

West Kingsdown CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130948
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	341069
Inspection dates	18–19 March 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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Bosley
Headteacher	Ian Whittaker
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2010
School address	Fawkham Road Sevenoaks TN15 6JP
Telephone number	01474 853484
Fax number	01474 853114
Email address	headteacher@west-kingsdown.kent.sch.uk

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent looking at learning. Inspectors visited 13 lessons involving seven teachers. They observed the school's work, and held meetings with the Chair of Governors, staff and pupils. They looked at pupils' work, the school's improvement plans, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 37 parent and carer and 16 staff questionnaires were received and analysed, along with 42 from pupils.

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

- the impact of recent initiatives to raise attainment and accelerate learning, and progress in mathematics and science
- how successfully leaders and managers are improving and maintaining teaching quality in order to sustain consistently good progress for pupils in all year groups
- the impact of actions taken to tackle persistent absenteeism and to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils.

Information about the school

The school roll has declined since the last inspection and the school is now smaller than average. There has been an increase in the proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is not their home language, and these are now higher than in the majority of schools. The largest minority group are from Traveller backgrounds and several other groups are represented in small numbers. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, with many having complex behavioural, emotional and learning needs. Amongst its awards, the school holds Safe School Accreditation and Eco-School status.

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

'Our children are happy going into school and happy when they come out of school.' This parental view of this good school was typical of many features appreciated by other parents and carers, also illustrated in another comment, 'It's small and friendly and they (pupils) have been encouraged to be children; by that, I mean the more traditional ethics of enjoying childhood and not being pushed into growing up too fast.' Pupils too are positive about the school, shown in recent improvements in attendance. However, the attendance of a few pupils remains low, which has an impact on their achievement. Pupils are articulate and confident, reflecting how the buddy system 'boosts self-esteem' of both partners. Another positive feature of the school is the impressive range of well-attended clubs giving pupils excellent opportunities to broaden their interests within a social setting. These range from sport, music and drama to activities for particular interest groups such as art, chess, computer, gardening, model making and mathematics challenge. Most pupils say that they feel safe from bullying and know that they will be given help if it is needed, recognised in the Safe School Accreditation. The introduction of 'worry boxes' by the school council means that issues of concern to pupils are dealt with quickly by teachers within class groupings.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and continue to achieve well through the school because of good teaching. Progress has not always been even, but this has been addressed well. Pupils gain a momentum in their learning as they move through the school and their literacy and numeracy skills become embedded. From a below average start, attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6 and improving, giving pupils a sound basis for secondary education and their future working lives. Attainment in English is stronger than other subjects, and in the Year 6 national tests last year, was above the national average. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain similar standards this year. Although attainment in mathematics and science has been improving, science has been weaker because pupils have not had enough opportunities to develop their practical skills through relevant hands-on activities. In a few lessons, too much time is spent in whole-class learning which limits opportunities for pupils to consolidate their understanding by trying things out for themselves. Teachers monitor pupils' progress regularly and take appropriate action if a pupil is not making the expected rate of progress. Pupils generally have a good understanding of what they have to do next to raise the level of their work, but they are not routinely required to respond to the advice given in teachers' marking, to ensure that new skills are practised or misconceptions are corrected at an early stage.

Good leadership and management at all levels mean that leaders, staff and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. Staff focus

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rigorously on improving areas of the school's work which have the greatest impact on pupils' achievements, such as improving attendance and attainment in science. Work undertaken with local authority consultants has improved teachers' accuracy of assessment and they use their understanding of the level of pupils' work well to plan tasks closely matched to pupils' needs. Teachers, the majority of whom are relatively new to the roles, work collaboratively to share ideas and approaches, resulting in improved progress for pupils. This shows the school's good capacity for sustained further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase attainment in science by giving pupils more practical, investigative tasks to improve their scientific understanding.
- Strengthen pupils' learning by:
 - giving them more opportunities to do things for themselves
 - ensuring that they reflect on and respond to the advice given in marking.
- Raise the attendance of the few pupils who find it difficult to attend regularly.

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

Pupils work and play well together, and participate keenly in and enjoy school life. The positive relationships between pupils and with adults successfully promote good behaviour in and around the school, which makes an important contribution to the progress pupils make. Adults balance the needs of pupils who have emotional and behavioural needs with a 'zero tolerance' approach so that minor incidents are managed well and do not disrupt the learning of others. The pupils' questionnaire showed that a small minority expect their peers to behave even better. Pupils want to do well, particularly when lessons are made interesting and fun. In these lessons, pupils' enthusiasm takes learning forward quickly. Pupils' eagerness for events such as health week, skipping day and wear their own clothes day for Sport Relief shows their understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. The importance pupils place on contributing to the school, for example as school councillors or peer mentors, is shown in their desire to influence decisions even further. Pupils participate in many activities beyond the school, including regular links with the church and parish council, and representation on the County Youth Council making their views known to county councillors. They understand and subscribe to the school's values well, for example through their genuine involvement in an assembly when the Christian message was made concrete for them through the connection made to school rules.

Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, helping them to make good progress not only in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but across all their subjects. They particularly enjoy the visits associated with their topics and making learning relevant. For example, during the inspection, pupils produced quality pictures in the style of David Hockney following their visit to Tate Modern the previous day. All groups of pupils make good progress, although those with special educational

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needs and/or disabilities make marginally better progress than others because of the good identification of their needs and the programmes put in place to help and support them.

