

# Pluckley Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118669
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	339273
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gavin Jones

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	117
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elizabeth Bloom
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sheila Todd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Pluckley Ashford TN27 0QS
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@pluckley.kent.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. In all, nine lessons were seen which included all teachers. Inspectors observed the school in action, looked at planning documents, observation notes on teaching, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and reviews carried out by the local authority. They received 71 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

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

- the achievement of all pupils and the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2
- the use teachers make of assessment information
- the part governors and middle managers play in driving the school forward
- the effectiveness of the school's care, guidance and support
- the accuracy of judgements made by the school about provision, outcomes and leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

Pluckley is much smaller than the average primary school and is recognised as being at the heart of the village. A very small proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and the school regularly has children from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low and the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and high in Year 3. In the previous academic year, there were changes in leadership in the school with three different headteachers during that period. The new headteacher was appointed from April 2009. There is a pre-school facility in the school, which is not organised or managed by the school. The school has a wide range of awards including ICT mark, Activemark, Healthy Schools status and Investors in People.

**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

Pluckley is an effective school that provides a good education for its pupils. It has improved rapidly over the recent past and is not complacent about its current position; it is still looking to improve further. The school shows outstanding strengths in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the excellent care, guidance and support it offers all of its pupils, but more especially the most vulnerable. Its strong partnerships with the local authority, its key contribution to the 'hub' partnership of local schools and its video conferencing links all provide impressive evidence of the impetus and breadth of its drive for school improvement and show good value for money. The growing links with parents and carers are helping support better attendance and fortnightly newsletters keep parents and carers well informed about what their children are learning, class by class.

Attainment in English is high and pupils make outstanding progress in this subject from below average starting points in Reception. Attainment in both mathematics and science is good and pupils make good progress. The headteacher's accurate initial assessment of the school's strengths and areas for development has enabled staff to decide, initially at their own school conference day, how they might tackle improvement. Although the leadership team will not be the same next year, careful succession planning, some good new appointments and very clear plans for moving forward indicate that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve in the future. Already improvements have been seen in attainment and progress, the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum, the governance of the school, and the effectiveness of care, guidance and support, together with aspects of pupils' personal development. One parent commented: 'The new headteacher has made this school come alive!'

Although the curriculum is now good, the school is embarking on a further round of improvements by placing the improvement of pupils' skills at the heart of its curriculum. In this way, it intends to add an even greater degree of challenge to the creativity that is already the cornerstone of its current provision. At the same time, teaching is also being improved by developing the skills of individual teachers so they move firmly into the good category. As a school, there is a sense that the journey will not be complete until teaching and learning are outstanding.

As a result of the support from the headteacher, as well as the local 'hub', the school has secured important improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with the teacher responsible for the setting gaining in knowledge, understanding and status as a result. There remains some work to be done, however, to make the outside classroom as effective a learning environment as it is indoors.

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

- Consolidate the good progress made in provision, outcomes, and leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with the leader taking the lead in:
  - analysing data in order to check on and improve progress for all children including the most able
  - ensuring that experiences in the outside classroom are as well designed and managed as those indoors by the mid point in the next academic year.
- Complete the school's plans for further curriculum development by:
  - ensuring that the move to a skills-based programme of learning incorporates the work currently in place in the expressive arts.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The quality of learning and progress in lessons are good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their tasks and thoroughly enjoy learning. Years 5 and 6 were engrossed in creating an anti-smoking leaflet and a mathematics lesson was focused on the careful weighing of ingredients for a Harry Potter potion, for example.. In two lessons, behaviour was exemplary, giving much support to learning. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to turn to for help when required. They play a full part in the life of the school in the school council and with older pupils acting as playground buddies and organising playground games for younger children. They have a broad picture of our multi-cultural world through well-established links with Malawi. Many are well informed about healthy living, understand diet and take part in a range of sporting activities both in and out of school. Their good levels of basic skills, their ability to work independently or in teams and their good attendance support the development of skills they will need in later life. This is enhanced further by well-presented enterprise work, with one group of Year 5 pupils producing a range of 'Pluckley Pastries' to sell. The school is a thoughtful place. In each classroom and around the school, there are small, comfortable areas and alcoves where children can sit and reflect, and these, together with the school's successful use of acts of worship, provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their lives in relation to the themes presented, all of which support their very good personal development.

