

Painters Ash Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 118491 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 358364 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 February 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | John Worgan |

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

| | |
|--|--|
| Type of school | All-through |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 358 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Alan Russell |
| Headteacher | Patricia Sherling Gina Salter |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15 January 2008 |
| School address | Masefield Road Gravesend Ke DA11 8EL |
| Telephone number | 01474 568991 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty-one lessons or part lessons were observed and 15 teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, governors' evaluation and monitoring documentation, headteacher's reports to the governing body and pupils' progress and attainment data. One hundred and ten parent and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed, together with questionnaires from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether there is convincing evidence that attainment, learning and overall achievements are improving quickly and securely, especially for boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well leaders at all levels are working to improve boys' progress in literacy and girls' progress in mathematics.
- The accuracy of leaders and managers in their monitoring of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of this in improving the quality.
- To what extent assessment focuses on improving the performance of different groups of pupils, especially any who may have underachieved in the past.
- The extent to which the Early Years Foundation Stage is a particular strength of the school, as leaders had graded this to be so.

Information about the school

Painters Ash is a larger than average primary school, where there are more boys than girls. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average but varies considerably between school years. The school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. ♦ Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The next largest groups are from Black African and Asian heritages. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two Reception classes. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status. The school has breakfast and after-school clubs that are managed by the governing body.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Painter's Ash is a satisfactory and quickly improving school that is well led by the headteacher, who is partially retired, the co-headteacher and the senior team. A good start has been made in reorganising leadership responsibilities which is having a positive impact on the outcomes for pupils, especially their progress. As a result, attainment is now average. Very committed staff, together with effective support from the governing body, contribute greatly to the reasons why the school is improving. All staff are dedicated to the pupils. Relationships and the care provided are good. Teachers support vulnerable pupils sympathetically, which helps them to be ready for learning. As a result, this group almost always achieve as well as others.

Pupils enjoy their learning and confirm that they feel safe and well looked after. They grow in confidence and gain self-esteem. Older pupils take on responsibilities willingly. Pupils are articulate, confident and well mannered. There is a strong sense of respect. As one pupil explained, 'It does not matter what colour or nationality you are, you can work as a team.' Pupils mostly behave very well in lessons and this has a positive impact on their learning. Some parents and carers and a few pupils expressed concern about boisterous behaviour in the playground. Inspectors found that staff are taking active steps to monitor it and to support the small number of pupils involved, several of whom have complex special educational needs. Overall, behaviour is judged to be satisfactory.

The improvement in attainment in 2009-10 has been sustained in the current year and the school's assessment information shows that pupils are on target for improved results in 2011. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress but boys do not always get off to a strong enough start in acquiring writing skills, which impacts on their overall progress as they move up through the school. Leaders have identified this and some robust work has begun to improve it, for example by making writing activities more interesting for boys and by providing consistently good teaching and additional support in Year 6. However, writing continues to be an important area for improvement as the school works towards providing good rather than satisfactory learning and progress throughout the school. In Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory and improving; although the gap between boys and girls in literacy is narrower, it is still apparent. In mathematics, boys slightly outperform girls. Girls' progress in mathematics is improving as there has been an increase in the additional intervention support given, but leaders appreciate that this could begin even earlier.

The school's good self-evaluation shows that they are aware of differences in progress of different groups and have effective additional help for supporting pupils who have underachieved. As a result, pupils' progress is accelerating well.

Following a review of the curriculum, activities and topics are more relevant and interesting. A wide range of clubs is well attended, extending the curriculum and providing

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opportunities for pupils of all ages to develop skills and artistic, sporting and cultural interests. As a result, pupils really enjoy school.

There are examples of good and outstanding teaching which are effective in securing good progress in learning, especially in Key Stage 2, but this is not consistent across the school and is the reason why teaching and learning are judged to be satisfactory. For example, in a few lessons, the pace of learning slows and work is not closely matched to the learning needs of different groups of pupils. Nonetheless, pupils try hard and are keen to learn.

Middle and senior leaders share the headteacher's passion to raise achievement and have introduced a good range of initiatives to bring about improvement. The impact on pupils' learning and progress is carefully monitored and evaluated. ♦ This process involves the governing body. Since 2009, attainment has crossed a grade boundary from being below average to average, there is more good and outstanding teaching and attendance has improved in the last year from inadequate to satisfactory. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been completely reviewed and support has improved for this group. These features demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement to good by:
 - improving boys' learning and progress in literacy, especially in writing .
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are consistently challenged .
 - giving increased opportunities for writing to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- By July 2011, raise the quality of teaching and learning to at least good by:
 - sharing good and outstanding practice
 - ensuring that children who are withdrawn from lessons for support do not miss opportunities given to the rest of the class, especially for writing
 - making sure that teachers provide equally well for different ability groups
 - ensuring that opportunities for independent learning are consistently well promoted in all year groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In the lessons seen, pupils clearly enjoyed learning. For example, Year 6 pupils produced good and sometimes outstanding newspaper reports about local issues, such as the impact of a recent road closure on the local area. Their learning was good because pupils of all abilities were helped to think and work independently. This was aided by research, discussion and effective use of drama to help them to understand different points of view. In another good lesson, in Year 2, pupils had great fun measuring accurately the melting rate of chocolate. Where learning is more often satisfactory, opportunities are missed to enthuse pupils as effectively. Independent and challenging activities are not always well promoted. Some teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively

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to help pupils to learn in different ways but overall, the quality of this has been hampered by some technical ICT difficulties.

