; occasionally their attention lapses where an activity lasts too long. They make good progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills. Year 1 pupils used 'talking partners' well to discuss their ideas about the photographs of mini-beasts before writing poems, while Year 4 recounted familiar nursery rhymes before writing about them. By the time they leave, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is rapidly rising. Clearer targets for pupils are enabling them to progress at a faster rate. Current work and school checks on pupils' progress shows that most are currently on track to meet challenging targets with an increasing number set to exceed them, so that standards are on track to be higher than average; this represents good achievement from their levels of attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, this accelerated progress is not as marked in all aspects of writing and mathematics for more-able pupils because they are not yet routinely challenged and motivated. Opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills in a range of relevant, real-life situations and to develop more in-depth problem-solving and investigational skills in mathematics are sometimes underdeveloped. Pupils who speak

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English as an additional language make good progress due to extra language support. The reason for good learning and progress by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is due to the effective, targeted support they receive, and this also demonstrates the school's good focus on inclusion. Pupils develop very good skills in information and communication technology; Year 2, challenged to write instructions for a game using laptops, looked forward to accessing their work later through the school's 'virtual learning environment' facility. Such good basic skills prepare them well for the future.

Children are safe and enjoy school and pupils show high levels of social and moral awareness. Pupils participate in interviews for staff, are proud school councillors, play leaders and dining hall assistants, and enjoy gardening and 'eco' groups. They are involved in the church and have contacted local developers about land use. Pupils are genuinely interested in each other and respect other people's feelings and values. As one pupil said, 'It is good to find out more about other people's cultures and faiths; it will help us in the future.' Pupils raise funds, for example by organising a coin map collection with a local secondary school to raise money for a village in The Gambia. Pupils enjoy participating in local musical and sporting events and are successful in local and national swimming events. At the heart of the school's work is a warm and caring atmosphere where all are welcome.

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	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	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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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

The school provides for its pupils well both personally and academically. Pupils at risk of underperforming are now identified at an early stage and tailored help is given. The needs of pupils identified as gifted and talented are generally met well through additional programmes in science and information and communication technology.

The good teaching reflects generally high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers assess pupils' progress, use this information to plan future learning and usually set work at the right level of challenge for most pupils, but this is not always the case for the most-able pupils. Teachers share the intentions of lessons with pupils, use a range of resources to make learning more interesting, engage boys and use good questioning skills to consolidate pupils' learning. Skilled teaching assistants contribute well to pupils learning. Pupils know their targets, and say marking helps them know what to do to improve. Occasionally learning slows with too much 'teacher talk' and chances to really challenge, engage and pursue pupils' independent learning skills can be missed. As one pupil told inspectors', 'We want more hands-on and practical learning.' Inspectors looked closely at how well teaching engages and inspires boys to do well and they found that this was increasingly the case.

The curriculum is effectively underpinned by themes from Caribbean calypso to recycling; Year 3 proudly showed their recyclable pretend sandwiches and packaging. Displays about Japan and a Jewish Sukkah all help promote pupils' personal development and their views of the wider world. The curriculum is enriched through a range of clubs and activities. The outstanding care, support and guidance provided by all staff are very important factors in pupils' success. The good transition arrangements and links with parents and agencies are a real strength of this area.

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
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 is forthright in her vision, ambition and drive for improvement. She is extremely well supported by senior leaders and the governing body. Some significant improvements in teaching, learning, the curriculum and especially in teachers' expectations' of pupils' academic ability are evident. These factors, combined with more

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robust checking systems throughout the school, ensure the upward trend of improvement in pupils' achievement. Senior leaders effectively measure the impact of support programmes and the relatively new subject leaders are clear about their roles and are beginning to have an impact in their subjects.

