



# Little Gaddesden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 117443  
**LEA** HERTFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 280081  
**Inspection dates** 23 January 2006 to 24 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Joyce Cox LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Church Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		HP4 1NX
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01442842464
<b>Number on roll</b>	100	<b>Fax number</b>	01442842825
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr.Nick Crispin
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 April 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Charis Geoghegan

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 23 January 2006 - 24 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280081
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This small school serves the local community and just over a quarter of the pupils are from outside the village. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and virtually all are from White British families. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. A below average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is also below average. The school has noticeable pupil mobility which affects the composition of groups and classes. Some year groups are very small and have just eight pupils. There has been a considerable turnover of staff during the last two years. The present headteacher was appointed in April 2005 after two terms as acting headteacher.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Little Gaddesden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary is a good school which provides good value for money. Parents strongly support the school. The new headteacher has quickly begun to develop and improve many aspects of the school's work. Inspection findings support the school's positive assessment of its overall effectiveness. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average and pupils make good progress. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and all pupils normally attain the expected level in national tests. More able pupils in Year 2 do not make all the progress they could in mathematics and writing. Staff know each and every pupil well and good teaching overall helps children to achieve well as they progress through the school. Provision in Reception is adequate and children get off to a satisfactory start. The school recognises that planning to ensure that children experience a relevant Foundation Stage curriculum is an area for further development. The school is in the process of developing the outdoor area for young children. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good. The headteacher's good leadership and the support given by a dedicated staff make sure that any child with learning difficulties is quickly identified and supported. Governors are supportive and carry out their responsibilities effectively. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection because standards at the end of Year 6 are higher and the quality of teaching in the junior classes has improved. The rising trend in national test results for older pupils and the good strategies in place to raise more able Year 2 pupils' achievement mean the school has a good capacity to improve further and to become even more successful.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to improve the curriculum and the accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage. - Make sure more able Year 2 pupils are challenged to attain higher levels in mathematics and writing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is broadly average. Children start school with above average levels of personal and social skills. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and virtually all children attain the expected standards on entry to Year 1. Children's achievement is restricted because it is currently difficult for them to move easily between the outdoor and indoor environment. In 2005, Year 2 pupils attained high standards in reading and average standards in mathematics and writing. Pupils' attainment in national tests has fluctuated since the last inspection and declined overall since 2003, particularly in the number of pupils attaining above average standards in writing and mathematics. Very small numbers of pupils take the tests each year and variations are therefore more likely. A significant proportion of pupils also move in and out of the school at different times

of the year, which affects standards. However, the school has recognised the trend in standards and has good strategies in place to raise more able pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing. By the age of eleven, standards are high in English, mathematics and science and assessment information shows that pupils have made good, and in the case of some less able pupils, very good progress between Years 3 and 6. This good achievement is due to high calibre teaching and skilful planning to meet pupils' different needs. Pupils meet their challenging targets in Year 6.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

One parent wrote, 'I particularly value the ethos of the school and the way older children are encouraged to mentor the younger ones.' Pupils have good attitudes towards school and behave well. Older pupils in particular are mature and sensible. Teaching captures pupils' interest effectively so that they like coming to school. They want to succeed and they take pride in their work and in their school. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils feel very safe at school and speak highly of the care and support they receive from all staff. They have a good understanding of the importance of being healthy because the school participates in the 'Healthy Schools' initiative and the 'Safer Routes to School' project. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community by serving on the school council and by supporting younger children at playtimes. The school takes the views of pupils seriously. Through the school council pupils have made decisions about new playground equipment and healthier school lunches. Learners make good progress in acquiring the numeracy and literacy skills that will help them in later life. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. The school is currently working to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures. The comprehensive personal, health and social education programme helps pupils to understand their feelings, get on well with others and contribute successfully to their school and local community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The teaching and learning in Reception is satisfactory. Children benefit from having good adult support and teaching from an experienced Reception teacher, which means that the quality of teaching is improving. In some lessons in the infants, more able pupils have work which is too easy for them and they are not challenged to move on in their learning. High calibre teaching is one of the key reasons for junior pupils' good achievement. Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about their teacher because learning is fun and interesting. The very good relationships, classroom management skills and detailed planning, together with the fact that staff know pupils so well help all pupils to succeed. In a very successful literacy lesson the teacher immediately captured pupils' full attention when

