

Trottiscliffe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118630
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339259
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
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	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Kemp
Headteacher	Stella Sudds
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's virtual learning environment, school policies, the school improvement plan, governors' minutes, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 55 parent questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following: ' How well pupils achieve, particularly boys and all pupils in Key Stage 1. ' How well teachers use assessment information to plan work for different groups of pupils. ' The impact of the school's actions to bring about improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average village primary school. Mobility is high, and in most years, the majority of children in Year 6 had not joined the school in Reception or Year 1. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and are mainly related to dyslexia, moderate learning, communication or behavioural and emotional difficulties. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school currently holds Healthy School and Active Mark awards. There were significant staffing changes last year, and two of the three teachers have only recently taken up their posts.

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

Trottiscliffe is a satisfactory school. It has many areas of strength but there are also areas which the school is determined to improve. The large majority of parents are happy with what the school does. Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending school and grow in confidence and self-esteem during their time there. Achievement is satisfactory overall but in the past, pupils did not make consistently steady progress through the school and have had to make up lost ground in Years 5 and 6. The key strengths of the school are: The warm, welcoming school ethos and good care for individuals make a strong contribution to ensuring pupils' good personal development and their safety. Reception children settle quickly into school routines and learn satisfactorily alongside Year 1 and 2 pupils. Teachers give pupils good guidance about their achievements so that pupils know their targets for improvement. Behaviour is good because pupils know how their actions can affect others. The curriculum is interesting for pupils and motivates their learning. Staff understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have a shared vision about how it can be improved. Improvements to the school buildings and playground since the last inspection are being used well to improve learning. Senior leaders monitor the effectiveness of the school's work closely and the headteacher has been robust in challenging less effective practice and the dip in standards after the last inspection. Staff show drive and determination to accelerate pupils' progress using national programmes and local authority advice, although this is only just starting to take effect. This, alongside good guidance from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, gives the school a sound capacity to remedy its identified weaknesses and accelerate pupils' progress. Areas of relative weakness Standards in Key Stage 1 are too low, particularly in writing. Teaching does not always demand high enough expectations of pupils to take learning forward quickly. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to follow up on misconceptions or practice an individual skill needing improvement. Pupils' understanding of life in modern British multicultural society is weaker than other aspects of their social and cultural development. Governors have not fully evaluated the impact of the school's approaches to promoting community cohesion so pupils' understanding of life in modern British multicultural society is a weaker aspect of their personal development. About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and pupils' progress in Key Stage 1, particularly in writing so that

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they learn to write more fluently and at greater length, by: giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing skills implementing the new handwriting policy. As soon as possible, build on the good practice already in the school to improve teaching and pupils' learning further by: ensuring that teachers check that pupils have a clear understanding of exactly what is expected of them when they work independently or in groups improving the pace of lessons and expect pupils to do more when they are working independently so that they achieve quickly ensuring pupils act upon the advice given on how to improve their work. Develop pupils' contribution to the wider community and their understanding of different cultures this year by: making sure that governors have a clear strategy for promoting all aspects of community cohesion giving pupils more opportunities to broaden their understanding of life in a multicultural British society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils say that teachers help them to learn in 'an interesting and fun way'. Some parents of pupils who moved to the school commented how their 'children are encouraged to be confident in their approach to learning'. As might be expected with small numbers and differing abilities in each year group, standards vary from year to year. Standards for the oldest pupils are broadly in line with national averages, but standards in the Year 2 assessments have declined sharply, particularly in writing, and were below national averages last year. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were making good gains in their skills; for example, in an English lesson, older pupils quickly mastered their understanding of how to use commas to define clauses. However, it is too early in the school year to assess if pupils are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them. The strong sense of school community contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have an awareness of cultures other than their own, for example through study of other religions or charity work, but have a more limited understanding of the diversity of modern British culture. Other key features of pupils' outcomes: Pupils work effectively in groups although, when required to work individually, sometimes pupils take a rather relaxed approach when they are not directly supervised by an adult, and their learning slows. Vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress because of the close support they are given by teaching assistants and through specialist programmes. Boys' attainment through the school is generally not as high as girls', but when looked at in relation to their starting points and individual needs, boys make similar rates of progress to girls. Pupils are safe and play well together; they use their bicycles safely along the cycle paths in the playground. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and enjoy growing vegetables in the school allotment or exhibiting the produce at the village fete. Despite only reaching average academic standards, pupils' positive attitudes to learning, good social skills and awareness of simple business skills give them a good foundation for later learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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?

