

# Ightham Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118293
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	339185
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Chris Grove

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	167
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tina Higgins
<b>Headteacher</b>	June Cooke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Oldbury Lane Ightham Sevenoaks TN15 9DD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 882 405
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils including some of the school council. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, records of governors' meetings, development planning and monitoring, and a range of policies and procedures, including those associated with safeguarding, curriculum planning documents and a small sample of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from a sample of pupils, and from school staff. Evidence was also gathered from parental questionnaires, of which 62 were received.

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

- the extent to which teaching offers enough challenge to ensure satisfactory or better achievement by all groups of pupils at all key stages
- how well the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and supports the progressive acquisition of skills in core subjects
- how well the school promotes cohesion at all levels between different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups
- how well the roles of subject leaders and of governors are developed, and how effectively they monitor their areas of responsibility or the work of the school.

## Information about the school

Ightham is a primary school which is smaller than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with much smaller numbers from other ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, principally behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, is well above average. Pupil mobility is broadly average. The school holds the Healthy School and Activemark awards, and the Basic Skills 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

Ightham Primary is a good school, with outstanding practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A highly positive ethos has been developed in which pupils are very happy and enjoy what is on offer. The great majority of parents are very appreciative of the school and its leadership. One described it as 'a lovely village school with a caring staff and a good ethos'. Another wrote of the school as 'a very welcoming community, for both children and parents alike'. The staff form an extremely cohesive team, are proud of the school, and, like the parents, are entirely confident in the leadership. The school motto 'Together, Everyone Achieves More' characterises the daily reality and practice of the school.

The inclusive atmosphere and the high quality of the school's pastoral care lead to pupils' good personal development. The relationships between staff and pupils, and also between pupils, are warm and trusting. One pupil summarised others' views in writing, 'I like this school, and when I am in Year 6 I will not want to leave.' Pupils are well-behaved, both in class and around the school. The very positive tone is set from the Early Years Foundation Stage, and permeates the whole school. The school is good at identifying the needs of pupils, including those who are vulnerable.

Results in national tests and assessments at the end of both Years 2 and 6 have been significantly above average in all subjects in recent years, although they dipped last year in Year 2. Progress is good through the school. Good progress results from teaching which is never less than satisfactory, and is often good. Where teaching is best, a rapid pace to the learning, and good challenge for pupils, lead to good progress. However, in lessons pupils are not always clear about their learning targets or how they might judge for themselves whether they have achieved them. Marking does not always give pupils a clear indication of how to improve. The curriculum is wide-ranging and has a number of strong aspects.

The headteacher works in close cooperation with other senior leaders. Together, they have developed a confident vision for the school, and a strong sense of care for pupils. A large range of partnerships of good quality have been developed which enhance pupils' learning and support their well-being. Pupils' awareness of living in a multicultural and multi-faith world is limited. Self-evaluation activities are well developed. Effective self-evaluation has resulted in the high quality of the outcomes and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in pupils' good personal development and progress. The school sets itself realistic and appropriately challenging statutory targets, which were largely met, or in some instances exceeded in the 2009 national tests and assessments. Given its track record of sustaining above-average standards and improving aspects of its provision since the last inspection, the school's capacity for

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further improvement is good.

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

- Improve the consistency of academic guidance for pupils through:
  - marking which indicates the next steps in their learning
  - greater pupil involvement in the setting and assessment of learning targets.
- Improve community cohesion through a wider range of contacts beyond the school in order to promote pupils' understanding of cultural and social diversity.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Children's levels of attainment on entry to Year 1 are above average. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress. This is because they are given good opportunities to develop their thinking and to explain their reasoning, for instance when they are discussing the strategies that they use in mathematics to solve problems. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress continues to be good because of the extent of challenge in their work. For example, pupils in Year 3 showed good understanding of ideas such as 'pitch' and 'vibration' as they studied aspects of the science of sound. While pupils in Year 6 calculated the surface areas of three-dimensional shapes, they had also to consider the real-life applications of their work. Pupils' achievement is therefore good.

