

Ide Hill Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118722
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339282
Inspection dates	15–16 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Denbigh
Headteacher	Irene Elsey
Date of previous school inspection	16 July 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited nine lessons involving five teachers, and held meetings with representative governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, the school improvement plan, safeguarding documents, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 36 questionnaires from parents and carers were received and analysed together with 12 from staff and 38 from pupils.

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

- how well the changes made to the teaching of literacy are impacting on pupils' attainment and progress
- the impact of the action taken to improve pupils' attendance
- the appropriateness of the school's improvement priorities.

Information about the school

The majority of pupils in this small primary school are from White British backgrounds, but a range of other heritages are represented in small numbers. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, mainly European languages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. Pupils' identified needs mostly relate to moderate or specific learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder. Many more pupils join or leave the school part way through their primary education than in most schools, with approximately a half of the pupils in the Key Stage 2 classes having joined the school after Reception. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced significant turbulence in staffing, including a two-year period without a substantive headteacher. The current substantive headteacher took up post just over a year ago. During the current academic year the school has been involved in a local authority programme 'Leading for Impact' to bring about improvements in pupils' attainment. A refurbishment programme has recently improved classrooms, office and storage facilities. One class is based in mobile accommodation. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up as one Reception class taught in a new classroom.

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

This is a good school where all pupils are made to feel welcome. Pupils work and play together very well. Parents and carers value the recent improvements, with many making positive comments on the inspection questionnaire. These views, accurately reflecting the school's key strengths, were summed up in the comments, 'Ide Hill is a very caring and friendly school which our children really enjoy. The atmosphere enables a rounded, balanced education underpinned by a Christian ethos,' and, 'I feel the school has improved dramatically in direction and leadership under the new headship in the last year. All aspects have improved, from the range of clubs available to the consistency of homework.' Pupils' personal development is good because of effective care and guidance, and pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in and running school activities, for example Year 6 pupils run clubs for younger pupils. Although most pupils attend well, attendance is only average overall because of the poor attendance of a few pupils and the number of holidays taken in term time. The school's robust approach to promoting good attendance has resulted in some improvement over the year.

The numbers in each year group are small and in recent years around half of the pupils who take the Year 6 tests were not in the school at the beginning of Key Stage 2. Although pupils' attainment varies from year to year, overall attainment in English, mathematics and science is generally in line with the national average by the end of Year 6, and an above average proportion of pupils reach the higher levels. Pupils make good progress from their starting points, whether they join the school in Reception or later, because their needs are identified accurately and teachers use the information to match work closely to pupils' earlier learning. Good teaching engages pupils well so that they work hard because they know what is expected of them and strive to meet teachers' high expectations. Good leadership is shown in the carefully focused improvement priorities this year. Attainment in reading and mathematics is stronger than in writing, and the school has accurately identified that pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length or to use their writing skills in other subjects. The school has had to work in restricted accommodation during the building programme this year. This included limited access to outdoor play for the Reception class, and the new grassed area has yet to be fully developed to enable children to play more creatively outdoors.

Staff and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's performance and have a realistic ambition for its future. The school has come through a period of instability, and morale and teamwork are strong. Since the last inspection teaching and leadership have improved, accelerating pupils' progress and improving their

