

Langafel Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118711
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358430
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2011
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	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Harrison
Headteacher	Martin Clinton
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons involving 11 teachers, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body and staff, and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, assessment information and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 71 parents and carers, and scrutinised others from staff and pupils.

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

- the extent to which improvement in pupils' progress in 2010 is being sustained
- the extent to which teaching challenges pupils, particularly girls and pupils with the most complex special educational needs
- the impact of the school's creative curriculum in providing interest and enjoyment for pupils and on their achievement
- the effectiveness with which leaders use the information from tracking pupils' progress to target underachievement and accelerate progress.

Information about the school

The school is slightly larger than average, but pupil numbers are lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is high because the school includes a specialist unit for autistic pupils. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class.

The school entered into a 'soft' federation with another primary school locally when the previous headteacher left the school in autumn 2009. The school is led by an executive headteacher and a head of school. The governing body is currently recruiting a permanent headteacher. A privately run nursery and an after-school club operate on the school site and are subject to separate inspections. There is a daily breakfast club. The school has a number of awards for its work, including Healthy School, Eco School and Activemark awards.

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

3

Main findings

Langafel CE VC Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The warm school ethos and good care for individuals make a strong contribution to ensuring pupils' safety and good personal development. This is very evident in the quality of support given to pupils who are potentially vulnerable or those with the most complex additional needs. For a period after the previous inspection, pupils did not make enough progress, but this situation has been reversed and attainment is rising. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory, steadily reducing the gap between school and national performance levels. Pupils' attainment is in line with the national average in English and mathematics in the current Year 6 class. The Year 2 assessments last year indicated a trend of rising attainment giving pupils a stronger basis for Key Stage 2 study. This improvement has been brought about by the determined effort of staff under the skilled leadership of the executive headteacher. Rigorous monitoring has been introduced in order to show key areas of underachievement and a range of effective support programmes introduced to accelerate pupils' progress. At the same time, teachers have been supported by colleagues in the partner school in improving teaching and the curriculum.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception class. Through the school, pupils enjoy the new curriculum topics and links between subjects, contributing to their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Although good practice is evident in many lessons, there are inconsistencies in the level of challenge and the quality of marking. These prevent pupils' achievement from being better than satisfactory overall. Teachers do not always have high-enough expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work, so that the work they set is not sufficiently challenging in all lessons. On occasion, the learning identified for the lesson is too broad and does not identify clearly enough the precise knowledge or skills to be developed. Pupils have a good understanding of their personal safety and how to lead a healthy lifestyle, shown in the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Their sound literacy and numeracy skills prepare them satisfactorily for secondary school.

Senior leaders have established a climate where there is a shared commitment to drive up achievement across the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and precise assessments of the quality of pupils' work are being used to pinpoint where improvements need to be made. However, the most effective practice is not yet being shared widely in order to bring all teaching to the quality of the best. There has not yet been time to evaluate fully the impact of initiatives on pupils' achievement and the full influence of recent improvements is yet to be realised, making the school's capacity to sustain improvement satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the 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 attainment and accelerate progress by:
 - sharing the good and outstanding practice seen in lessons
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and giving pupils of all abilities more challenging work
 - ensuring that pupils are clear about what the intended learning for each lesson is and giving them the tools to evaluate their own success
 - improving the consistency of marking in identifying for pupils how their work can be improved and giving them opportunities to respond.
- Evaluate the impact that initiatives have on pupils' attainment and progress to ensure that only the most effective interventions are used to promote achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school, which is reflected in above-average rates of attendance. They comment on the friendly atmosphere and how friends care for one another. They recognise the good facilities available to them, for example the gymnasium, and participate well in a range of extra-curricular activities which meet their different interests effectively. Pupils are keen to do well, as is shown in the good presentation of their work. They respond well to the opportunities they have to discuss their work and they work maturely in groups. For example, discussion was animated in a lesson when pupils were considering whether a marble would fall faster through air or water. As a result, pupils are articulate and have good speaking skills because they are often encouraged to explain their thinking to the whole class.

In some lessons, pupils' achievement is restricted because they spend too long listening to the teacher or in discussion and opportunities are missed to develop their writing skills by making a written record of their thinking. All pupils participate well in lessons, including girls and pupils from the autistic unit joining lessons with their peers. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress towards their targets, which are being set at an increasingly challenging level. Pupils with the most complex needs make good progress in reading.

Pupils are enthusiastic about taking responsibility, for example, as school councillors or running the fruit barrow. This latter helps to promote financial awareness by reviewing how sales are stronger when the fruit is cut into pieces to display it more attractively. Involvement in activities such as the gardening and Eco clubs give pupils a sense of community and commitment. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have a concern. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and reflects the Christian ethos of the school.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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	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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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 at least satisfactory, and sometimes better, across both key stages. The new curriculum is still in the process of planning, but those units which have been introduced during this academic year are well planned and structured. The units are proving interesting for pupils because they are able to contribute their ideas about what they want to learn. The curriculum is widening the range of opportunities to meet different learning styles, thinking skills and research, using information and communication technology. As yet, there are limited opportunities to consolidate basic skills in literacy and numeracy. In many lessons, teaching is imaginative and teachers use a variety of approaches, including the use of computer programs, to stimulate pupils' interest. However, in a minority of lessons expectations are too low or the balance between active and written work is not managed well enough to promote good progress. Often, this is because the intended learning is not identified precisely and the tasks set for pupils are too easy and do not take their learning forward quickly enough. Teachers share the level of work and targets effectively with pupils. However, pupils are less clear about exactly what they have to do to achieve them because marking does not always give them detailed points for improvement or opportunities to respond to teachers' guidance.