Leaders are tightly focused on minimising the variation in girls' and boys' achievement. Pupils' improving achievement reflects a more rigorous approach to tracking and monitoring how well pupils are doing and often good additional group support. An increased emphasis on promoting speaking as a rehearsal for writing is helping all pupils to enjoy and understand their learning more. Some classes, for example, have role play areas to aid their first-hand exploration of topics. For example, in Year 6, pupils enjoyed exploring the events and reading stories about the Second World War in their home-made bomb shelter. This kind of learning is not consistently well promoted in all classes.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily; achievement has improved securely since last year, following a review of the support provided. This group now benefit from helpful, and often good, focused group work.

All pupils make a strong contribution to the community The school council is strong, using a small budget to improve the school environment and working with the Parent Teacher Association on larger projects, such as the trim trail. Such things as eco work and gardening club contribute to pupils' good contribution to the wider community. Pupils' views are sought on their learning and are used in planning at whole-school and subject level. An impressive display showed messages in a variety of pupils' home languages. Leaders are working well to improve pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although there is more to do to lift it to good. This is well on the way, for example, by using the theme of Africa to help pupils to learn about different cultures. Links with a school in Gambia enrich pupils' awareness of the wider world. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge about different faiths. Pupils enjoy art and music but the outcomes in these aspects are no more than satisfactory overall, although pupils' singing of a round was impressive. Pupils' show a good understanding of how to stay healthy and say that there are good opportunities to take exercise and eat healthily at school.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

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?

The school places a high priority on the training and professional development of staff and this is helping to lift the overall quality of teaching. For example, there has been a significant decline in the amount of inadequate lessons. Now, only a very occasional lesson is inadequate. ♦ There is an increasing proportion of good and occasionally outstanding teaching. In the whole school, teachers help pupils to use new vocabulary and to talk about their ideas confidently. For example, Year 5 pupils were able to use correct technical language such as 'simile' and 'ellipsis' to comment on and to analyse each other's work. Teachers plan lessons well to cater for pupils' wide-ranging needs, but sometimes plans are not implemented well for the most able pupils. As a result, the pace of learning slows and adults miss opportunities to demonstrate how pupils might extend their learning.

Following changes to the curriculum, the school is making writing more purposeful and interesting to pupils. Examples include working with the local trading standards officer to produce information leaflets on doorstep crime aimed at senior citizens and linking writing to drama through a 'smuggler workshop'. Planning for additional support is improving well with a robust focus on the key skills to catch up with any past underachievement.

Nonetheless, this planning is not outstanding because interventions sometimes miss the opportunity to link work with class lessons or year group topics. For example, one group of Year 2 boys were withdrawn from a lesson and, although well supported in learning basic letter and sound (phonic) work, the writing activity did not enable them to write

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about the properties of materials in science, as did the rest of their class. This was a shame, as this group of boys had been included in the high quality lesson introduction.

Teachers help pupils to understand how to improve their work, with some good examples of marking, for example in the use of colour coding and 'next step' prompts. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent between classes.

The support given by teaching assistants is sometimes good, but opportunities to support the teacher and particular pupils during lesson introductions are sometimes missed. Case studies and classroom observation confirmed that staff deal very sympathetically with pupils' emotional and social needs, and links with outside professionals considerably enhance this. Pupils learn to be independent and how to cope with their emotions, behaviour and worries, due to the good care and support given. The breakfast club is well organised and provides a range of activities for pupils of different age groups. Safety is always at the core of the school's work. The after-school club extends the good daily care and pupils' enjoyment of school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| 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?

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has partially retired and co-headship has been implemented. Staff, parents and carers speak highly of the way in which this change has been implemented. A parent stated, 'The children have not noticed the change.' The senior staff have successfully developed the management skills of other leaders, so that they share leadership well and show clear drive and ambition to help pupils reach their full potential. Leaders carefully evaluate the work of the school and have recently become better at taking prompt action to improve, especially in developing literacy and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The governing body ask challenging questions about how well pupils are doing and have clear and well-focused monitoring procedures, with groups of governors focusing on different aspects of self-evaluation. They ensure that the improvement plans are focused on the most important priorities to improve teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils. Safeguarding procedures are good and vetting and recruitment procedures are robust.

The school works in a focused way to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination by working to close the gap between the achievements of different groups. Gender differences in progress, and the need to challenge the more-able, are recognised and plans to close gaps are in place.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Parents' and pupils' cultural

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differences are shared and valued; this helps to make an inclusive and harmonious school community. The school promotes aspects of global awareness well. Opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge of the diversity and richness of cultures in the United Kingdom remain an area for development. Work has begun on this, for example by exploring the traditions and history of Kent in greater depth.

