

The Churchill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133367
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	360498
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David McKivett
Headteacher	Jennie Carter
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed 14 teachers. They observed the school's work and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, the school development plan, lesson and curriculum planning and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents and carers, and analysed 161 questionnaires completed by them.

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

- The impact of initiatives to improve attainment and progress in writing, particularly by the more able pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The way in which different forms of assessment are being used to improve the quality of pupils' learning and accelerate their progress.
- Key reasons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities making such good progress.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in fourteen classes, two for each year group. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The range of these needs includes physical disability, speech, language and communication difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has been awarded the Green Flag for Eco-Awareness and is the only Kent school to have achieved Level 4 of Enhanced Healthy Schools 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

1

Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved significantly in all areas since the last inspection and some features of its work are now outstanding. Staff and pupils are very proud of the school and parents and carers are very pleased with the good quality of education it provides. The headteacher's inspirational leadership provides a drive and ambition for improvement that is shared by all. At the heart of the school's work is the outstanding care, guidance and support given to each pupil. This has enormous impact on pupils' personal development.

Teaching is good overall, and some of it is outstanding, and this helps all pupils to achieve well and reach above average levels of attainment when they leave the school. Senior leaders recognise that teaching can improve still further, mainly through greater consistency in providing challenge for more able pupils across the curriculum. An additional area for development is the use of assessment for evaluating the impact of the curriculum as a whole. Tracking of pupils' progress is rigorous in English and mathematics, but there is not sufficient information about their attainment and progress in other subjects to make sure that activities are building on prior learning.

Pupils make good progress from the moment they start the Early Years Foundation Stage, where their attainment on entry is broadly at expected levels. By the end of this stage, attainment is above average and it continues to be so as pupils move up through the school. Behaviour is an outstanding feature of pupils' personal development, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their moral code is very strong and pupils place great emphasis on showing kindness. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe at school. They know that they are valued and contribute much to the school and local communities. They love physical activity and have an excellent understanding of its importance and of the need for healthy eating as the basis for a healthy lifestyle. ♦

There are outstanding features in leadership and management at all levels that have considerable impact on all aspects of provision. These include the highly successful drive to improve teaching and learning, which has led to all pupils making more progress. There is a strong sense of partnership with parents and carers, with excellent communication between school and home. The governing body has good impact on the day-to-day life of the school as well as the strategic planning for the future. Procedures are in place for ensuring that important responsibilities, such as rigorous safeguarding systems and the promotion of community cohesion, are well established and effective. ♦

Senior leaders evaluate accurately the school's strengths and weaknesses in order to identify key areas for development. This has enabled them to bring about important changes that have significantly improved the school. For example, initiatives to improve writing have been very successful and have raised attainment by all pupils. Subject leaders

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make a major contribution to the professional development of staff, helping teaching and the curriculum to improve. All outcomes and all aspects of provision have improved significantly since the last inspection and this shows that there is an outstanding capacity for improvement in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning still further by ensuring that:
 - the more able pupils are suitably challenged in all their work and are moved forward when they are ready
 - pupils' learning in all subjects is assessed in a way that enables activities to build on prior learning.pupils' learning in all subjects is assessed in a way that enables activities to build on prior learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The high rate of attendance is one indicator of pupils' enjoyment of school. Further confirmation was the unbounded enthusiasm for learning that was seen in nearly every lesson. Additionally, pupils showed very good levels of cooperation when required to work in pairs or small groups. Such positive attitudes are a key reason for their good achievement, ever-improving progress and above-average attainment. The ability to work collaboratively has a marked effect on pupils' quality of learning as well as on their social skills. 'It's your turn now,' was heard in a Year 5 class when pairs of pupils created animation sequences on laptops.

All groups of pupils are meeting the high expectations set for their progress and this is driving attainment upwards. The school has a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and many of these pupils progress to a point where attainment matches that of their peers by the end of Year 6. Priority is currently being given to meeting the needs of the more able pupils. Many of these pupils progress well, but this is not consistent in all classes or all subjects. There is more work to do, as was evident in some mathematics and topic lessons where some of the more able had work that was too easy for them or were not moved on to more challenging work as soon as they were ready.