Care, guidance and support are fundamental pillars of school life. Lower-ability and potentially vulnerable pupils are especially well supported so that they play a full role in the school. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the well-tailored support

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that their children receive. However, the current programmes to promote pupils' academic achievement are relatively recently introduced and have not been evaluated sufficiently to see which make the greatest impact. The autism unit is well resourced and staff are skilled in sensitive interventions which ensure that autistic pupils make at least satisfactory progress. The breakfast club supports families further and is well attended. The importance of regular attendance is promoted successfully and it has improved steadily since the previous inspection.

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?

The executive headteacher and head of school have a good understanding of the school's needs. Much has been achieved over the last year due to the effective drive and ambition of senior leaders to bring a steady influence to school improvement through working closely with the partner school. The impact of the action taken is seen in improvement in pupils' attainment and the school providing a more stimulating learning environment for the pupils. The governing body took prompt action to secure strong interim leadership and the school is emerging well from a challenging time. Staff morale is high. There is a common sense of purpose and staff are positive about the opportunities for professional development within the federation. Many of its members are new to the governing body and recognise that further training is needed for them to play a full part in setting the strategic direction for the school. The first step has been taken in the setting up of the appointment process for a permanent headteacher.

The measures to ensure the safety of pupils, including checks on adults who work in the school, are rigorous. Staff are well-trained in child protection procedures and there are clear management responsibilities for the protection of pupils. The school is a warm and cohesive community and pupils are involved in a number of events locally, mainly linked with the church. Staff and the governing body have reviewed how the school fulfils its responsibility to promote community cohesion. Plans are in place to extend opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness through links with schools in different social contexts in the United Kingdom. There is a very clear commitment to equal opportunities so that all groups of pupils progress at similar rates from their starting points. The school's success in tackling discrimination is evident in how pupils are generally tolerant of one another's differences, such as when autistic pupils join mainstream classes.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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

From entry, the school builds a successful relationship with parents and carers. Good relationships with pre-schools, including the on-site nursery, enable children to transfer into the Reception class calmly and without anxiety. Children's skills when they join the school are generally close to national expectations for their age. There is an effective balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities, which is adjusted carefully over the year in preparation for Year 1 work. Overall, children make satisfactory progress during their time in the Reception Year. Effective teaching of sounds and letters was observed during the inspection, but children have not made as much progress in reading, writing and numeracy as they should over the last year because opportunities are missed to consolidate their skills in everyday activities, including in the outdoor area. Children are well cared for. They have picked up the routines of the class quickly. Behaviour is generally good so that children develop positive attitudes to learning. The changes in staffing over the last year have slowed the pace of progress within the Reception Year, for example, in developing the analysis of data as a tool for planning activities to meet the needs of individual children closely.

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	3

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Stage	
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Views of parents and carers

The response rate to the questionnaire was a little below that found in most primary schools. Most parents and carers indicated that they are happy with what the school offers. Parents and carers are confident that children are safe and happy in school. Parents and carers praised particularly the increase in the number of opportunities to boost pupils' academic achievement and the work of the autism unit. The most common concerns related to the negative impact and instability caused by the length of time the school had been without a permanent headteacher and that children do not make enough progress. The governing body is currently recruiting a headteacher and inspection evidence finds that actions taken by school leaders have improved the attainment trend across the school. Pupils' progress has been too slow in recent years, but all groups of pupils are now progressing satisfactorily.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Langafel Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 247 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	38	41	58	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	39	42	59	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	34	42	59	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	28	39	55	11	15	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	21	30	38	54	7	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	35	38	54	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	34	42	59	4	6	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)	20	28	35	49	4	6	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	35	36	51	7	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	23	44	62	8	11	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	31	38	54	7	10	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	17	24	31	44	14	20	5	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	44	31	44	7	10	1	1

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.



14 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Langafel C of E Primary School, Longfield DA3 7PW

You may remember that inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and for explaining to us what you were doing when we came to see you in lessons. This letter is to explain what we found out.

Adults have been busy trying to make the school better for you and the school has improved recently. Your school is satisfactory overall and your attainment is broadly average. It is good that you are happy and feel safe in school and that you take care of one another. You know a lot about how to lead healthy lifestyles. Adults look after you and care for you well. Your behaviour is good and you are growing into sensible young people who take on responsibility well, for instance as school councillors or running the fruit barrow. ♦

We have made some recommendations for your teachers to help you to do even better. We have asked them to:

- share with each other the ways you learn best
- give you work always which is challenging and often a little harder than now
- make sure that you know exactly what you are expected to learn in each lesson
- give you more feedback on how your work can be improved and then give you time to try the new ideas out for yourselves
- review how well special programmes help you to improve.

We are sure that you will continue to work hard. Please thank your parents or carers for returning the questionnaires. It was very helpful for us to know their views.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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