Most pupils confirm that they enjoy school. One thought that 'teachers are kind and enthusiastic, and they seem to enjoy teaching you'. Most are also convinced that the adults provide good care. As a result, the great majority feel entirely safe at school. They show awareness of issues of personal safety, and of the need to be alert over internet safety. They are well-behaved around the school. In lessons good behaviour shows in high levels of attentiveness to teachers, and willingness to cooperate. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, though there have been limited opportunities to develop an understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils recognise that the school helps them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. In addition to two hours weekly of physical education, the school offers a range of after-school sports clubs. Hot lunches of good quality are provided, and a majority take up this option.

Pupils make good contributions to school and to the local community in which there is strong involvement. They are also actively involved in fund-raising for charities. However, the impact of the school council has been more limited. Pupils' future economic well-being is well supported by their level of skills in English and mathematics, and to a lesser extent by their skills in information and communication technology (ICT). They are aware of green issues through their use of the school grounds. Attendance is above the national average, and punctuality is good.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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?**

Very effective planning, which includes tasks that are well matched to pupils' prior attainment, provides a good foundation for the teaching. Taken together with teachers' high expectations, this provides a good level of challenge for pupils. Teachers often make good use of interactive whiteboards in their teaching. Teaching assistants offer good support to those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and to those who speak English as an additional language. A specialist teacher offers regular support to pupils who need further experience to develop their reading skills.

In their questionnaire responses some pupils showed that they were unsure about how well they were doing at school. Pupils do not consistently get feedback about the next steps in their learning from teachers' marking of their work. Although the school uses learning targets, they do not have sufficient impact because pupils are not as involved as they could be in the setting and assessment of their targets.

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Good provision in English and mathematics has been maintained. Past weaknesses in planning and teaching science have been successfully addressed. A vibrant wider curriculum is on offer. A local authority scheme is having a positive impact through supporting the music subject leader in encouraging pupils to take up learning an instrument. Local partnerships provide opportunities in a range of team sports, swimming and dance. Specialist input in the teaching of French from Year 3 supports class teachers well. Displays attest to interesting work undertaken, including aspects of art and of history. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills in other subjects.

Teaching and support staff are strongly committed to the caring ethos. Pupils are well

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known by staff and are looked after as individuals. Adults promote positive attitudes to learning and are good at developing pupils' self-confidence. The needs of vulnerable pupils are identified and met well. Well-organised systems for care and guidance, and good links with external agencies, provide effective support. Induction arrangements are comprehensive and facilitate transitions within the school and to secondary education. Effective monitoring arrangements ensure above-average levels of attendance.

*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	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher gives strong and principled leadership. As a result, members of the senior team feel involved and empowered. Middle leaders are closely involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and of curricular provision. These factors make an important contribution to pupils' good progress and personal development, and to the good quality of provision. The very inclusive ethos attests to the impact of the leadership team, and promotes equal opportunities well. The governing body has a good understanding of its strategic role. Governors are closely involved in the school, offer warm support, and act as 'critical friends' where necessary. Most parents are happy with their child's experience, and this is testimony to their successful engagement in the school's work.

Effective contributions to community cohesion are made at the levels of the school itself and the local community. Attention to the national and global levels of cohesion, and to the ethnic and socio-economic dimensions, is less well developed. The school has not undertaken an audit of its provision in order to develop a strategy to promote community cohesion at all levels. At the time of the inspection the school's procedures and systems met all the requirements for safeguarding. Child protection procedures are robust, and where necessary involve appropriate collaboration with outside agencies. Partnerships with local authority services are well established, and these provide good support for vulnerable groups of pupils in particular.

