

# Sturry Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118658
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	339269
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	381
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Georgina Glover
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon O'Keefe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Park View Canterbury CT2 0NR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 19 lessons involving 14 teachers, and held meetings with the chair of governors, representative staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, the school's improvement plan, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, questionnaires completed by 127 parents and carers, 36 staff and 102 pupils were received and analysed.

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

- the effectiveness of the action taken to improve pupils' attainment, particularly in mathematics
- how well the school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the progress they make from their starting points
- the quality of the start children get to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

Most pupils in this above-average-sized school are from White British backgrounds, with minority ethnic groups represented in small numbers, including a few from Gypsy/Roma backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided for in two classes. A breakfast club is attended by, on average, 25 pupils. The school has received a number of awards, including Healthy School, Eco School and Activemark awards.

The headteacher has joined the school since the last inspection. In 2009, the school formed a federation with another school locally. This resulted in shared governance and the creation of a new management structure, including a new head of school post.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

A parental comment, 'I have noticed a huge improvement in the school over the last two years', accurately reflects the progress this good school has made since it was last inspected. The school is welcoming to all, and the focus on monitoring aspects of pupils' personal development alongside their academic achievement results in pupils being cared for well. Pupils make a very strong contribution to the positive learning environment because of their consistently good and sometimes outstanding behaviour in lessons. Their work is valued and used to celebrate achievement in the vibrant displays around the school, showing pupils' involvement in a wide range of activities. Pupils know that the school looks after them well and they feel safe because of the very good relationships with staff. As one parent rightly indicated, 'My children are thriving at Sturry School.'

Children make a valuable and effective start to their learning in the Reception classes because adults establish good learning attitudes, set parameters for good behaviour, and provide lively and enjoyable activities which make learning fun. Pupils achieve well through the rest of the school as staff build effectively on these early skills. From starting points which are generally below average, pupils' attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Staff changes and inconsistency in teaching since the last inspection led to some unevenness in the progress pupils have made. These issues have been resolved and teaching is good. Consequently, pupils now make good progress, particularly in mathematics, which had begun to fall behind English. Senior staff, many of whom are new to their roles, correctly identified those areas which were causing gaps in pupils' understanding, such as weaknesses in calculation skills. They have been swift to change teaching approaches and the curriculum, but recognise that there is room for further gains by making sure that more classroom practice matches the best. In particular, a few teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do for themselves and do not give pupils regular opportunities to respond to comments made in marking and assessed work. The curriculum is good, giving pupils the necessary balance between acquiring basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills and other subjects, including enrichment activities developing creative and artistic development. Further plans are in place to build on the current good practice by finding additional ways to link subjects and to ensure that more learning is enquiry-based and contextualised in pupils' experiences of everyday life.

The school has a strong, shared sense of purpose and staff are focused on the right priorities to improve pupils' achievement further. Their evaluation of the school's strengths and areas where improvement can be made is accurate. Under the strong leadership of the executive headteacher and head of school, staff share and develop

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their practice effectively with others within the federation. Improvements already made demonstrate the good capacity to continue to address areas of relative weakness. For example, together with the governing body, senior leaders are planning how parents and carers could feel better informed about how to support their child's learning. Attendance is in line with the national average. The school has been successful in reducing the number of children who take too much time off school, but persistent absence remains a little above average.

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

- Build on the recent improvement in pupils' achievements to raise attainment by:
  - ensuring that more teaching is at the level of the best by setting more challenging tasks and raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do for themselves
  - ensuring that pupils are given opportunities to follow up on the advice given in teachers' marking
  - implementing the plan for a creative and enquiry-based curriculum where pupils apply their knowledge and skills, particularly in mathematics.
- Consult with parents and carers about how they could be more involved in supporting their child's learning.
- Extend the range of the work undertaken to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is low.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils concentrate very well and enjoy lessons, particularly when teachers set work which challenges them or gives them opportunities to work cooperatively in groups. For example, a Year 6 activity involved pupils in setting up a 'business company' which they will run over the next few weeks to raise money for charity. This required them to apply their literacy, numeracy and computer skills while developing other personal skills of negotiation and compromise, valuable for their future education and economic well-being. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the skills they acquire, such as when they present their work to others using computer presentations. They take a pride in their work, present it well and work at a reasonable pace. Pupils regularly review their work against the intended learning outcomes, and generally know what they have to do to improve it further. As a matter of course, older pupils respond to teachers' comments, showing that they understand the points made and quickly correcting a misunderstanding or extending a new skill. This effective practice is not used widely enough across the school.