School monitoring observations indicate that teaching last year was not consistent and, largely because of the disruption caused by staff changes, led to varying rates of progress across the school. Teaching in most of the lessons observed during the inspection was good, but it will take time for pupils to make up for slower progress in the past. Key features of teaching and the curriculum: Teachers' good subject knowledge helps them plan a curriculum which meets the needs of the different age groups and abilities in their classes. Pupils' basic skills now develop systematically. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils learn through good first-hand experiences. Work is appropriately challenging, although there are occasions when the expected learning for individual groups is not identified clearly enough for pupils to have a better understanding of both the quality and quantity of work expected of them. Teachers give pupils good advice on how their work could be improved, but agree that pupils need more opportunities to follow this up. Activities and materials are stimulating, developing pupils' capacity to work things out for themselves, for example when pupils had to record their ideas of how to count the number of seeds on a giant sunflower which linked to their earlier work on number place value. Pupils enjoy the curriculum themes which link subjects, and particularly enjoy creative aspects such as specialist sport and music lessons. Extra-curricular activities ranging from woodwork to yoga are broad for a school of this size and provide well for pupils' interests and talents. The personal and

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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social education effectively contributes to pupils' good personal development. Pastoral care is strong and consistent across the school so that pupils are confident to ask for help when it is needed. Those who need extra support are identified early and given appropriate help, often by skilled teaching assistants, to resolve problems or move them on in their learning.

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?

Although many teachers are new to their posts, staff have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has successfully guided the school through the disruption caused by staff changes and has created a strong sense of purpose for school improvement. There are already signs of success of improvements in teaching. Because all staff have not yet had sufficient time to contribute to school development planning, the improvement plan lacks precise steps and timeframes for future action. Other key features of leadership and management: The governing body support the school appropriately, although they are reviewing their roles and responsibilities. The safeguarding of pupils is ensured effectively. The school involves parents well in school life, values their views, and helps parents understand how their children learn. The school promotes community cohesion well in terms of the harmonious school community, but not for the pupils' wider knowledge of society. Staff ensure that vulnerable pupils who need extra support are identified early and given appropriate help so they achieve as well as their classmates. The school is starting to remedy weaknesses in attainment for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

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	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	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

The good links with parents and welcoming atmosphere ensure that children settle quickly into school life and routines in a very short time. Teaching is organised well to give these youngest children opportunities to work within their own group, for example in the early stages of learning phonics, and good opportunities to initiate play themselves. The teacher and teaching assistants take great care to develop communication skills as they guide children's activities. The activities interest children, who already concentrate and sustain play for reasonable periods of time without the need for adult intervention. School records show that from broadly average beginnings, children made satisfactory progress during their Reception Year and that the majority met the expectations in the areas of their learning by the time they started Year 1. They develop particularly well socially because of the regular contact with older year groups. The school has recognised that in the past, pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills have not developed as well as other areas of learning. This year, a particular focus is being placed on developing early writing skills, through the introduction of a new handwriting policy, including a new approach to writing for Reception children. Care and welfare are good and contribute to children's achievement and understanding of how to take care of themselves, and linked well to their first topic on 'Ourselves'. For example children already routinely put on wet weather gear to play at the water tray. Senior leaders have a sound understanding of the needs of young learners and have ensured that there are clear systems in place to monitor children's progress. Already this information is being used this year to plan suitable activities to meet children's differing needs.

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

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

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The response rate for parental questionnaires was high. Most parents are positive about the school, commenting that their children are happy at school and that the school has a warm and welcoming ethos. Although a large majority indicated that they were happy with the progress their child makes, a few believe that this is not the case and the inspection evidence agrees that the progress of younger pupils could be faster. A few parents regard discipline as an issue but inspectors found that pupils are well behaved and value the considerate behaviour of others. Pupils confirm that the school is special because 'no-one is ever left out'. The majority of criticisms were offered constructively; for example, parents, particularly those who do not pick their children up directly from school, would appreciate more information about the progress their child is making or more guidance to enable them to help their child at home. Inspectors found that the school makes strenuous efforts to be available to speak with parents and is extending the school's website further to enable parents to link more directly to the work being undertaken in lessons and to view the latest assessments and targets for their child.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Trottiscliffe 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 12 statements about the school. The inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 62 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	72	11	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	59	17	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	43	13	30	9	20	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	46	15	34	3	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	57	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	48	10	23	7	16	2	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	48	16	36	2	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	44	16	37	3	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	52	15	34	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	41	19	43	1	2	3	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	48	15	34	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	46	16	36	4	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	66	11	25	3	7	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"> ■ 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.



18 September 2009 Dear Pupils Inspection of Trottiscliffe C E Primary School, West Malling, ME19 5EB Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited recently. We think yours is a satisfactory school which is on course to become even better. Here are the things that we think are best about your school: You all help to make the school welcoming to newcomers and visitors and behave well because you understand that you need to treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. Pupils new to the school have settled in very quickly. In the lessons we saw, you were taught well and teachers and teaching assistants really help you to know how to improve your work. The staff plan many interesting activities for you to do, and everyone seems to be really enjoying the outdoor lessons in the new outside areas. Adults take good care of you. The staff and governors make sure your parents or carers know what's going on in school. Here are some things we have asked them to do: Help the pupils in 'red station' to improve their standard of writing. Make sure that you are clear about what you have to do when you work without adult help so you learn more quickly. Give you more activities to make sure you improve your work after teachers have marked it and left you ideas about making it better. Plan more ways for you to understand how people live in other parts of Great Britain. You can help by working hard, particularly when you have to work on your own. Yours faithfully Helen Hutching Lead inspector

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