

Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118714
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339281
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Thelma Cunningham
Headteacher	Edward Cottle
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 11 lessons in addition to brief visits to other lessons, saw 10 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, reports from advisers working with the school, tracking data showing pupils' attainment and the progress they are making, the school's improvement plans, monitoring records and 93 responses to the questionnaire for parents and carers.

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

- how effectively pupils' progress is being tracked and assessment information used to ensure all pupils are being suitably challenged to make the progress that they should
- how successfully leaders and managers identify priorities for development and secure sustained improvements.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average primary. The number on roll has fallen considerably over recent years. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and most of these pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally and none is at an early stage of learning English. There have been a considerable number of staff changes particularly at headteacher level over recent years. Since April 2009, the school has been led by an advisory headteacher. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards including Healthy School Status and the Sportsmark.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. The school is ineffective overall because pupils' learning and progress are inadequate and because the quality of the school's provision is inadequate.

Children make a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Rates of learning and progress through the rest of the school are uneven across year groups and subjects. The quality of teaching is inconsistent. There is some good teaching but too much teaching is inadequate or barely satisfactory because it does not enable pupils to make sufficiently rapid gains in their learning. Expectations are not always high enough and work is not well matched to pupils' needs, particularly for more-able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Provision for these pupils has not ensured that their specific needs are identified quickly or that they make the progress that they should. Some very recent improvements have been introduced, such as the use of computers to support pupils' literacy skills, but these have not been in place long enough to have had an impact on outcomes for pupils. When teachers mark pupils' literacy and numeracy work, they do not always make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. The quality of target setting is too uneven. Although some pupils know their targets, this is not consistent. The school has new systems to check the progress pupils are making. Assessment data are helping leaders and managers to have a more accurate picture of how well pupils are doing. However, information from assessments is not always used as a tool to identify and plan the next steps in pupils' learning to ensure that pupils progress swiftly in their learning.

Extra-curricular clubs are popular and particularly support pupils' positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles. However, the curriculum does not ensure that pupils make the steady gains in basic skills necessary to reach their potential. The use of computers to support pupils' learning across a range of subjects is limited and there are few links between subjects. Very little use is made of visits to local places of interest, themed events or visitors to the school to enhance pupils' learning experiences.

Pupils like coming to school as parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire confirm. Attendance is average. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory. Pastoral care is sound and pupils' personal development is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders, managers and governors

have been unsuccessful in tackling the weaknesses identified by the last inspection. As a result, performance targets are not being met. Although staff turnover has contributed in part to pupils' underachievement, it does not fully account for it. School leaders have not ensured that specific priorities for development have been swiftly addressed to secure the necessary improvements. The school has not taken effective steps to plan or evaluate its contribution to community cohesion in order to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of those who live in communities other than their own. A recently introduced monitoring programme is helping the school to evaluate the quality of its work but has not ensured that improvements to provision are secure and lasting. Consequently, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate. Although the needed improvements have not yet been secured, the advisory headteacher has identified appropriate priorities for development and successfully united the teaching staff with an increased understanding of where enhancements are required.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase rates of learning and progress in literacy and numeracy by:
 - making sure that teachers have a shared understanding of the expectations and challenge required to ensure that all pupils make swift gains in their learning
 - ensuring that support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is an established part of the school's provision
 - using information from tracking pupils' progress, assessing and marking to match work consistently to pupils' needs
 - ensuring pupils know their targets and how to improve their work
 - planning the curriculum to build systematically upon pupils' prior experience and ensure pupils develop their computing skills
 - increasing the rigour with which leaders, managers and governors monitor the school's performance in order to bring about sustainable improvements to the quality of provision.
- Ensure that community cohesion is effectively promoted at local, national and global levels and foster pupils' cultural awareness.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Rates of learning and progress are not consistent enough through the school and particularly in Years 3 to 6 to ensure that pupils learn and progress as well as they should. This is why pupils' overall achievement and enjoyment of their learning is inadequate. Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. All groups of pupils make similar progress. The pace of learning and progress was observed to be slow in lessons when the work pupils were given was not suitably challenging for them and when all pupils were expected to do very similar tasks despite the range of ability in the class. Pupils were observed making insufficient progress in some lessons because

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

planning did not ensure that pupils develop and practise the specific skills needed to move up to the next level in their work. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have not been consistently well supported to ensure they can keep up and as a result many of them have not made the progress of which they are capable. Although behaviour is generally positive, when pupils were insufficiently motivated and engaged in their work in lessons they were easily distracted. Pupils have a sound knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and say they usually feel safe at school. Pupils enjoy a satisfactory range of opportunities to take on responsibility in school, for example as prefects and running the school savings bank each week. Older pupils readily look after children in the Reception class, fostering caring relationships. The school choir regularly sings in the local community. Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy is good and reflected in the school's success in achieving Healthy School Status and the Activemark. Links with the local church support pupils' spiritual development. However, pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own is extremely limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

How effective is the provision?