Pupils are eager to take on responsibility, for example as buddies or school councillors. They are polite and respectful of one another and adults, so that it is customary for pupils and staff to open doors for each other. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, shown in their participation in clubs and physical activity at lunch time,

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and recognised in Healthy School and Activemark awards. As one parent commented, 'The introduction of the healthy eating cards has been great. My children are eating more fruit so that they can get their cards stamped. School dinners are helping to improve eating habits.' Pupils' respect for one another extends to the school and its grounds, where they help to tend flower and vegetable gardens, shown in the Eco School award. Pupils attending the breakfast club have a good start to the day, socialising with their friends and enjoying the supported activities. The school's faith status underpins links with the local community, for example when the choir sings in the church and to senior citizens at a care home. Pupils understand and care about local issues, contributing to the planning for a playground near to the school. They reflect maturely on the choices they make, and have a good understanding of right and wrong.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Good teaching and a good curriculum are the key factors in the current improvement in pupils' achievements. All lessons have effective features. These include opportunities to talk about their work so that pupils learn through articulating their ideas, and work

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

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matched to pupils' earlier learning and abilities. In a few lessons, the work is routine and is not sufficiently purposeful to extend, challenge and consolidate pupils' learning further; for example, when higher-attaining pupils are given extension tasks repeating what they can do already rather than opportunities for more open-ended, research activities to develop independent learning skills. Teachers use a variety of methods well, such as the interactive whiteboards and 'talk partners', to model the requirements of the tasks set. Teaching assistants are involved in planning with teachers so that they understand pupils' learning. They give focused support across all groups in the class, though more frequently to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders of learning track pupils' progress regularly with teachers, and use the information to plan appropriate next steps if a pupil begins to fall behind. Consequently, teachers manage pupils' work effectively so that all groups of pupils achieve well from their starting points.

Pupils say that teachers try to make learning 'fun'. The current curriculum review is designed to make it more enjoyable and coherent for pupils by linking learning and practising skills through more themes. Care has been taken to plan this thoroughly by trialling cross-curricular projects, which pupils are responding to well. Visits and visitors enrich classroom learning, such as the visit during the inspection to Canterbury Cathedral, providing the basis for further study in school. A wide range of clubs and extension activities enables pupils to develop their personal interests and skills. Pupils generally respond well to the promotion of good attendance through its award system and the school has taken a robust approach to challenging holidays taken in school time. In spite of the broadening work undertaken with families, a few pupils are absent on too many occasions without valid reasons.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The regular, systematic tracking of pupils' progress has been instrumental in raising expectations for pupils' achievement. Senior leaders, including 'leaders of learning', have responded positively to the restructuring on the introduction of the federation. Their skill and determination are effectively making improvements which are accelerating pupils' progress. Not only are pupils making good progress throughout the school, the vast majority have made up ground lost through earlier underachievement. Teamwork is strong, with staff identifying and sharing the most effective practice both

