

Reculver Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118656
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339268
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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	489
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Richardson Perks
Headteacher	Dean Jones
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2007
School address	Hillborough Herne Bay CT6 6TA
Telephone number	01227 375907
Fax number	01227 742761
Email address	office@reculver.kent.sch.uk

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

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, which included seeing all teachers teach in the course of the 18 lessons/part lessons observed. They looked at examples of pupils' work and evaluated their progress. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, which included such things as the school's improvement planning and assessments about pupils' progress. In total, 101 parental questionnaires were analysed along with staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- how well pupils achieve, with a focus on the progress, attainment and learning in the current Year 6
- how well leaders and teachers enable the most-able pupils to do as well as possible in English, mathematics and science
- if pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do better than other groups and if so, what leaders are doing to close the gap for equal opportunities for all groups of learners
- how well the school is improving provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their language, communication and mathematical development
- if the care given to pupils is a particular strength of the school.

Information about the school

Reculver Primary School is a large school, which is close to the coastal town of Herne Bay. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has faced significant staff changes and staffing difficulties in recent years. The substantive headteacher is currently on a secondment, but will be returning to the school in September 2010. The deputy headteacher has been acting as headteacher during her absence. The inclusion leader has been acting as deputy headteacher.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and reflects the high proportion of pupils with dyslexia or emotional and behavioural difficulties. A high proportion of pupils have statements, which is largely due to the school's specialist provision for pupils with visual impairment. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of three Reception classes. Pupils can attend a breakfast and after-school club and there is an on-site nursery. These childcare facilities are privately run and therefore not part of this inspection.

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

Reculver Primary is a satisfactory school. The pupils are keen to learn and behave well. Their spiritual, moral and social development is a particular strength of the school and this enables them to be respectful, reflective and thoughtful young people. Pupils and parents confirm that the care given to pupils is good and this ensures that they feel safe and happy at school. Strong pastoral support is provided by the care shown by teachers and assistants and through the outstanding work of the family support worker. Staff go out of their way to make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as those with visual impairment, are fully involved in the life of the school.

Over the last two years, the acting headteacher has faced some complex difficulties. These often stemmed from having to make difficult decisions about staffing levels, which were a result of having a greatly reduced budget. As a result, the morale among staff dropped. The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have completely restructured the staffing and leadership in the school; this has taken time to embed. Staff morale has now improved. This is reflected in the staff questionnaires, which showed that staff are proud to be members of the school and to be involved in what the school is trying to achieve. Almost all feel valued and have confidence in the leadership team. Following an audit, the governing body has been completely restructured to ensure that it can play a greater role in the strategic development of the school.

Leaders have been correctly focused on improving teaching, mathematics and science, but some lack of challenge for the most able pupils pulls down overall attainment. Currently, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with just over one third of lessons seen being good and very occasionally outstanding. As a result of this and because of the improved assessment procedures, pupils' progress is speeding up. Leaders are correctly ambitious to make teaching at least good overall. They have taken decisive action to eliminate the inadequate teaching that was evident in the past and the quality of teaching and learning is improving rapidly. Past inadequate teaching and learning had a negative impact on pupils' progress and overall achievement. Learning and progress are satisfactory and improving quickly. However, attainment in 2010 is still likely to be low for the second year in a row. However, it is on track to be much higher in 2011 and thereafter, which reflects the much improved teaching and learning. Thus, overall, achievement in the school as a whole is satisfactory and improving.

Leaders' self-evaluation is satisfactory and this has led to a suitable development plan being in place. This plan is helpful in focusing on priorities but is not always sharply focused on each step of development needed. The staff questionnaires and discussions held with middle managers indicated that they would like to be more involved in

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evaluating the work of the school. Inspectors found that middle managers are keen and knowledgeable, but have not developed their roles in monitoring the subjects that they are responsible for well enough. This is because they have not been sufficiently trained in how to do this. Equally, insufficient time has been allocated to them to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Plans are under way to improve this. The school is now recovering from a difficult time in its history. Leaders show a satisfactory capacity to maintain improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the leadership in the school in the drive to improve attainment and achievement for pupils by:
 - leaders at all levels analysing data about pupils' attainment and progress as rigorously as possible
 - making sure that the improvement plan is as useful as possible in setting out each small step for development, so that leaders can easily, and accurately, check how quickly the school is improving
 - building on the way that senior leaders monitor lessons by going back to lessons more frequently to see how well teachers are acting on development areas
 - developing the roles of all middle managers in monitoring and evaluating the provision and outcomes in the subjects that they are responsible for, especially in science and mathematics.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to good in the drive to improve pupils' overall achievement so that attainment is at least average in July 2011 by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are consistently well challenged
 - widening opportunities in mathematics for real-life problem solving and by making links with other subjects
 - providing more time for the teaching of science so that pupils build up a deeper knowledge of the subject
 - making learning more fun and exciting
 - providing more time for pupils to work independently
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to do extended pieces of writing, which they edit and improve, so as to more quickly reach higher levels
 - improving the consistency in the way that teachers mark pupils' work
 - sharing good and outstanding practice more among the staff.

