

Hildenborough Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118603
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339255
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	H Rumary
Headteacher	Claire Vernon
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 13 lessons involving seven teachers, and held meetings with representative governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, the school improvement plan, safeguarding documentation, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 63 questionnaires from parents and carers were received and analysed, together with 21 from staff and 101 from pupils.

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

- how well pupils make progress, particularly in Key Stage 2
- the effectiveness of the start children get in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well the school plans developments to take improvements forward quickly.

Information about the school

The pupils in this average-sized school are mainly from White British and European backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is average. Pupils' identified needs mostly relate to social, emotional or behavioural or speech, language and communication difficulties.

There have been significant changes in staffing since the last inspection, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher. At the time of the inspection the headteacher was not in school and the school had been led by the deputy headteacher for the previous four weeks.

A breakfast club runs daily in the school and a Nursery uses buildings on the school site, both run by private providers and these are subject to separate inspections by Ofsted. The school has achieved the Eco-Schools and Activemark awards.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Hildenborough is a satisfactory school. The school's mission statement 'To be the best that we can be, for ourselves and for God' is clear. It is known to staff and pupils and actions are guided by it. As a result, the school is a harmonious community where pupils feel safe and behave well. Pupils are polite and are mature in their relationships with one another and with adults, showing respect for others' opinions. They are confident that their concerns will be understood and acted upon by an adult. These are some of the school's main strengths.

The school is not yet accelerating pupils' progress sufficiently to secure their good achievement. From pupils' higher than expected starting points, they make steady progress so that their attainment remains above average by the end of Year 6. School data show that, following the last inspection, pupils made inconsistent progress through the school so that their overall achievement in Key Stage 2 was not strong enough. Closer monitoring of pupils' attainment and changes made in teaching have had a positive impact, particularly this year with many pupils beginning to make up lost ground.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop very positive attitudes to school. The school has accurately identified that pupils do not build rapidly enough on this good start. Pupils read and write well and use their writing skills well in other subjects, although generally they are not given enough opportunities to write at length. Sometimes teachers' expectations of what pupils can do for themselves are too low, and although work is set at different levels, pupils' tasks are not always consistently challenging enough. Pupils enjoy their learning because the curriculum interests them, but they say that they could sometimes cope with more difficult work. Teachers mark pupils' work and give appropriate praise and encouragement, and often provide useful advice about how work could be improved. However, the school's marking policy is not implemented consistently so that pupils are not always required to respond to the advice given by their teacher. This limits pupils' understanding of the quality of their work and how to improve it, which would help to lift their achievement from satisfactory to good.

Leaders' evaluations of the work of the school are accurate and key areas for development have been correctly identified. The work of consultants has helped to strengthen teaching across the school although some staff lack confidence to share best practice with other teachers. The improvements in the rates of pupils' progress this year show the school's sound capacity for ongoing improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least good in the drive to accelerate pupils' progress and further lift attainment by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can do and requiring them to do more for themselves, particularly in writing
 - ensuring that tasks are always sufficiently challenging
 - improving the information pupils have about the quality of their work
 - developing the confidence of all teachers to identify and share best practice more effectively across the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

After a sharp dip in 2007, attainment has been rising steadily. Pupils' attainment in basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are above average and their ability to apply these in other subjects prepares them well for future study. A higher proportion of pupils reach the higher level in English, mathematics and science than in most schools. Pupils' progress is now consistent through the school and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making up for earlier underachievement. All groups of pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language, make at least satisfactory progress and are on course to meet the targets set for their achievement.

Pupils particularly enjoy the wide range of activities they undertake. For example, this was seen during the inspection when Year 5 pupils were engaged in a practical science task 'cooking in the solar ovens', linked to their study of global warming. They were totally engrossed during break time, explaining their learning to younger pupils on the playground. Pupils show their commitment to their learning by presenting their work well and in line with the school's handwriting policy. Similarly, pupils' genuine enjoyment of their learning is seen in the Friday 'learning assembly' when each class shares the highlights of its learning during the week and gives pupils a good opportunity to review and think about their personal achievements.

Pupils have a strong sense of being part of a school community through representing the school in sports teams, or undertaking responsibility for organising activities for others as house captains or play leaders. Responsibility posts are respected and coveted. The school council is elected with pupil manifestos, making a good contribution to pupils' understanding of democracy, but has yet to be completely organised and run by pupils. Pupils have high expectations of behaviour and say that sometimes pupils fall out over games but that such issues are resolved quickly. They know what makes a healthy lifestyle and its mix of exercise and nutrition. Attendance is consistently above average and the school's target was exceeded this year. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in pupils' awareness of the needs of others and

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through an emphasis on worship and prayer in assembly.

Activities to develop pupils' awareness of the local community have been extended well this year with Year 6 pupils looking after the war graves in the local churchyard, following a representative of the British Legion joining the school for a Remembrance Day service. Pupils have a good understanding of conservation issues, recognised in the school's Eco-School award.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and monitoring pupils' attainment regularly is resulting in consistent practice across the school. For example, teachers share the intended learning well with pupils at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers are using assessment information to plan work but it is not always sufficiently matched to pupils' prior attainment. Teachers manage pupils well so that behaviour is good in lessons, and learning takes place within a calm and focused environment. For example, in a lesson when pupils were planning play scripts, the discussion they had in pairs helped them to clarify their thinking quickly so that they remained engaged. In too

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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many lessons, whole-class discussion is overly extended so that pupils do not have enough time to consolidate their learning through applying their new skills or understanding for themselves.