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across the school and with colleagues in the partner school. Teachers now have the knowledge and skills to provide even stronger critical challenge and support for one another to bring about further improvement. The governing body is extremely effective and focused because they have a shared vision of the strategic direction of the school. There is a wide range of expertise within the governing body, and governors understand the school's work through regular visits and links to curriculum or leadership areas. Staff resolutely ensure equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination through their partnership with parents, carers and other external agencies. The school is inclusive, and all pupils' achievements are recognised and celebrated. Because pupils are well known as individuals, prompt action is taken to ensure that the best course of action is taken to remove barriers to learning for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements were good. Records meet requirements and staff are well trained in child protection. Well-established links with the local community are seen in the positive links made with families from Traveller backgrounds. The school is a cohesive community, and links with other British, European and African schools give pupils an appreciation of their place within the global community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start because of the good relationships they form with adults. Parents and carers recognise this in comments such as, 'My child has come on leaps and bounds at this school.' Children are well cared for, safe and happy. They really



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enjoy their activities, for example when writing about animals of their choice or as one child rushed into the classroom saying, 'We made a volcano. Water, water everywhere!' Learning about lava flows, children measured the 'lava flow' (coloured water) in the outdoor area. This is just one example of the stimulating activities planned for children, with staff responding to topical events to broaden children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are confident and manage things for themselves, such as using watering cans in the outside area or clearing away resources quickly and without fuss. Assessment is regular, although the recording sheets are not always completed with children's 'next steps', which restricts its usefulness for immediate planning. However, all adults understand children's needs because planning is shared and activities are generally well focused to take learning forward systematically. From below-average starting points, most children make good progress and join Year 1 with skills in line with those expected for their age. The knowledge of children's progress and good relationships with parents and carers ensure that learning or social problems are picked up at an early stage. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and organised. The links with pre-school settings are used to make sure that children settle quickly and the same care is given to managing the transfer into more formal learning in Year 1.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Almost all parents and carers are positive about their child's experience at Sturry School and supportive of it. They feel that the school is well led and managed and, in particular, that children are safe and happy. A small minority are concerned that their child do not make enough progress, that behaviour is not dealt with effectively or that the school does not take account of their suggestions. Inspectors found that pupils make good progress but that in the past this has been uneven. Pupils are very well behaved and when any incidents of inconsiderate behaviour occur, the school deals with it promptly and effectively. Parents and carers are given regular information about school activities and children's progress through curriculum events, consultation evenings, newsletters, the website and regular reports. In a recent survey, senior staff and governors identified that reports do not give information about progress in a way parents and carers find helpful. Plans are under way to amend the reporting system to give them more help in knowing how to help their children at home.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sturry 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 127 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 357 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	51	56	44	3	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	68	54	58	46	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	43	65	51	6	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	45	55	43	11	9	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	52	42	66	52	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	36	70	55	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	43	65	51	5	4	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)	27	21	77	61	7	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	31	80	63	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	31	71	56	9	7	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	30	66	52	13	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	38	71	56	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	48	61	48	4	3	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

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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



24 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sturry Church of England Primary School, Sturry CT2 0NR

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We found the information you gave us when you spoke with us very valuable, and thank those who gave up some of their lunch time for this.

Sturry School is a good school where you make good progress. You told us how much you enjoy school and that teachers try to make learning fun. They are always trying to find new ways to make learning interesting for you. You understand your targets and what you have to do to make your work better. Teachers give you good guidance when they mark your work but not all of you have a chance to follow this up quickly to make sure that you have fully understood their comments. Adults take good care of you, so that you feel safe and secure. You know how to take care of yourselves, for example how to eat healthily and take exercise. You are lucky to have such wonderful grounds where you have space to play many games at break and lunch time. Many of you take on responsibility for others, as members of the school council representing the views of others or as buddies for younger children.

The school is improving all the time. Your attainment is average and we have suggested some things for your teachers to help you to make even more progress. We have asked them to make sure that your tasks are always challenging because some of you said that sometimes you could do harder work. We have asked teachers to give you more opportunities to apply your literacy and numeracy skills in everyday situations. A few of your parents or carers indicated that they do not always know how to help you at home. We have suggested that the headteacher and head of school ask them how the school could give them more useful information. A few of you do not attend as well as you could and can help by coming to school more regularly

We wish you every success in the future and know that you will help by continuing to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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