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

Pupils enjoy opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups to discuss their ideas and new learning, supporting their sound social skills. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not always high enough, particularly for more-able pupils. Information from assessments is not used systematically to plan learning and ensure that tasks set are appropriately matched to all pupils' needs. Although in most classes there is a range of abilities, pupils are often set fairly similar work to do. This means that tasks are sometimes too easy for some and too challenging for others. Additional adults are not always given clear enough guidance to ensure they are consistently involved in supporting pupils' learning. Pupils sometimes lose concentration when they spend too long listening to the teacher talking and when teachers ask questions that involve only a few pupils in the class. Consequently, the pace of learning is not as swift as it should be and some pupils struggle to settle to their work.

French and ensemble singing are highlights of the curriculum. However, curriculum planning is not ensuring that pupils build steadily and systematically upon their prior experiences. The use of computers to promote pupils' learning and skills is restricted. Curriculum provision to ensure pupils develop an understanding of people from other cultures and backgrounds is also limited.

Care and support systems have shortcomings. For example, pupils who require extra support in their learning do not always receive appropriate levels of specific additional help because they are not always identified quickly. Over recent years, record keeping particularly for potentially vulnerable pupils has not been well enough organised to ensure effective links with outside agencies and to foster pupils' learning and development. Some opportunities are missed to promote caring attitudes among the pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

Systems for monitoring provision and pupils' learning and progress are not effective in bringing about rapid and lasting improvements. Leaders and governors have ensured that procedures to promote pupils' safety, welfare and health are sound. The governing body has been ineffective in offering robust challenge or holding the school sufficiently to account over pupils' outcomes and the quality of provision. The governing body has had too little impact on the direction and work of the school. Community cohesion is insufficiently encouraged. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling

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of discrimination is inadequate because there is not enough improvement in the outcomes of all groups of pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Caring support and happy working relationships help children to settle quickly into the Reception class. Links with the local nursery and opportunities for children to visit the Reception class before they start support them when they join the school and emphasise partnership with parents and carers. Newsletters ensure parents and carers are informed about the work their children are doing and how they can support their learning at home. Notes displayed on the walls written by parents and carers record their children's successes at home. Children form positive relationships with adults and other children, and learn to take turns, share equipment and work well together. There is a sound balance between adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to select tasks for themselves within a sound range of activities. The use of the outdoor area is restricted and when outside, opportunities for children to develop their skills in all areas of learning are limited. Pupils were observed making satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world during a walk around the school grounds looking at spring plants. However, opportunities were missed to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Records of ongoing observation are kept and used to plan further learning. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

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

Most parents and carers responding to the questionnaire are confident that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe. A majority expressed concerns that they are not kept sufficiently informed about how well their children are making progress. Inspectors found that some recent improvements have been made in response to parents' suggestions, although the school could do more to involve parents and carers in their children's learning. A majority of parents and carers expressed concern about the management of behaviour. While inspectors judged behaviour to be satisfactory during the inspection, some pupils were more easily distracted when teaching was not sufficiently engaging.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Voluntary Aided 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	37	39	50	53	6	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	40	48	51	7	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	11	53	56	26	28	4	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	12	60	64	14	15	7	7
The teaching is good at this school	13	14	56	60	11	12	3	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	13	59	63	17	18	4	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	31	55	59	9	10	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	10	55	59	8	9	5	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	9	66	70	14	15	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	9	44	47	24	26	5	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	6	55	59	11	12	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	14	15	53	56	17	18	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	22	51	54	12	13	5	5

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.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Brenchley, TN12 7NY

Thank you for being friendly and helping the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to all that you had to say. I am writing to tell you about the judgements that we made.

We found that your school does some things satisfactorily but that it has areas that need to be improved. It is not giving you a satisfactory education because you are not all making the progress that you could, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This means that many of you are not doing as well as you might by the time you leave the school. We have judged that the school needs 'special measures'. This means that the school will receive extra support to improve things quickly and inspectors will come back to check on the progress the school is making.

The best things about your school are:

- you told us you like school and you attend regularly
- the youngest children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception class
- you are well aware how important it is to keep yourselves fit and healthy and you like the sporting clubs that the school organises for you
- you know how to keep yourselves safe.

We have asked the school to make sure that:

- you all make good progress in lessons
- the teachers give you work that is at the right level of difficulty for each one of you
- when the teachers mark your work, they give you clear ideas about how you can make it better
- those of you who need additional help are well supported so that you make good progress
- you are taught more about the lives of people who live in a wide variety of communities that are different to your own.

We would like to thank you again for your help and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard

Lead inspector

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