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achievement, so that the school has a good capacity for ongoing improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment in English by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at greater length
 - providing more activities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Improve attendance, particularly of the few pupils who find it difficult to attend regularly.
- Develop the use of the Reception outside area as an outdoor classroom covering all aspects of children's development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils say that learning is fun. They have positive attitudes, shown in the way they concentrate in lessons and present their work well, for example in neat handwriting and the organisation of work in their books. This means that pupils can see the development of their skills, motivating them to sustain their efforts. Pupils are confident to offer their ideas and are not afraid to ask if there is anything they do not understand, because they know that their views are valued. Following a decline in pupils' attainment and progress after the last inspection, the school's data show that pupils are now making good progress in all aspects of their learning, and attainment is rising across the school. Some pupils make better than expected progress from their starting points because any gaps in their knowledge are identified and they are given additional support. New approaches to teaching phonics and structured guided reading have been successful in raising pupils' reading skills, which helps them to make good progress in other subjects. All groups do well, including those who speak English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The relatively low numbers in each year group make comparisons with national averages not fully reliable. However, a higher than average proportion of pupils has reached the higher level in the Key Stage 2 tests this year. Pupils' good achievement by the time they leave the school, particularly in the basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), gives them a good basis for their secondary education. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used their writing and information technology skills well to film and record documentaries about their 'roller coaster ride' generated by computer software.

Pupils have a good understanding of their own safety which, together with their excellent behaviour and the consideration they show for one another, helped everyone to cope with restricted space during the building renovation. One pupil accurately summed up the school ethos in the comment, 'We are one big happy family. We know everyone and look after one another.' Pupils of all ages respond well to the opportunities to take responsibility, for example looking after the garden or as school councillors, knowing that it develops their leadership skills. Older pupils willingly look after younger children so that all can play happily together. Pupils know how to take responsibility for their own health by eating sensibly and taking exercise. They participate enthusiastically

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in a wide range of extra-curricular sport activities and are rightly proud of how well they do in competitive sport, often against much larger schools. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and shown in the good relationships with one another and with adults. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and respect each other's views and differences. They have an acute awareness of others less fortunate than themselves, initiating fundraising for charity. They have a good awareness of cultures and beliefs across the world, with some parents sharing aspects of their culture in lessons, such as looking at Ugandan costumes or sampling Asian food. Teachers are aware that pupils' direct understanding of the diversity of British culture is less well developed and have set up a link with a school in different circumstances for pupils to visit and share experiences. The school has good procedures in place to promote good attendance and check on absence. However, a small minority of pupils with poor attendance has a disproportionate impact on the overall attendance and a number of families do not subscribe to the school's expectations not to take holidays in term.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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.

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Good teaching makes learning effective and interesting for pupils. This was shown by the recall pupils had for their learning about Judaism because a good range of resources made learning visual and memorable. Teachers use their subject expertise and knowledge of individual pupils well to match work to pupils' prior attainment so that the needs of different age and ability groups are met effectively. Teachers use time well, planning activities which give pupils an appropriate balance of whole class and independent work. While pupils have regular opportunities for writing which develops a range of writing skills, their books show that they do not have enough activities or opportunities to develop their capacity to write at length. Teachers explain work clearly and use the interactive whiteboards well to illustrate concepts. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the range of reading activities and say that the daily guided reading sessions have helped them to improve their reading. Marking is regular and often makes reference to pupils' individual targets which gives pupils a strong sense of achievement. Recently there is a clear expectation that pupils will respond to marking, for example by carrying out an additional task to show that they have understood the guidance they are given. Generally pupils know what they have to do to improve their work.

Although the curriculum for literacy and numeracy is well developed, staffing and leadership changes have impacted on the development of other subjects. Whilst the curriculum is broad and has many strengths, for example through specialist provision in art, music and French, staff recognise that subjects could be linked more creatively to make learning coherent and to offer more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. The new ICT suite is greatly appreciated, and teachers and pupils are excited about the potential this brings for internet research and the development of lifelong learning skills. Pupils' personal development is promoted well and the emphasis on pastoral care is a strength of the school. Staff have developed effective links with other professionals, particularly to support pupils with specific needs where expertise beyond that available in the school is required.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
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?