she said they were all going to write persuasive letters to raise money to purchase new reading books for their class. Teaching assistants happily and confidently provide good support in lessons to all pupils and in particular to those with learning difficulties. Until recently very detailed and complicated procedures were in place for assessing pupils' progress. The headteacher wisely devised ways to reduce the amount of information so that it can be used more effectively by all staff. Older pupils are skilfully encouraged to devise their own goals at the start of lessons so that they are very aware of what they are trying to achieve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is lively and interesting overall. The school is currently seeking ways to further improve the Foundation Stage curriculum and accommodation. This is necessary to ensure children have a more exciting, relevant and stimulating learning environment outdoors as well as indoors. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in improving its information and communication technology (ICT) resources. Pupils' attainment and staff expertise have also improved. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well so that they can enjoy all subjects. The school organises many visits to make sure pupils experience the world beyond the school. For instance all pupils visit 'Hazard Alley' where they learn how to respond to accidents in the street or the home. French is taught to Year 5 and 6 pupils. The school successfully teaches pupils to develop safe and healthy lifestyles. Pupils benefit considerably from regular sports coaching in lessons and during after school clubs. There is wide range of clubs and activities such as violin, chess, football and choir which successfully promote pupils' personal and social skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for in this happy, friendly school which prides itself on welcoming everyone. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good. It is especially characterised by high levels of pastoral care from all staff. The headteacher and staff make sure they get to know families well. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and staff are vigilant. Pupils have clear literacy and numeracy targets which help them to improve their work and older pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve and attain high levels in national tests. A large number of parents responded to the questionnaire and their views about the school were extremely positive. The vast majority appreciate the 'Parents' Forum' which gives them a voice in school and are 'delighted with the improved healthier school meals.' The level of care and consideration pupils show towards each other is good. This is evident in the playground where older pupils play with younger ones. Year 6 pupils talk of the friendly atmosphere where everyone is valued and respected.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and management and has skilfully and sensitively built on the good systems already in the school to move forward. For instance, together with the literacy subject leader, she wasted no time in changing the way writing is taught in the Year 1 and 2 class to make sure that more able children are challenged to attain the higher levels of which they are clearly capable. The headteacher has created an ethos where comparatively new staff have quickly jelled to support each other, to look critically at all that the school does and find ways to improve. The school improvement planning currently under review is correctly focused on addressing weaknesses and maintaining strengths. The subject leaders' role has been improved. Governors give good support to the school and keep a close eye on standards generally, spending and the progress of the more able Year 2 pupils. Parents and pupils all make positive contributions to the school. It has made good improvements since the last inspection. The significant improvements already made to the assessment procedures, improved teaching in the junior classes and the rising trend in national test results for eleven-year-old pupils means the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited. It was a real pleasure to talk to some of you and to watch you working and playing. This letter is to tell you about some of the important things I saw. The headteacher, teachers and all the other adults look after you well. They encourage you to be happy, to be healthy and to stay safe and they ensure you have good opportunities to learn exciting new things. Many of you told me how much you liked your new headteacher and all the other teachers and how well you thought they helped you to learn. You behave well and this makes it easier for the teachers to teach and for you to learn. Older children enjoy looking after younger ones and those of you on the school council have suggested many good improvements. I hope you are successful in getting more playground equipment. You are also very interested in doing different things and love taking part in clubs, trips, assemblies and other exciting things the school provides for you. Year 6 children spoke of the happy memories they had of the visit to the Isle of Wight last year. Your teachers are keen to make the school even better for you. I think that to do that they need to improve the Reception children's indoor and outdoor working space and the curriculum. It will also be good if some of the Year 1 and 2 children get harder work so that they do even better in Year 2. It was so good to find out that all of you are happy and doing so well at school and that your parents are happy too. Keep working hard and enjoying life at Little Gaddesden.