*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

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<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills which are broadly typical for their age. The induction arrangements for new entrants are outstanding. Staff take excellent care of children. The exemplary teamwork of the leader and the teaching assistants work means that they very rapidly get to know the children well. The children therefore settle quickly and are very happy, with the result that they greatly enjoy learning. Contact books are used highly effectively to maintain the excellent communication between staff and parents, and regularly provide outstanding guidance particularly effective in developing children's emergent reading. Staff have developed a highly effective partnership with parents

Children make excellent progress in the Reception Year, so that they enter Year 1 with knowledge and skills that are above average. They progress very well because of the very imaginative curriculum and the excellent teaching and welfare provision. Staff plan a very well balanced mixture of activities, some led by the teacher or the teaching assistants, as well as others where the children choose for themselves. The result is that the children rapidly become active, confident and independent learners. The teaching does much to involve the children so that they enjoy their learning, and make rapid progress. For instance, in an excellent lesson observed, the teacher's mastery of letter sounds (phonic) knowledge, and her precise teaching and engaging good humour, ensured high levels of participation by the children, and quickly led to confident and successful work on reading skills.

Strong encouragement leads children to speak clearly, demonstrating proficiency in spoken language. When children select activities for themselves, they cooperate very well, and the adults are very good at building on their experiences to develop their learning. There is a rich variety of resources for children which are well laid out in both the indoor and outdoor areas. Outdoors, for instance, the stimulating range of activities includes opportunities to ride in home-made sleighs and undertake supervised woodwork as well as to gain experience of weighing objects and making chalk marks on



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floor and walls in readiness for early writing skills. The ethos is highly inclusive. An outstanding instance was observed when children practised their counting to 20 in English, which was then extended into counting in French and Spanish because some children speak these as home languages.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff make thorough observations and assessments of children. These are well recorded, and point to the next steps in their learning. The impact is seen in the particularly clear overview of each child's academic development and personal well-being. Parents comment very favourably on the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. One delighted parent wrote that the school had made her daughter's introduction to Reception 'a complete joy'.

*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**

Almost all parents have positive views about the school and about their child's enjoyment of what is on offer. Inspectors agree with parents' judgements that the school keeps their children safe, supports healthy lifestyles and deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Most parents think that their children are making enough progress at school. Inspectors judge that pupils are currently making excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good progress from Years 1 to 6.

Teaching is seen by the great majority of parents to be good. Almost all parents agree with inspectors' judgement that the school is well led and managed. They expressed particularly positive views about the leadership of the headteacher.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ightham 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 167 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	61	21	34	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	56	27	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	37	33	53	5	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	31	34	55	6	11	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	28	45	31	50	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	40	32	52	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	60	24	39	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)	29	47	27	44	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	32	38	61	3	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	31	37	60	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	34	32	52	4	6	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	34	55	25	40	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	53	24	39	3	5	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 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.**



19 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ightham Primary School, Ightham, Sevenoaks TN15 9DD

We would like to thank all of you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. We especially thank those of you who filled in the pupils' questionnaire.

We think that Ightham Primary is a good school.

These are the positive things about your school

- There is a warm and welcoming 'feel' to your school.
- You enjoy school, behave well and have positive attitudes to learning.
- You get an excellent start in Reception because of the outstanding teaching and leadership.
- The headteacher and staff are good at their jobs and know how to improve your school.
- All the adults take very good care of you.
- You feel very safe in school and understand healthy living.
- You reach above-average standards in English, maths and science by the end of Year 6, and your progress is good across the school.
- The curriculum is interesting and stimulating for you.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school, and appreciate its many good features.

We have also asked your school to make some further improvements.

What your school needs to do now

- Help you to understand more about what you can do to improve your work through marking that points out the next steps in your learning, and by involving you more in setting targets and deciding when you have reached them.
- Give you more opportunities for contact with other people not just in your area of Kent but also elsewhere in the country and in different parts of the world.

You can help, too, by working hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your school will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove  
Lead Inspector

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