The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body are ambitious for the school and committed to increasing the rate of pupils' progress further. They have taken strong action to bring about improvement, following time lost through staff turnover. The

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headteacher and staff have used the school's involvement in the 'Leading for Impact' programme and other local authority support to focus successfully on improving reading, the area needed to make the greatest difference to pupils' achievement. The governing body, headteacher and teachers are accurate in their evaluation of the school's performance, and are bringing the same focus to the next priority of improving writing, ensuring that appropriate action is being taken to sustain improvements. Individual governors use their skills and knowledge well and base their strategic decision making on first-hand knowledge of the school. The governing body has good systems in place to keep parents informed. Staff make good use of partnerships with other schools, for example sharing events for pupils identified as gifted or talented. This is particularly helpful for small schools.

The management of equality of opportunity is good and discrimination is tackled effectively, shown in the accurate identification and action taken if any pupil does not make the expected progress. The school adopts recommended procedures to protect and safeguard pupils. Issues of safety are addressed effectively in pupils' learning, for example through first aid or cycling proficiency training. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school community is free from prejudice, with pupils from all backgrounds and starting points progressing and enjoying their education equally well. The school places itself effectively at the heart of the village, for example by supporting village events such as the village fair, but also shows its appreciation of the support of the local community. The school received many notes of thanks following the school garden party to say 'thank you' to villagers for their support during the disruption caused during the building refurbishment.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are happy and contented because they feel safe and enjoy learning. They are looked after well and understand why the routines for safety and their health are necessary. The speed with which children are helped to settle was seen on the introductory morning for the new intake when children were happily moving around the school and finding out about their new surroundings. Relationships with parents and carers are positive and the school has introduced effective ways for them to share children's achievements at home with the school. Children's starting points vary considerably, but taken together are usually in line with national expectations for their age. Provision is improving and staff are committed to ensuring that they introduce Early Years Foundation Stage best practice, so that children make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. In line with the rest of the school, there has been an effective focus on developing children's understanding of phonics. This was seen when children identified rhyming words linked to the theme of seaside, and then a small group successfully thought out and wrote their own next lines of a poem. Children's progress is tracked carefully and the information used to guide provision for their next steps in learning. Children learn through appropriate opportunities for play. They are given some good resources, such as the leaves collected on a walk around the school grounds as a stimulus for drawing. On occasion, children's choice of activities could be more structured. Now that Reception has access to more outdoor accommodation, staff intend to develop it into a full outdoor classroom, particularly to give children opportunities for more imaginative play alongside different experiences to promote their literacy and numeracy skills.

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	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school, remarking particularly on the improvements evident this year. They referred particularly to the positive impact of initiatives such as the introduction of French and the increase of clubs and visitors. They appreciate the interaction of different age groups and the sense of support and friendship. A very few indicated that they are not given enough information about their child's progress and how to provide support at home. The inspection found that parents and carers are given detailed information about the curriculum and regular opportunities

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to discuss children's progress with teachers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ide Hill 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 83 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	83	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	83	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	42	19	53	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	61	11	31	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	61	12	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	61	12	33	1	3	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	64	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	67	9	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	61	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	78	4	11	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	67	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	86	5	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	78	8	22	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

	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.



19 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ide Hill Church of England Primary School, Sevenoaks TN14 6JT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We found the information you gave us when you spoke with us very valuable. This letter is to explain to you what we found out. We agree that Ide Hill is a good school.

Here are some of the things the school does well.

- Your behaviour is excellent, and this helps you to learn well in lessons.
- You get on very well together and many of you organise activities to help others, so that you enjoy school a lot.
- You know a great deal about how to live healthily and keep safe, and many of you keep fit by joining in sports activities.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and you make good progress.
- All staff take good care of you.

The headteacher, governors and staff constantly try to make the school even better and we agree with them about the most important things that will help you to make even better progress. They are:

- to improve your attainment in English by giving you some tasks which require you to write at greater length and to practise your writing skills in other subjects
- to develop the outdoor area for Reception children so that they can learn more things outside.

We know that you will help by continuing to do your best and always asking if there is anything you do not understand. A few of you do not attend as well as you could and can help by coming to school more regularly.

We wish you all the best for the future and particularly to Year 6 pupils in their new school.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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