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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school had originally graded the effectiveness to be good, but it recognises that this judgment was generous.

Children enjoy a welcoming and happy experience in the Reception classes because staff are caring and highly sensitive to children's individual personal needs. Staff ensure that there are close links with the wide range of pre-school settings as well as with parents and carers. As a result, children are happy and well cared for. There is effective support and inclusion for children with more complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders assess children's skills satisfactorily and keep suitable records of their developments. Children make satisfactory progress, which leads to most children's reaching average levels of attainment for their age by the end of their Reception Year. However, very few children develop higher level skills and knowledge. Children do well in their overall personal development but in writing and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, leaders recognise that they could be doing better.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but there are missed opportunities to challenge children by extending their learning. Although the planning takes adequate account of the needs of different abilities, some staff members' expectations of children are not high enough when actually teaching or engaging with them. Children enjoy the

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opportunity to select activities for themselves and this is usually well balanced with more formal teaching sessions. Some formal teaching sessions are occasionally outstanding or good, as seen in some letter and sounds (phonics) group work. However, some are occasionally inadequate because learning lacks challenge and skilled direction by staff. Nonetheless, staff help children to enjoy most activities; for example, the children were excited about hunting for pretend wild animals in the outside area. During this activity, staff helped them to make a bridge to cross the imaginary river; this promoted their thinking, discussion and problem-solving skills well. Additionally, one boy was helped to follow up the activity when making a model of a giraffe; this was then photographed and he wrote about it enthusiastically. This kind of practice is high quality, but there is not enough of it and overall, children, especially boys, are not writing enough.

The reading area is cosy and inviting. However, some of the classroom areas are rather dull and do not provide sufficiently exciting resources to help children to develop lively enquiring minds. As a result, opportunities are missed to enliven children's learning, fun and creativity. Leaders are in the process of rethinking the development plans to improve the provision. They are keen to do this as they want the best outcomes for the children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

One hundred and ten parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which for this school is a slightly below average proportion. Parents and carers are very pleased with the school overall and speak highly of the care given to their children. They feel that their children learn well and make the progress expected to enable them to be ready for their next schools.

Inspectors endorse parents' and carers' views about the good promotion of healthy lifestyles. ♦ As one parent explained, 'This is good, especially, 'walk on Wednesday' initiative, plenty of active days i.e. dance workshops, trips to Shorne Country Park, and healthy meals/packed lunch policy'. The majority of parents and carers feel that the school is well run and all say that their children enjoy attending. Several noted things such as, 'We have never had a day when they don't want to go in.'

A few parents and carers noted that they feel that the school could listen to their views more. Inspectors found that the school has an open-door policy and regularly seeks parents' and carers' views. A few parents and carers identified that they do not feel that the school helps them to support their children's learning. Inspectors found that the school's efforts to work with parents and carers in supporting their children's reading are

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usually good but more variable in other subjects. Inspectors were impressed by the standard of written reports. A few parents and carers commented on pupils' behaviour at playtimes. Inspectors found behaviour to be satisfactory, with good support for individual pupils who find it harder to behave as well, so that pupils are safe and happy at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Painters Ash 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 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 358 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 56 | 51 | 49 | 45 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 62 | 56 | 51 | 38 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 42 | 38 | 57 | 52 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 44 | 40 | 51 | 46 | 10 | 9 | 1 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 46 | 42 | 57 | 52 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 44 | 40 | 49 | 45 | 14 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 39 | 35 | 61 | 55 | 6 | 5 | 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) | 33 | 30 | 55 | 50 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 38 | 35 | 60 | 55 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 40 | 36 | 46 | 42 | 16 | 15 | 2 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 27 | 25 | 61 | 55 | 12 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 42 | 38 | 57 | 52 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 47 | 43 | 53 | 48 | 7 | 6 | 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 | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Painters Ash Primary School, Gravesend DA11 8EL

You may remember that three inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we spoke to you. Your school is satisfactory and improving because the adults are working hard to make it a special place for you. We agree with you that you go to a safe and happy school. The staff are very caring and help you when you have problems, making sure you can do your best. We were delighted to see you having fun and enjoying most of your lessons. We especially liked seeing you help each other learn and speaking and listening to each other so well. Well done for behaving well in lessons and being respectful and kind to others. Your teachers help you to learn new and interesting things and to talk about your ideas; as a result, you make steady progress.

We have asked the adults to make the school even better for you by:

- helping you all, but especially the boys, to make even faster progress in literacy, especially writing you all, but especially the boys, to make even faster progress in literacy, especially writing
- ensuring that you are challenged to do even better, especially those of you who find some of your work easy
- ensuring teachers work together to share their ideas and make teaching even better
- making sure that when you go out of lessons for extra help, you do not miss out on the things which other pupils have done.

We enjoyed meeting you, hearing your views and listening to your impressive singing. We wish you great success in the future. Keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

John Worgan

Lead inspector

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