Photographic evidence and displays around the school show the range of lively activities which engage pupils well. These celebrate ongoing learning in all subjects, such as science investigations, and pupils' achievements in physical activities. The curriculum is well planned to make learning interesting and varied. Art is used to good effect and is linked well to work by famous artists, to spiritual emotions, poetry and to representing pupils' feelings and work undertaken in personal, social and health education. A particular strength of the curriculum is music with its wide range of opportunities for learning instruments and singing, made possible by teacher expertise and support. Singing in assembly is first-class, for example when inspectors heard the school sing Sweet Chariot in rounds. A range of visits, visitors and enrichment opportunities means that learning is reinforced. Clubs enable pupils' interests to be followed in depth and including many opportunities for sport, recognised in the school's Activemark award. The school provides a welcoming learning environment and places effective care and welfare within its Christian ethos. Transition arrangements, especially for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are sensitively and effectively managed. Staff know pupils and their families well. Procedures for identifying individual need are effective and support is channelled well to support pupils in difficult circumstances, such as through bereavement. A wide range of support is in place, including social skills groups and play therapy to support pupils who have social difficulties such as behaviour. The success of the support provided is reviewed and amended regularly to ensure that it continues to be effective. Teaching assistants provide effective support for individuals and groups within lessons.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory because common aims are shared by staff and the governing body and there are strong partnerships with parents and carers. The school has used well its involvement in the 'Leading for Impact' programme, offered by the local authority, to increase the rigour and impact of monitoring performance. The school has raised its expectations of the progress pupils should make. The introduction of pupil progress meetings is having a positive impact on their learning, but more

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remains to be done for teachers to use data more effectively to accelerate pupils' progress further.

The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily and is improving as governors become more aware of the impact of the action taken to raise attainment. They provide useful support, for example in ensuring that the school's budget is managed effectively to ensure financial viability, but are aware that they require further training to give them a stronger understanding of their strategic role to give them more confidence to challenge the school on raising achievement.

The school is inclusive and tackles any form of discrimination, helping pupils who have disabilities and learning needs to access mainstream education. The school monitors the progress of all groups of pupils and uses the information to influence its practice, for example in meeting the needs of year groups with very different proportions of boys and girls. Leaders are now working to ensure that the most able pupils are always well challenged.

The school is a cohesive community where groups of pupils get along well together. Pupils have opportunities to study different cultures, mainly within religious education, and the school has clear plans to increase pupils' awareness of the diverse range of British culture through a link with another school with a different social and cultural intake. Procedures to safeguard pupils meet all current requirements. Parents, carers and pupils agree that the school is a safe and secure environment.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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On entry to Reception, children's skills vary from year to year but are usually above those expected for their age. A key strength is the quality of relationships, and the enjoyment and pride that adults take in giving children a positive start to school. Children feel safe, and are happy and confident. Their development is monitored closely and the information used effectively to focus children on well-planned activities to support their development across the required areas of learning so that they make good progress.

Teaching and learning are good, as seen when children thoroughly enjoyed choosing activities for themselves, such as playing out the 'World Cup in South Africa' when children ran excitedly to tell their teacher that 'England has scored a goal, the score's two nil'. Meanwhile, other children were enjoying developing their writing, making lists and taking the register, while others 'painted the shed' outside or designed new kit for their chosen football teams using the computer. Such activities are designed to capture children's curiosity and are resourced very well, for example with small notebooks and pencils readily to hand which appeal to children.

Leadership and management are good. Staff are rightly proud of the improvements made in developing children's early literacy and numeracy skills in the last few years, providing a good basis for more formal learning in Year 1. An appropriate emphasis is placed on developing children's speaking and listening, and not a moment is wasted when rhymes and song are used as routines for changing activities. Teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistant is strong, and there is an excellent understanding of the learning and development needs of young children. They involve parents and carers well through each child's 'My Unique Story' to engage parents and carers in their child's learning, but recognise that there is room for further development of this approach to strengthen children's achievement further.

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

An overwhelming majority of parents and carers are extremely positive about their child's experience at the school. Most agree that their children enjoy school and are well prepared for the future. They appreciate the impact of leaders and managers and how they are kept informed about the school and their children's progress. Parents' and carers' concerns about behaviour and teaching mainly relate to one age group with an above-average proportion of pupils who have behavioural difficulties. Inspectors found

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that the school manages pupils' behaviour well so that learning is not disrupted. While teaching across the school has not always brought about good progress in the past, this has been addressed and pupils now make at least satisfactory progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hildenborough 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 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 191 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	62	24	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	71	17	27	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	49	30	48	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	38	29	46	6	10	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	25	40	33	52	2	3	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	35	36	57	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	43	32	51	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)	21	33	37	59	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	30	35	56	5	8	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	27	31	49	10	16	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	22	43	68	3	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	14	22	44	70	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	51	27	43	0	0	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.



12 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hildenborough CE Primary School, Tonbridge, TN11 9HY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently, and for sharing your work and talking to us about all you do there. We found the information you gave us when you spoke with us very valuable.

Hildenborough School is a happy and friendly place. You clearly enjoy school and get on well together. You know a lot about how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. Many of you help others in the school well as school councillors, play leaders or buddies for younger children. You behave well and are right to expect that everyone should be kind to one another all the time. You told us that adults quickly sort out any behaviour problems and you trust staff to do this. Your attendance is good.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. It was good to see that most of you find your work interesting. Many of you are making better progress this year because teachers are more aware of your levels. The school is improving all the time because the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and staff know what needs to be done next to help you make more progress. The ways to improve further are to:

- expect you to work longer on your own in lessons so that you have enough time to try things out for yourself, particularly in writing
- make sure that your tasks are always sufficiently challenging so that you always learn new things
- help you to understand how well you are doing and what you have to do next.

We have suggested that teachers should share with each other the ways which help you to learn best. We know that you will help by continuing to do your best and wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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