Another priority for several years has been a focus on improving writing and the use of the whole curriculum to provide opportunities for writing. This has developed skills well and, by Year 6, many pupils say they enjoy writing now, whereas they did not in the past. They also produce high-quality work. This is evident in the poems on 'Night' written by one class, many of which have a truly spiritual quality. One example of the powerful use of language is the sensitive introduction,

'Night is a gentle, compassionate grandfather, comforting and reassuring me as I sleep peacefully.'

Pupils feel completely safe in school. This reflects not only the high quality of care but also pupils' consideration of the needs of others. One pupil explained that there is a 'Friendship Bus Stop' on the playground but it is not really needed. Excellent behaviour is the norm. All try hard to follow the behaviour code. Those who have emotional or behavioural

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difficulties are helped by well-planned adult support and also by the example set by other pupils.

Pupils are very eager to contribute to school life and appreciate the fact that their views are sought and acted upon. They thrive on the many responsibilities given to them, for example as school councillors, librarians, peer mediators, Eco warriors, road safety officers and play leaders, all of whom carry out their duties very conscientiously. Pupils have an excellent understanding of other cultures and faith groups. The many outstanding outcomes in personal development, a wide range of experiences of enterprise activities and good basic literacy and numeracy skills mean that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and have many skills to help their future economic well-being.

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	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is sharply focused on achieving a high quality of learning. This reflects the successful emphasis placed on monitoring of teaching by senior leaders and on continuous professional development for all staff. Teachers have a common starting point of very thorough lesson planning. They use a range of strategies in lessons, such as target setting and peer and self-assessment by pupils. These ensure that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn in each lesson and also encourage pupils to evaluate how successful they have been. A Year 3 literacy lesson ended with partners reading each other's work

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and checking whether the partner had met the challenge of using adjectives, adverbs and similes in their descriptive writing. This was a purposeful, immediate self-assessment that successfully reinforced the main learning intentions.

Use of assessment is generally good. Marking is constructive and pupils' achievement of targets is monitored. Three times a year, specific work is used to check each pupil's progress over time. There is quick reaction to underachievement, and programmes are put in place to address short- or long-term needs. However, ways of checking the full impact of these programmes are not always planned in advance and so the true extent of their success is not measured thoroughly enough. The same is true of the curriculum insofar as assessment procedures do not evaluate accurately enough the attainment and progress of pupils in all areas of learning.

Much of the good curriculum is imaginatively planned, with strong emphasis on practical activity and first-hand experiences. The planning shows that attention to the needs of the more able pupils is inconsistent and, consequently, some are held back in topic work by lack of challenge. The curriculum as a whole is used well for development of basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Teachers link subjects together in a topic approach and pupils like this arrangement because, as one pupil said, 'We learn lots of interesting things in topics.' Equally popular are events that enrich pupils' learning, such as a 'Festivals Day' when all classes learned about festivals in cultures across the world. Multi-cultural education is a strong feature of provision that is promoted well through local links, such as with the local Nepalese community based at a nearby barracks, as well as by the school's many global partnerships, including Australia and Uganda. Enrichment is also provided by a large number of clubs and activities outside the school day. From film club to jazz dance, many are oversubscribed and all provide a hugely popular extension of learning opportunities for pupils. Parents and carers particularly appreciate the opportunities to purchase the market gardeners' produce, although the pupils themselves feel they need more chickens to rear in order to meet the demand for eggs.

The outstanding quality of pastoral care, guidance and support impacts very well on pupils' personal development, particularly social skills. The needs of the significant number of potentially vulnerable pupils are fully met and there is extra help and support for these and all other pupils whenever they need it. The school works very closely with families, providing support for any parents or carers seeking help or advice. The popular, superbly planned, breakfast club is an outstanding feature of provision where pupils' relationships are especially harmonious.

