

Wouldham All Saints Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118634
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339261
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Carole Skinner

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	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Hutton
Headteacher	Carl Fitter
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and members of the school council. They observed the school's work and looked at assessment records, pupils' work in writing and mathematics, management information, evidence of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and safeguarding records. Forty-five parents' questionnaires were analysed as well as responses to the questionnaires that were given to staff and pupils.

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

- the impact of strategies to raise attainment and accelerate progress, particularly in mathematics and writing and especially for the more-able pupils
- the effectiveness of strategies to promote consistently good teaching throughout the school
- the contribution of assessment and target-setting procedures to securing good learning and progress
- the extent to which leaders, managers and governors are driving improvement and evaluating the impact of their work.

Information about the school

Wouldham All Saints is a small school that draws most of its pupils from the village. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that seen in most schools. A falling roll has recently led to the school's restructuring into four mixed-age classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class alongside a small number of Year 1 pupils. Two of the four full-time class teachers were appointed during the last 15 months, two of them in September 2009. There is an unusually high turnover of pupils between Years 3 and 6. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Wouldham is a satisfactory school that is showing strong signs of improvement. The headteacher has maintained an unswerving vision and high aspirations for the school during a time of significant change due to the falling roll and high staff turnover. These potential barriers to progress have actually been embraced as opportunities for improvement. New leadership and management structures have given all staff a key role in evaluating the impact of initiatives and a shared responsibility for driving improvement strategies. Governors have also undergone a number of changes and have clearly identified responsibilities for evaluating the impact of development strategies. They are at an early stage of implementing these action plans and are not yet sufficiently engaged in checking the school's effectiveness.

Rigorous self-evaluation has led to a number of improvements that demonstrate the school's good capacity to continue moving forward. Innovative approaches to designing the curriculum provide pupils with a good variety of experiences that develop their knowledge and skills and broaden their horizons. Pupils say this makes learning exciting and very enjoyable. It is clearly a factor in their improved attendance and is having a positive impact on raising attainment.

Attainment is broadly average and achievement satisfactory. In the recent past pupils have made better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics across the school. Current attainment in Years 2 and 6 indicates that the school is making headway in closing the gap and shows that its improvement strategies are taking effect. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels of attainment is rising, but is still below average. This is because they are not always given sufficiently challenging work. Good teaching of basic skills in Reception and Years 1 and 2 lays solid foundations for future learning. Better teaching in mathematics throughout the school is accelerating progress, although pupils' ability to use and apply their knowledge and skills in different contexts is not well enough developed. Attainment in writing is too low because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write for a variety of purposes.

Lessons are usually lively and interesting and engage pupils well in active, practical learning. Teaching is not yet consistently good throughout the school because, on some occasions, pupils do not achieve enough in the lesson or take sufficient pride in their work. There is much good practice in marking pupils' work and in giving them opportunities to assess their own and others' performance, but this is not fully embedded in every class.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes, both in literacy lessons and in other areas of the curriculum
 - integrating opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematical knowledge and skills within each block of work so that these activities are set in a meaningful context
 - increasing the level of challenge for the more-able pupils so that more of them reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
 - ensuring that all teachers expect pupils to learn at a good pace and to produce high quality work
 - involving pupils more productively in checking their own progress towards their targets and in assessing how well they have done in lessons
 - providing worthwhile opportunities for pupils to check each other's work.
- Develop the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - involving all governors more productively in evaluating the school's performance
 - seeking ways to engage with parents more effectively by taking good account of their views and devising ways to help them support their children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils say they enjoy learning most when activities are practical and challenging, and this is when they make good progress. On some occasions, pupils are less well motivated by the teaching and do not apply themselves to their tasks with energy and enthusiasm. Some pupils produce too little work in the lesson and do not take enough care over it. By contrast, others strive to achieve high standards and clearly work very hard. Pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school but do less well in writing and mathematics. Progress in mathematics is improving as a result of the new curriculum and improved teaching strategies. However, some pupils lack confidence when tasks require them to use their mathematical knowledge and apply their skills in a range of different contexts. Raising attainment in writing is the school's main area of focus. Too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in each year group because of weaknesses in the composition of their writing, punctuation, spelling or the range of vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in line with their peers.