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

Learning and progress in the lessons seen were satisfactory, and sometimes good or even outstanding, which demonstrates how the overall quality is improving securely and

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quickly. Where learning and progress are satisfactory, learning activities are purposeful and pupils learn new things in a steady way but occasionally, activities are dull and higher-attaining pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work. Where learning is good or better, the needs of all pupils are well met and lessons are challenging and fun. In these lessons, pupils are encouraged to investigate things for themselves and talk about what they are finding out about at length. This was very evident in an outstanding guided reading lesson in Year 5, where pupils worked in pairs to find out about sea pollution and confidently discussed the recent oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico and other past disasters.

Leaders are focused on improving the outcomes for pupils in mathematics and this is coming along securely. Good learning and progress were evident when pupils were challenged to round up numbers in a mixed Years 3 and 4 class and when learning subtraction methods in a mixed Years 1 and 2 lesson. While pupils are getting a secure knowledge of basic number and calculation skills, opportunities are sometimes missed for real-life problem solving to apply and develop these skills. There are signs of this being evident and improving quickly in the school but this good practice is not yet consistent enough to help lift achievement from satisfactory to good. A good example of good practice occurred in Year 5, when pupils had fun and great satisfaction when solving more complex problems using calculators.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make great leaps in their confidence while at the school. Their achievement in academic learning is satisfactory overall, although in aspects such as reading, it is good. Pupils with visual impairment do well as evident in the progress being made by pupils who are currently in Year 6.

Pupils enjoy doing things for the community, for example by making hanging baskets for 'Herne Bay in Bloom'. They enjoy singing and were delighted to sing in such places as Canterbury Cathedral. These activities contribute much to their good spiritual, moral and cultural development. Pupils know about healthy eating and this was very evident when pupils designed and made packed lunches in Year 1.

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	4
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

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

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The extent 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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers know the pupils well and relationships are good. Lessons run smoothly but sometimes pupils spend too long on the carpet listening to teachers, which limits their time for independent and group work. Teachers' lesson planning shows good awareness of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those of lower and middle ability. However, there is sometimes variation in the way that teachers challenge and extend the most able pupils, but the school is focused on improving this. Leaders are fully aware that there is sometimes inconsistency in how well teachers make learning fun and highly meaningful for pupils and improvements are being made. For example, in a good lesson Year 2 pupils had fun writing about how they might feel if they won the 'Golden Ticket' from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Links between different subjects are improving but these are underdeveloped for mathematics. Leaders know that marking is an important area for improvement. This was evident in pupils' written work, which also showed that, although opportunities for extended writing are improving, there is still more to do on this in the drive to make learning consistently good.

Pupils enjoy a satisfactory range of clubs and visits. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and have introduced a new science curriculum and better assessment systems. Pupils are using the environment more and doing more investigations than previously. However, the sample of work seen indicated that pupils are not doing science topics in sufficient depth in some year groups, in order to build up their skills and gain a deeper understanding of the subject. The special science and mathematics weeks are a good initiative and show how teaching is improving. But in a few classes not enough time is allocated to science.

The care given to vulnerable pupils is very impressive, with a wide range of links with other professionals for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for looked after pupils. Pupils are helped to talk about their worries. The introduction of 'peer mediators' (when pupils help each other) has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, attitudes to school and attendance.

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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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

All essential systems are now in place to enable the school to move forward. Leaders are ambitious for the school's success. The governing body takes suitable action to bring about improvement, such as challenging the school to tackle inadequate teaching and by improving financial control.

In particular, leaders have improved assessment systems, which are aiding development in teaching and learning. Leaders are still working to streamline the way that they analyse data for all groups of learners. Teamwork is good but a few teaching assistants would like communication with them to be better. Suitable monitoring by senior leaders is effectively aiding the improvement of teaching. Leaders agree that, where teaching has been satisfactory or good, they have not gone back to lessons often enough to check how well teachers are acting on their development areas.