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	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Staff are ambitious for the school and work well as a team to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to make learning interesting, enabling pupils to grow in confidence. Modern technology is used imaginatively to illustrate learning and motivate pupils. Teaching assistants are valuably and collaboratively involved to support the learning of a range of pupils, but particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In a few lessons, a small minority of pupils passively listen to the teacher for too long and do not have sufficient opportunity to show what they know and can do. Target setting, seen as a weakness when the school was last inspected, has been successfully addressed. Pupils are aware of their current achievements and the targets set are helpful in ensuring that they know how to improve to meet manageable challenge.

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

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The school places an appropriate emphasis on core skills, meeting the needs of groups and individuals well, as seen in the good progress they make. The curriculum has been developed to include French and improve provision for music, commented on positively by parents and carers. Teachers make effective links across subjects, for example in linking a problem-solving lesson in mathematics to Sport Relief. Further work is in progress to enhance opportunities for creativity and active engagement.

Parents and carers are given good feedback about the development and progress of their children. Programmes to develop self-confidence and empathy for others are effectively promoting pupils’ personal development. The arrangements to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are good. The school is sensitive to the circumstances of families from different backgrounds, for example running workshops for those from Traveller backgrounds to enable them to support their children’s literacy and numeracy development. Effective work with the local authority has improved attendance so that it is now in line with the national average, although a few pupils still do not attend regularly enough.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and leadership team have focused relentlessly on establishing a team of staff who share a vision for good, child-centred teaching to promote pupils’ personal qualities alongside academic achievement. Governors are very supportive of the school and have appropriate skills to support school leadership. Under the astute leadership of the chair, governors are demonstrably involved in all aspects of school life, so that they know the school extremely well and are aware of its strengths and the challenges it faces. They share the school’s aspirations to give West Kingsdown pupils the best possible life chance through an education that meets their needs, knowing that first and foremost most parents and carers want happy children. Systematic and rigorous self-evaluation, particularly of teaching and learning, is used well to bring about consistency and improvement across the school.

Procedures and links with outside bodies to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are good. The school deals fairly with each pupil and family to support pupils’ welfare and educational development, so that all groups of pupils make consistent progress. The school is a cohesive community which places itself firmly at the heart of the wider community, with its building being used by the community every day of the week.

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Church links, such as the school’s partner school in Uganda, help to give pupils a good understanding of global issues and promote community cohesion in its broadest sense.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Well-thought-through induction procedures and links with parents and carers ensure that children make good progress from the time they join the Reception class. Children’s attainment on entry varies from year to year, but mostly, children enter school with skills below, and often well below, those expected for their age, with particular weaknesses in aspects of their social and emotional development and communication skills. Appropriate adult intervention ensures that children are thoroughly and productively involved in a range of activities so that they grow in confidence and effectively develop intellectual and social skills. Although more children are working at expected levels than when they started, attainment on entry to Year 1 is generally below average. Adults make ongoing, perceptive assessments of children’s development, share these regularly with parents and carers, and use the information well to plan activities to address children’s needs. Good leadership and management ensure effective organisation and planning. Great care has been taken to create an environment appealing to children, for example with interesting displays of ‘Special People’ and ‘Look How I’ve Changed’, reflecting the work undertaken. The outdoor area is used well, particularly for physical development, but staff realise that further development is needed so that it can be used more effectively as an outdoor classroom reflecting all areas of learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Inspectors agree with parents’ and carers’ positive views about the school. Comments such as ‘thoroughly enjoying school and progressing extremely well, both academically and in terms of social interaction and confidence’ are typical of the views of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire. A few respondents indicated that they are unhappy about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors do not agree with this negative view, finding that adults manage the behaviour well, including that of pupils who have behavioural needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Kingsdown CoFE VC 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 160 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	65	12	32	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	26	70	11	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	54	16	43	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	51	17	46	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	59	15	41	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	54	15	41	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	46	16	43	1	3	1	3
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)	14	38	19	51	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	43	20	54	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	30	22	59	1	3	3	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	38	20	54	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	38	20	54	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	51	17	46	1	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 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.



22 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Kingsdown CofE VC Primary School, West Kingsdown, TN15 6JP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited recently. I particularly want to thank those pupils who gave up time at lunchtime to talk to some of the inspectors. We found the things you told us very helpful in making our judgements about how well the school is doing. West Kingsdown is a good school where you make good progress because you work hard in lessons.

You take plenty of exercise and know how to lead healthy lifestyles. We are impressed that so many of you take part in extra-curricular sport. Many of you contribute well to the school and local area as gardeners, school councillors, joining pupils from other schools at the County Youth Council or fundraising for charity. You feel safe because you behave well and get on well together. Adults take good care of you and you always have an adult to talk to if you need help.

You enjoy learning because teaching is good. Your teachers make lessons interesting for you and often make links between subjects. Sometimes, the start of the lesson is a little long. We have asked your teachers to make sure that you always have enough opportunities to work independently for a longer period of time to help you to learn to think things through for yourselves, and that you have more practical activities in science. You have a good understanding of how well you are doing and teachers give you clear advice on how to improve when they mark your work. You can also help by always being sure to read what they say and try out the guidance you are given. We have asked teachers to give you time to do this.

You can all help by continuing to work hard. A few of you do not attend school as regularly as you should and you can help by trying to come more often.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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