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	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and staff work closely together to monitor the impact of school improvement measures, which are the product of ongoing, rigorous self-evaluation. The school knows itself well. The result has been improvement in virtually every aspect of the school's work since the previous inspection. This includes the effectiveness of subject leaders who are well informed by thorough monitoring of outcomes and provision that leads to detailed planning of actions necessary for further improvement. The way that these middle leaders have been empowered to develop and use subject expertise exemplifies senior leaders' strong commitment to professional development of staff. Teaching assistants have benefited particularly from this commitment. The school now has an exceptional group of highly qualified and very effective teaching assistants. The very good progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a direct result of the expertise of the teaching assistants.

The fact that higher attaining pupils need to make even more progress means that the school's promotion of equal opportunities is good rather than outstanding. The school's promotion of community cohesion is clearly outstanding, such is the high quality of work to integrate all pupils into the school community and then the school itself into national and international communities.

There are excellent links with parents and carers, who appreciate the guidance on how they can help their children's learning and the approachability of staff. The development of excellent home-school links is one of many key partnerships that have been used to enhance the quality of pupils' learning and their well-being. The school makes the most of many local community links, as well as its work with other schools and professional organisations. ♦

Governors have effective strategies to make them fully informed about the life of the school and they contribute knowledgeably to planning for school improvement. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough and that staff are well trained and vigilant in their attention to health and safety, risk assessment and child protection issues.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with knowledge and skills at the expected levels in all areas except language development, in which writing skills are below those expected. Good provision and leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage help children to progress from the moment they start school. The stage leader has promoted a strong sense of teamwork among staff. This helps all children's progress to be good and the majority of children end the year above average in nearly all areas of learning. In all respects, children experience a rich curriculum that, together with consistently good teaching, results in children's great enjoyment of school. Staff work very closely together, showing high levels of concern for children's welfare. They all carry out ongoing assessments of children's learning by recording observations of their successes and areas for development. This is a particular strength in provision and the assessment information is used very well to plan activities tailored to the needs of individual children. Most children quickly develop the confidence to work independently. They are inquisitive and love learning new things. They talk excitedly about their discoveries. This all stems from learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors being well planned, with a good balance of activities led by adults and activities that children initiate for themselves.

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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

The majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires, or who spoke to inspectors, are happy with the school, particularly that it keeps their children safe and helps them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Many questionnaires had additional, positive comments that praised the quality of teaching and their children's progress. The few expressions of dissatisfaction focused on provision for more able pupils and the school's reaction to concerns raised by parents and carers. Inspectors have judged that provision for the more able has some inconsistencies, both between classes and between subjects. The school's response to individual concerns raised by parents and carers is hard to evaluate. A significant proportion of parents have praised the school for its reaction to issues that have arisen. The recently established Parents Forum is judged to provide a useful opportunity for opinions to be voiced.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Churchill 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 161 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 409 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	113	70	45	28	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	102	63	58	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	42	89	55	3	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	40	76	47	14	9	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	71	44	80	50	3	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	71	44	82	51	5	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	77	48	79	49	3	2	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)	68	42	77	48	6	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	43	75	47	9	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	35	89	55	8	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	29	96	60	9	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	69	43	78	48	9	6	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	90	56	63	39	6	4	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Churchill School, Folkestone CT18 7RH

I am writing to thank you for helping us during the inspection of your school. We especially enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views. We have taken these views into account in writing this report. The Churchill School is a good school. Here are some of the main findings from the report.

- You make good progress and your work is of a high standard in English and mathematics. You have worked particularly hard at your writing and it is showing good improvement.
- Those of you who find learning easy can make even more progress and we have asked teachers to give you extra challenge.
- You are taught well and teachers plan a good curriculum that gives you many exciting learning opportunities. We have asked teachers to check how well you are learning things in topic work.
- Your behaviour is excellent and we saw how well you all look out for one another. This makes your school a very happy place that everyone enjoys going to. ♦♦
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise.
- You are superb at carrying out responsibilities, such as being a school councillor, eco warrior or road safety officer, and this makes an excellent contribution to the life of the school.
- You say you feel very safe in school ♦ this is because all the adults do an outstanding job in looking after you and making sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The headteacher and many other teachers provide outstanding leadership and management and all the adults work well together to help the school to improve.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and best wishes for your work in the future. We hope you will carry on working hard, enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make The Churchill School to be an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee

Lead inspector

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