□ Attainment is high in English. Pupils enter the school with below average skills but their subsequent progress is good. Results show good attainment and progress, particularly in mathematics and science in recent years, and inspection evidence confirms that pupils in Years 1 and 5 are also making at least good progress in all key subjects, with some pupils already working at levels appropriate for the next year of their schooling. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress, and sometimes reach the same levels of attainment as their classmates. Although pupils from Traveller families do not always maintain regular attendance in school, good relationships remain between families and school, and as a result, those pupils make at least satisfactory progress.

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*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>	2
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>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

While the curriculum is already good with some innovative aspects, plans are in place to make further changes, in order to develop skills alongside the creative curriculum. Themes, chosen by the school in advance, are used as starting points, so that pupils in every class can suggest aspects they would like to study within the theme. This effectively involves pupils in creating aspects of their own curriculum. Teachers make good use of this information to plan work which reflects the interests of their pupils. As a result, pupils are very engaged in their learning, which often takes a very imaginative form, as for example, in the scarecrows that are to be found throughout the school and the playground tables that are covered with umbrellas inside which pieces of food are slowly 'cooking' in the sun. Planning formats are very comprehensive, ensuring that learning intentions, success criteria and challenges for all abilities are clearly noted. A parent commented: 'The learning environment in the school is fantastic. Children are always involved and given opportunities to extend their learning.' □ The curriculum is enriched further by a wide range of visits, visitors, residential trips and after-school clubs. These activities support their personal and social development well.

<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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Good teaching is to be seen across the school, resulting in the curriculum being put into effect very well. Both curriculum and teaching have improved since the last inspection and, as a result, both attainment and progress have also improved. Relationships, questioning and the learning environment in classes are all key positive features of teaching. Teachers' work is further supported by the good quality assessment information they gather and are now using increasingly to guide their teaching. Good teaching is exemplified by challenge being good for all groups of learners, showing teachers' good use of assessment; interest levels and motivation are heightened by teachers making learning fun and relevant to the children. On occasions, the starts of lessons lack pace and questioning does not go far enough to ensure that teachers know the progress that pupils are making in the lessons. Pastoral care is excellent. This is particularly the case for the most vulnerable pupils in the school. The school works very effectively with a wide range of agencies, ensuring that the needs of pupils are identified carefully, supported and improvements evaluated. Pupils with social and emotional concerns are extremely well cared for by the Children's Liaison Officer and Inclusion Manager. The progress of vulnerable pupils is tracked carefully and is good as their needs are now addressed more accurately by class teachers through their regular use of assessment data. At the same time, attendance has improved to above the national average, through the use of effective monitoring techniques and support strategies.

*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 headteacher is passionate in her commitment to providing the best outcomes for her pupils and has very quickly established high expectations of them and of her staff. The relentless quest for improvement has led to the setting of an all-encompassing school plan which highlights the way forward. Successes have already been noted in improvements in teaching and learning which have had a significant effect on pupils' progress and achievement. As a result, staff morale is high. At the same time, the impact of leadership has been seen in the creation of rigorous and accurate monitoring and evaluations of all aspects of school life. The senior leadership team has accepted the new vision wholeheartedly and is very involved in all aspects of improvement. The work with vulnerable pupils has ensured that every child has equally good opportunities to learn and achieve well. The work to promote partnership with parents and carers and with outside providers has been extremely successful in providing firmer links with the parents' group and in providing training, advice and support from a range of other