Children achieve well in Reception, often from low starting points, and continue to make good progress so that attainment is average by Year 2. In the past, pupils have not always made enough progress in Years 3 to 6. A review of pupils' work and progress data show that progress is accelerating and is at least satisfactory. More pupils are making good progress than in previous years but this is not consistent across all classes

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

and areas of learning.

Pupils participate with enthusiasm in the many activities the school provides. Most walk or cycle to school and greatly enjoy the good variety of sports and physical activities that help them to keep healthy, especially swimming. They have a good appreciation of the importance of a healthy diet. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for jobs around the school and the school council is proud of its track record in helping to make improvements; as one member said, 'We think of ideas to make the school better.' Pupils in Years 5 and 6 thoroughly enjoyed the recent opportunity to extend their understanding of French culture during a week-long visit. Daily worship provides valuable time for pupils to reflect on important issues. They take a lively interest in the local community and in environmental issues, taking part in events such as a 'litter pick' and helping to plant native hedgerows.

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	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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The imaginatively planned curriculum is regularly modified to take account of the pupils' needs and interests and to ensure progression in the mixed-age classes. Junior pupils

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

were very enthusiastic about their Great Expectations theme with its focus on the Victorian age. Teachers make effective links between the six main areas of learning and plan activities in the context of real-life situations that are meaningful for the pupils. The oldest pupils are challenged to pursue their own lines of enquiry and plan how best to carry out research that will provide the answers to the questions they have raised. The school has yet to maximise opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills across the whole curriculum.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory because the numerous good features are not always consistent between classes or sufficiently embedded into everyday practice. For example, in most lessons there is a brisk pace to learning, pupils settle to tasks quickly and maintain good concentration. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long to the whole class and leave too little time for independent work. In some lessons, skilful questioning develops pupils' understanding and enables teachers to pick up on misconceptions and use them as teaching points. In others teachers focus too much on delivering the content of the lesson and do not listen well enough to pupils' responses or ask them to explain their reasoning. In Years 3 to 6, teaching in mathematics is more effective in the lessons where pupils are grouped by ability than in those where the whole class is taught together. Teaching assistants' skills are used well to support and extend learning. Teaching assistants' skills are used well to support and extend learning.

There is some excellent practice in marking where teachers assess pupils' work against the objective for the lesson, highlighting good features and the next steps in learning. This is not consistent. Similarly, some pupils are involved well in assessing their own and other's progress while others have few opportunities to do this. Individual targets are used effectively by all teachers to raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are keen to show these in their books and on display in the classroom and say they help them to make good progress; as one put it, 'I always try to reach them in my work.'

The school's warm and welcoming family atmosphere is appreciated by pupils and parents alike. Pupils are known as individuals and their needs are catered for well. Vulnerable pupils, including those with particular learning difficulties, receive good support, often through effective partnerships with specialist agencies. In a number of cases, this good support has enabled pupils to overcome behavioural or emotional difficulties that were hindering their learning. Pupils' achievements are celebrated, be they good attendance, behaviour, performance in sports or as 'technostars'. This spurs them on to try even harder. The breakfast club provides a nutritious and sociable start to the day for those who attend.

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

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

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?

School leaders have successfully involved all staff in the drive for improvement. Teachers say that the whole-staff approach to evaluating performance and identifying development priorities provides valuable professional development as well as giving them insight into each subject as the focus changes each term. Senior leaders take responsibility for monitoring English, mathematics and science through lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Rigorous analysis of assessment data is central to the school's drive to raise attainment. The headteacher meets with each class teacher at regular intervals throughout the year to review every pupil's progress in reading, writing and mathematics. At these meetings challenging targets are set and reviewed and actions agreed to boost the progress of any pupils who are not doing as well as expected. In this way, shortcomings are tackled promptly and greater challenge is built in to extend those capable of it. The full impact of these strategies has yet to be seen in ensuring that able pupils always make good progress.

Governors are well informed and fulfil all their statutory obligations. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough. In the past, governors have not been sufficiently involved in finding out first hand how well the school is performing. Some new governors are still getting to grips with their role as critical friends and their responsibilities for ensuring the school improves. Now, all have action plans with timescales and clearly demarcated responsibilities to monitor aspects of the school improvement plan. These new arrangements are at an early stage of implementation.

