

# The Orchard School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	119058
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	379717
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Timothy Feast

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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	77
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Everett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nikki Mason
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Cambridge Road Canterbury Kent CT1 3QQ
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<b>Fax number</b>	01227 781589
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<b>Age group</b>	5–16
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	5–6 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	379717



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Timothy Feast

Additional inspector

Janev Mehmet-Christofides

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. In excess of 6 hours was spent observing 13 lessons, covering the whole age range on roll and involving 11 different teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils of different ages, senior and middle leaders and student support coordinators. Telephone conversations were held with the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and with the manager of one of the off-site providers of accredited courses. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents. These included attendance and behaviour records, assessment data, pupil files and a range of policies and procedures. The 25 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

The Orchard is an average-sized special school catering for pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties. It has undergone a significant change since the previous inspection. The minimum age limit was lowered from 11 to 5 years in September 2011 and at the time of the inspection the primary section had pupils in Years 3 to 6. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. In addition to the behavioural and learning difficulties, many have additional difficulties, such as autism. A very small number of the pupils are girls. The overwhelming majority of pupils is of White British heritage. Over two thirds of the school's roll is known to be eligible for free school meals and about a tenth is looked after children. Pupils come to the school from many parts of Kent, some travelling considerable distances to attend. Many pupils are admitted to the school at times other than those of traditional transition. The school uses some external providers for vocational opportunities for older pupils, for example stables which offer equine management courses as well as work experience.

The school has Specialist Arts status and has a number of national awards including Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- The Orchard is a satisfactory school, although there have been improvements since the last inspection. The vast majority of parents and carers believe that the school looks after their children well and inspection findings confirm this. It is not a good school because of satisfactory teaching, achievement and behaviour.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils progress well in some lessons, but more slowly in others. Progress with improving their reading has been particularly good since September 2011 when dedicated reading sessions were introduced. Children who are in the care of the local authority make better progress than other pupils.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Lessons are consistently planned but insufficient account is taken of the different levels at which pupils are working. These differences are not reflected enough in the choice of activities provided. Pupils make better progress in lessons where staff plan activities which involve the pupils in being active and creative, offer opportunities to work both collaboratively and independently and where progress is evaluated during the lesson.
- While pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall, there is low-level disturbance in some lessons and around the site. A small minority of parents and carers, staff and pupils have some reservations about behaviour. However, pupils' behaviour improves over the time pupils are at the school and they leave school prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory as are the monitoring of teaching and staff performance management. School leaders ensure the school runs smoothly. The curriculum is tailored well to meet pupils' interests. The data that leaders collect from their monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress are not always used to best effect to improve teaching performance and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress.
- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement, by September 2012, by ensuring teachers:
  - consistently identify in their lesson planning what they expect individual pupils to have learnt so that their progress in lessons can be evaluated precisely
  - use their assessments to modify their plans to enable pupils to maintain consistently good progress throughout the lesson
  - identify activities that are likely to enthuse and motivate pupils so that their progress is accelerated.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching by September 2012 by:
  - sharpening the analysis of assessment information in order to better determine each pupil's progress compared to those with similar levels of attainment and starting points elsewhere
  - using pupils' progress data to help teachers accelerate pupils' rates of progress from satisfactory to good, through better focused teaching
  - encouraging teachers to plan more opportunities for pupils to show resilience and the ability to work independently and collaboratively as activities require.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

The view of a large majority of parents and carers that their children make good progress was not confirmed during the inspection. Progress is satisfactory. Good progress has been made in improving pupils' reading abilities since the introduction of dedicated reading sessions from September 2011, even though levels of reading are still low for many pupils at the end of Year 2 and 6 and for older pupils. The school's specialism has a positive impact on pupils' progress in art and design, with pupils successfully completing a range of accredited courses from Year 8 onwards. Achievement is satisfactory overall when measured against that of similar pupils nationally. Girls make similar progress to the boys. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who have been identified as being on the autistic spectrum make similar progress to that made by others. Those pupils who are looked after by the local authority make better progress than other pupils. The few pupils whose progress is less than that of the other pupils is, in most cases, linked to poor attendance, often because of medical conditions.

A considerable proportion of pupils enters the school at times that are different from the usual transitions. These pupils' attainment is low, their learning often having been limited by their behavioural difficulties and usually lower than average attendance. Attainment remains low by the end of Year 11, although the gap against the national performance is reducing as pupils are now taking more publicly

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accredited courses successfully. Pupils are set annual and end of key stage targets, but these are not always linked to the most challenging targets provided through national progress data.

Variations in achievement were apparent in the lessons observed. Progress in many of the primary section lessons is good; for example Year 6 pupils made good progress in knowing the conventions in writing a formal letter. Year 5 made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of three-dimensional shapes, because the activities enthused pupils and the teachers provided constructive feedback celebrating their success. In art and design, Year 9 pupils finished off their first-hand observations in the lesson by evaluating their own and the work of others in the group. This helped them to understand what they needed to improve in their next lesson. In over half the secondary lessons, achievement was generally satisfactory because pupils were reluctant to engage fully in the activity or there was insufficient challenge.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is satisfactory, which is contrary to the view of parents and carers where the large majority are of the opinion that it is good. There are strengths: for example behaviour is managed consistently using strategies agreed by the school. The most effective teachers demonstrate a thorough understanding of pupils' learning styles and capabilities and plan their lessons accordingly, so that pupils' enthusiasm is maintained. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson on probability, pupils enjoyed identifying their own events to put on a probability line. As a result they were able to discuss those identified by other pupils accurately in terms of probability using appropriate mathematical terminology. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' personal development, for example in collaborative working. In some lessons teachers do not provide activities which match the individual needs of pupils. In these lessons behaviour occasionally deteriorates and learning is impeded with staff spend time managing such behaviour.