Middle management is strengthening, although there is more to do on this to develop their roles in monitoring lessons and in evaluating data about pupils' progress. A new science specialist has recently taken over the leadership of this subject; a firm start has been made to improving the subject.

Staff have a good degree of knowledge about safeguarding; they take child protection matters very seriously. The safeguarding policy is satisfactory but lacks a clear section on the role of governors and about how the impact of safeguarding work can be evaluated.

Leaders are right to be proud of the way that the school includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Several parents wrote positive comments about the provision for gifted and talented pupils. However, some parents and carers commented that the most academically able pupils do not always do as well as they should; inspectors agree with them. This is why equal opportunities and the tackling of discrimination are graded as satisfactory rather than good.

Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily, with close links with the local community and with a school in France. The very high-quality work of the family support worker helps the school to work closely with hard-to-reach families. Pupils have learnt about worldwide issues in a suitable way. Leaders have plans to help widen awareness about the diversity of cultures and communities in the United Kingdom.

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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	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	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

As a result of satisfactory leadership, the provision and outcomes for children are improving. This is most evident in the way that they are building up their basic skills in speaking, reading and writing and in their mathematical knowledge. As a result, attainment is on track to be higher this year than in 2009. Overall, children make steady progress in learning new things and they quickly develop the personal and social skills that enable them to work effectively with others. Children enjoy school and behave well.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there is not enough challenge to extend children's thinking and skills. The classroom environments are bright and stimulating with a wide variety of work on display that shows children are developing their imagination and creative skills. The outside area is rather cramped for the number of children who use it, but teachers make the most of the space available. Adults provide a good range of activities but sometimes these are over-directed by the adults; this limits opportunities for the children to make independent decisions about what they would like to do. In turn, this prevents teachers from building on children's special interests to promote their enjoyment and skills across all areas of learning. Adults record and track children's progress carefully but leaders do not make regular summaries about term-by-term progress. The leader has not had the chance to monitor teaching in the other two classes. Staff make the children welcome as individuals and by making close links with their parents and carers. Welfare and care procedures are good and aided by friendly relationships with the children.

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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

About a fifth of parents or carers responded to the questionnaire. They were almost unanimous that their children are safe at school. Almost all agree that their children enjoy school and they have confidence in the teaching and that the school mostly meets the needs of their children. A few feel that the school does not prepare their children well enough for the next stage of their education. Inspectors found that this can sometimes be the case for the most able pupils. The vast majority of parents and carers feel that the school is effectively led and managed and there were several positive comments about the work of the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. A few written comments noted that they have felt let down by the school, although several noted improvements this year. Inspectors confirm that there has been some disruption in learning in the past, but the situation is more secure now. Overall, parents would like communication to be better.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Reculver C of E 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 489 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	58	36	36	5	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	44	54	54	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	29	55	55	15	15	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	30	53	53	11	11	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	38	38	50	50	5	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	33	52	52	11	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	35	59	58	5	5	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	29	50	50	12	12	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	33	50	50	9	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	26	54	54	6	6	8	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	28	54	54	8	8	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	29	29	50	50	11	11	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	40	48	48	10	10	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Reculver Church of England Primary School, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 6TA

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. You go to a satisfactory school that is improving. Staff are kind and caring; they are working hard to make the school better for you. You are pleased about this and have already noticed that pupils are behaving better than in the past. You agree that you like school and learn new things in a steady way. A few of you commented that work is sometimes too easy and we agree that this should be improved. You especially like the care shown by staff and confirmed that you are safe; we agree that these things are good. You also told us that you are helped to know about how to be healthy. You learn how to be respectful to others and about several different faiths. We especially enjoyed seeing your work on The Tempest. You do well in learning to read, and we were pleased to see how well you have been involved in making hanging baskets for 'Herne Bay in Bloom'. We were also pleased to hear how much you enjoyed taking part in the different singing events.

We have asked the adults to work on the following important things to improve the school for you. They should:

- make more of your lessons and activities good or even better, especially in mathematics and science
- help those of you who find learning easy to have plenty of challenges and to work independently
- develop the way that teachers mark your work and help you to improve your learning
- provide more opportunities to do extended pieces of writing and to work in science
- most of all, ensure that you enjoy your lessons
- make sure that all of the leaders keep a close eye on your learning and progress, so that they can help teachers to improve their lessons.

Please continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead inspector

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