Leaders and governors take seriously their responsibility to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination and the harmonious school ethos reflects this commitment. The school does a great deal to promote community cohesion within its own locality and much further afield. Leaders and governors acknowledge that they have not yet developed a clear strategy to fully develop pupils' appreciation of those with differing backgrounds and cultures represented nationally. Excellent links with the local community and the church, strong partnerships with parents and outside agencies strengthen the potential for pupils' continuing success. The school has excellent safeguarding and risk assessment practices.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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 are happy and settle quickly. Teachers work in close partnership with parents and pre-school settings, which contributes significantly to children's welfare. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan a balanced range of activities, and give due attention to early counting and blending sounds and letters skills in readiness for reading. They know how children learn at this age, but do not always ensure consistently high-quality and challenging learning through more stimulating play and investigational opportunities. While children enjoy the various activities, adults are not really developing

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good opportunities to inspire and extend them as independent learners, especially those who are more able. Children were observed wandering about not settling to anything in particular, sometimes sitting quietly on their own without stimulation or purpose.

Leaders continue to develop the outdoor learning, and plans are in hand to extend the outside cover. Children have a good choice of free flow from inside to outside activities; for example, children happily set up road signs and directed traffic around the road works and made small gardens from natural objects. Some chatted with mothers about feeding their newborn babies and ticked off their names in the baby clinic, while others put away the shoes in the shoe shop. Adults missed several opportunities to extend imaginary writing, extend talking and develop investigational mathematics. Children enjoyed tracing the letter M in shaving foam, making Oscar Octopuses out of paper and playdough 'grumps' and building small world trucks, and one little boy was delighted to have fixed a broken tow hook. By the end of children's Reception Year, the proportion who reach the expected level of attainment is sometimes higher than average, but within this too few reach the highest levels in all areas of learning, which is why attainment overall is average.

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	3

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaire returns from parents demonstrate that a very large number of parents have positive views about the school. All parents indicate that their children enjoy school, and that the school keeps their child safe. A very large number indicate that the teaching is good and that they are happy overall with their children's experience. Very few indicated areas of unhappiness, these mainly related to meeting their child's particular needs and the school not taking account of any suggestions and concerns they had. Comments made on the questionnaires tended to highlight the positive atmosphere and the high levels of care and support. Others commented about the few extra-curricular activities and lack of competitive sports and support for individual needs. Inspection evidence fully supports the positive views. Inspectors also found that the school offered a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and that the school regularly entered competitive sporting events. Inspectors judged the support for individual pupils to be good in terms of those pupils that have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. However, inspectors judged that the more able could be challenged further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sir Henry Fermor 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 417 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	57	42	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	56	43	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	26	69	70	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	31	58	59	7	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	35	62	63	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	34	52	53	6	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	48	46	47	3	3	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)	22	22	62	63	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	33	52	53	9	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	20	61	62	8	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	20	59	60	8	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	46	47	47	48	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	51	43	44	2	2	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"> ■ 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.



22 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sir Henry Fermor School, Crowborough, TN6 2SD

I am writing to thank you all for being so friendly and helpful when we visited recently. I thought you would like to know what we found out. You and your parents are right to be proud of your school because it is good. You all told us how well the staff look after you and we agree. We saw that you were well behaved and you work hard. Well done! We really liked the way you all help each other in class and at playtimes and in other ways. You also told us how much you like the extra clubs you have and how these help you to keep so fit and healthy.

Your teachers make lessons interesting and you told us how much you enjoyed swimming and using information and communication technology. Those of you in Year 6 'looked fab' on 'decade's day'. You are making good progress and those of you in Years 3 to 6 are doing much better now than before, though those of you who find learning more easy could still be challenged more to do even better in some aspects of your writing and mathematics. You can help, too, by letting teachers know when your work is too easy for you. Reception children could also be given more exciting and challenging activities to help them learn. Those of you who find learning a little bit harder get lots of help and do well. By the time you leave you are doing well in reading, writing and mathematics.

Your headteacher has led the school very well. She gets lots of help from her deputy headteacher and all the staff. Even though you are doing well, your teachers want to make things even better for you. We have suggested that the staff:

- help you all to do even better in mathematics and writing and ensure those who find work easy are especially challenged in mathematics and writing
- make sure that learning is exciting for the youngest children. We want you to be really good at working with others as well as being active independent learners. We would also like the youngest ones, who find learning easy, to do more things that help you to learn new things really quickly.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning

Lead Inspector

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