The school engages effectively with community groups in the village and further afield. Based on thorough knowledge of its social, religious and ethnic make-up, school leaders have devised a clear plan of action to promote community cohesion beyond its immediate confines through, for example, links with a Kenyan school and orphanage. At harvest time, pupils worked with a Christian Aid representative to make paper bags, appreciating how Indian children do this for many hours a day to earn money for their families.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3

The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the current Reception class joined the school with typical skills for their age. In the previous two years, many children started school with weak language and communication skills and immature social and emotional development. Although they made good progress, their attainment was below average. The current cohort is showing the potential to reach higher levels of attainment than in previous years, especially in writing, where progress has historically been slower than in other areas of learning. Very few children have reached above average levels of development over the past two years in any area of learning.

Through home visits and focused observations, the teacher quickly assesses each child's capabilities and tailors activities closely to individual needs. Children settle in quickly and learn to become independent as they select activities and take responsibility for tidying up. Close liaison between the teacher and teaching assistant ensures that both are monitoring children's progress and supporting their learning throughout the day. The adults pay good attention to children's welfare and promote healthy eating and good hygiene. Close links with parents enable them to support their children's learning at home and keep them well informed of their child's progress.

Children make good progress in most areas of learning because the teacher plans an exciting variety of experiences to engage them and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. The indoor and outdoor classrooms are spacious and well resourced. Both are well planned to provide activities across all six areas of learning.

Children are keen to explore and initiate their own learning. In one session, some were drawing a road on the playground with chalk so that others could ride around it on their tricycles. One drew traffic lights and explained what they were for, while two others decided to 'dig' a hole in the road because 'the electricity's broken'. Back in the classroom, another child was examining a skeleton with a magnifying glass, while others made 'glittery' hats.

The teacher is a skilled early years practitioner who leads developments well. She has identified the need to work more closely with the feeder pre-school in order to share information and expertise.

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

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

Approximately 40% of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. The large majority of these expressed positive views of the school. However, a small minority do not feel that their children are making enough progress and are not well enough prepared for the move to secondary school. The inspection found that pupils are making good progress in reading with room for improvement in mathematics and writing. Around a third of those who responded feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their concerns and suggestions while a small minority say that the school does not help them to support their children's learning. The school has responded to parents' requests for more homework and also puts on information evenings, for example to explain to parents how aspects of mathematics are taught. However, governors have identified the need to engage with parents more productively and to put clear mechanisms in place to act on parents' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wouldham Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	67	10	22	5	11	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	60	17	38	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	44	19	42	4	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	36	17	38	9	20	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	16	36	24	53	3	7	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	36	15	33	11	24	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	36	27	60	0	0	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)	9	20	19	42	7	16	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	36	21	47	5	11	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	36	19	42	4	9	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	20	18	40	12	27	3	7
The school is led and managed effectively	17	38	19	42	8	18	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	44	17	38	5	11	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 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.



12 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wouldham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,
Rochester ME1 3TS

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We were impressed by your good behaviour and were pleased to hear how much you enjoy school. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education but it is improving quite quickly because the headteacher and staff are working hard to help you make better progress.

You make good progress in reading but only satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics. Most of you do as well as expected for your age but some of you who are capable of reaching Level 3 in Year 2 and Level 5 in Year 6, do not do as well as you should. We have asked the school to improve this so you all make good progress in every subject.

One of the reasons you enjoy school so much is because the teachers plan work around exciting themes ' some of you older ones told me how much you enjoyed learning about France, especially when you stayed there for a week. It was good to see how many of you walk or cycle to school and know how to keep healthy. You have a good range of sports activities too, including clubs, and I could see how keen you were to go swimming. All of the adults take good care of you and keep you safe and you all get on very well together.

Some of your teachers write very helpful comments in your books to show you what you have done well and what you need to do next to improve. We have asked the school to make sure that all of the teachers do this. We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to check your own progress and sometimes to assess each other's work. There have been some changes recently in the way the governors are organised and they are getting used to a new way of working. We have asked the governors to keep a close watch on how well the school is doing, in order to help it improve even more. We have also asked them to make sure that they take good account of your parents' views when deciding what to do in the future, for example by finding ways to help them support your learning.

I hope you continue to enjoy your time at Wouldham. Keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Carole Skinner

Lead inspector

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