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professionals. There has been particularly interesting and purposeful use of video links with the National Portrait Gallery, noted in a history lesson about the seaside with a class of younger pupils, for example. The school itself has led training and support for work in the Early Years Foundation Stage for a range of schools and this has had a positive effect on the school's own work. At the previous inspection, the governing body was seen as satisfactory. It has taken on considerable training, created two teams of governors for meetings and discussions, collects its own information through monitoring and is now in a good position to question, challenge and support the school. The school has several good elements in its community cohesion policy. For example, the school has had strong links with a school in Malawi for several years, supporting areas of the curriculum and pupils' cultural understanding well. Pupils in the school take on many roles in support of their school community. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were good, with some examples of outstanding practice.

*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>1</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 settle very quickly to school as many come from the pre-school facility in the same building. Parents and carers are very happy with transition arrangements. One parent noted: 'Pluckley has given my child a wonderful start to her school life.' Children's levels of skills on entry to school vary from year to year. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress in their learning. They enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities and are taught well. The current cohort show skills similar to those expected for their age, although there are still weaknesses in elements



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of language and mathematical development. Previously, intakes had a lower profile of skills. Progress is tracked carefully during the year and the vast majority of children are currently working within the Early Learning Goals set for their age group and are well prepared for working in Key Stage 1.

Activities are based firmly on the interests of children, thus capitalising successfully on what they want to learn. This has a positive effect on their independence. The current theme of 'The United Kingdom' showed that children were very interested in royalty, the story of St George and a wide range of flora and fauna. These interests are exploited by the good teaching. The outdoor area, noted as a weakness at the last inspection, has been improved. However, activities there are still not yet as well structured as in the indoor classroom.

□ Staff provide well for children's welfare and there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those initiated by children themselves. The class teacher, who leads the setting well, is now much more confident in her understanding of this age group and finds that only having Reception-age children in the class has helped accelerate progress. However, data show that the small group of the most-able children do not make as much progress as they should, compared with others in the class.

*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**

The return of questionnaires from parents and carers was high. They were overwhelmingly positive about the provision the school makes for their children. For example, over 95% of responses noted that children enjoy school, were kept safe, parents and carers are well informed of progress, teaching is good, their children's specific needs are met and that they are happy with their children's experience of school. A small minority showed concerns about how well their children are prepared for the future and that the school does not take notice of their suggestions. The inspection found that transition between schools and pupils' readiness for their future well-being are both good. A parent forum has been set up recently to help parents and carers have an even greater voice in the school. One parent commented, '□ ...the teachers and head are inspirational, very approachable, always asking for our opinion and I am very proud of the school'.

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

The inspection team received 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 117 pupils registered at the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pluckley 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	61	27	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	75	18	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	51	32	45	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	46	35	49	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	46	35	49	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	49	29	41	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	39	35	49	4	6	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)	24	34	37	52	8	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	42	38	54	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	42	32	45	3	4	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	35	39	55	5	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	29	41	37	52	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	54	30	42	0	0	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.**



23 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pluckley Primary School, Pluckley, TN27 0QS

Thank you for your help when we visited your school for its recent inspection. You are justly proud of your school, as we saw from your responses to the questionnaires, and sharing your views with us was very helpful. We all enjoyed seeing all your scarecrows mowing the lawn and sitting around the playground!

Here are some of the highlights we saw on our visit.

- You achieve well in your work and reach especially high standards in English.
- Your times for reflection, your understanding of right and wrong, and your understanding of different cultures are all excellent.
- The ways in which your teachers and other adults look after you are first class.
- The ways in which the school organises other people to help you learn, such as your video conferencing links, are exceptional.
- Many other aspects of your life and work at school are good.

The school now needs to:

- make sure that the work carried out in the outside area of the Reception class is as good as the work inside the classroom
- make sure that any further changes in the curriculum do not lose sight of its current emphasis on your creative work.

I am sure that you will continue to do your best and keep up your good levels of attendance.

Thank you again for such an interesting visit.

Best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones Lead Inspector

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