Teachers' lesson planning is detailed and linked to the longer term planned curriculum. However, the planning does not always effectively use information about pupils' prior learning and capabilities and as a result some of the activities are not sufficiently challenging to accelerate pupils' progress enough. Support staff are usually identified to support behaviour, but their impact is at its best when, in addition to supporting behaviour, they support the achievement of specific academic outcomes for pupils. Teachers' planning often identifies tasks to be completed rather than the learning that is expected and as a result staff are not always in a position to reflect on the extent of pupils' learning. In the best lessons teachers use time during, and at the end of, lessons to determine what learning has been achieved, rather than simply determining point scores in relation to behaviour criteria. Staff plan appropriate activities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Particularly good opportunities are planned for cultural development linked to art, music and food. Staff plan fewer opportunities for pupils to reflect or to enhance their social skills through paired or small group working. More small group

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and paired working was observed in the primary classrooms than in secondary lessons.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

A small number of parents expressed negative views about pupil behaviour. Inspection findings indicate that behaviour is satisfactory and that pupils' behaviour in the large majority of cases improves whilst the pupils are at the school. By the time they leave in Year 11, they are in a positive position to start the next stage of their education. Pupils are happy to discuss how their behaviour has improved whilst they have been at the school. Records indicate that pupils are successful in improving their points scores for good behaviour over time and achieving rewards that they value. Although individual pupils can be involved in low-level disruption in lessons, behaviour is usually well managed by staff and does not hinder the learning of others. School records show that rarely does this low-level disruption escalate into more extreme situations, as staff are skilled at defusing such situations and use whole-school procedures effectively.

Almost all the pupils, staff and parents and carers believe that pupils are safe in the school and that instances of bullying are managed effectively. Most of the bullying identified is linked to name calling, which can be of a racist nature, and pupils believe that the school deals with such incidents effectively, as it does with the very rare instances of cyber and sexual bullying. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and are able to reflect on their own successes and failings. Attendance is below average, but a large majority of pupils improve their attendance, often significantly, whilst they are at the school.

## **Leadership and management**

School leaders are ambitious and have a vision for the school to improve further. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly and externally validated. The school has a great deal of information about pupils' academic progress over time. However, school leaders have not made the most effective use of this information. There is not sufficient correlation between the evaluations of the progress of the pupils and the quality of teaching. Leaders have not used their analysis of the progress data sufficiently to raise the aspirations of both staff and pupils. The school's development plan includes a focus on key areas with relevant strategies to bring improvement, but challenging success criteria are not in place, especially in relation to pupils' achievement. Where school leaders have shown vision, as in raising standards in reading throughout the school, they have demonstrated that they can take the necessary steps and make a positive impact.

School leaders have been successful in raising rates of attendance, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 11 and improving the curriculum since the last inspection. The school's information about pupils' progress has been developed markedly. The key issues from the last inspection have been tackled and improvements made. School leaders have successfully implemented the introduction of primary aged

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pupils to the school. Such improvements demonstrate that school leaders, supported by an effective governing body, have the capacity for sustained improvement.

The curriculum is interesting, being broad and balanced, effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and leading to higher attainment at the end of Year 11. This good curriculum helps the school to be a cohesive community, demonstrated in activities such as sports and arts week. Effective partnerships have been made with other curriculum providers, such as with local stables, which have increased the range of vocational options and accreditations. These are valued by the pupils and have a positive impact on their behaviour and attendance.

The school has effective links with parents and carers through annual reviews and regular telephone conversations, but there is limited evidence of parental views being used by senior leaders, including the governing body, to address areas of general concern. School leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are good, well embedded and meet all requirements. School leaders and staff have developed good procedures to tackle discrimination, equality of opportunity is promoted well and, as a result, different groups of pupils make similar rates of progress.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



7 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of The Orchard School, Canterbury CT1 3QQ**

Thank you very much for your welcome and for helping us when we came to visit your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you, particularly about the work that you had done.

The Orchard is a satisfactory school and we agree with you that the staff take good care of you. You make satisfactory progress in your work and older pupils in Year 11 now take more accredited courses successfully. You could do even better if you concentrated more, worked harder in all your lessons and were challenged more, as some of you told us. Some lessons are good but they are satisfactory overall.

The people who run and lead your school do a satisfactory job. They have many plans about how they can make the school better and we are asking them to make sure that:

- teachers plan precisely what you should learn in lessons and then record how well you have done so that they can check how much progress you have made in the lesson and over time
- teachers plan challenging activities which are good at making you want to learn well
- people who lead the school look at your progress and teaching information more regularly so that they can help the teachers to plan better lessons in which you make better progress and show how well you work collaboratively and independently when necessary.

You can help these improvements by attending regularly and doing what is expected of you. An inspector may visit again soon to see how well you are getting on.

Finally, I would like to thank you all again and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Timothy Feast  
Lead inspector

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