



Herne Church of England Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118736
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280382
Inspection dates 22 February 2006 to 23 February 2006
Reporting inspector Colin Lee AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	School Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Herne Bay
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Kent CT6 7AL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01227 374069
Number on roll	380	Fax number	01227 741415
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Hillary Bayburt
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Quentin Roper

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large junior school, with three classes in each year group, draws its pupils from the villages of Herne and Broomfield and the surrounding area. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average but the percentage with a statement of special educational need is below average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Pupils' attainment when they start at the school is broadly average. The school has had a period of temporary leadership of the school and the permanent headteacher has been in post for just one year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and is effective. This also is how the school judges itself in its generally accurate and realistic self-evaluation. There has been satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection during an uncertain period of significant changes in staffing, especially at senior management level. The relatively new headteacher gives a very clear lead to the school and staff and the governors are committed to improvement. The school is improving steadily and has the capacity to continue doing so. It gives satisfactory value for money.

There has been a period when pupils' progress has been inadequate because it has fluctuated annually. This has caused results in national tests to fall. Standards in English and mathematics are now rising because there is improving use of information about pupils' progress. Teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, have good features that help pupils' progress to be more consistent. Standards and achievement are now satisfactory overall. However, standards in science are not high enough because the more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Additionally, in science, like many subjects other than English and mathematics, the pupils' progress is not checked frequently enough.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. After a year in post, the headteacher is leading the school very capably. Senior staff have introduced a range of changes to improve the quality of pupils' learning and the effectiveness of teaching. The impact of some of these initiatives has been immediate, such as improved assessment in English and mathematics that has helped to raise standards. Senior staff are supported well, but also challenged, by a knowledgeable governing body. While there has been such a strong focus on English and mathematics, the expectations of other subject leaders have not been clear enough and consequently they vary in the success with which they help standards and provision in their subjects to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science throughout the school.
- Make sure that teachers consistently set work in science that is at the right level of challenge for all pupils, particularly for the more able.
- Ensure that assessment in science and the foundation subjects is used to check on pupils' progress at regular intervals.
- Make sure that teachers' marking gives clear guidance on how pupils can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement presents a mixed picture but is satisfactory overall. Whereas in recent years rates of progress in different year groups have varied considerably, most pupils are now making consistent progress each year. Recent test results show that pupils

have done better in English than in mathematics and science. This has been due to the fluctuating progress in the past being adversely affected by staff turnover.

Standards shown by the results in the 2005 national tests were average in English but below average in mathematics and science. The English result was a good achievement because, although this was a year group with an above- average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, the pupils improved on the school's results in the previous year. The school has undertaken a thorough analysis of data to help it make more improvements. Its strategies are proving more effective in English and mathematics than in science. Most pupils are now making satisfactory progress in English and mathematics and are on track to achieve the realistic end-of-year targets set for them. However, there are still weaknesses in the work planned for the more able pupils in science that are impeding their progress and capping their standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' positive attitudes, respectful relationships and good behaviour contribute well to their enjoyment of learning. Behaviour is especially commendable at playtimes when the whole school is limited to using the small playground. The advice and guidance given to pupils about safe practices and healthy lifestyles prepares them successfully for their future well-being. Through questionnaires and the School Council, pupils voice their opinions and thereby influence school policy and practice, for example, by devising a new set of school rules. Attendance was below average in 2005 but half way through the year shows good improvement and is on track to be above the national average, as in previous years.

Pupils learn about their responsibilities and rights, both as individuals and members of the community. They are encouraged to make informed choices and to take an active role in events in the school and wider community, thus preparing them well for further study and their role as citizens. Older pupils take a lead in organising events in support of the local hospital and local and national charities. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is good and a reflection of the strong Christian ethos that runs through all aspects of the school's work. Pupils are provided with many opportunities for prayer and reflection, and appreciation of the natural world and the arts. Their social development is enhanced well through community links, visits and visitors. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. There are planned opportunities for them to discuss cultural issues and they have a developing appreciation of the cultural and ethnic diversity in British society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and ensure high levels of discipline and a positive atmosphere for learning.

Pupils work hard and want to do well and these positive attitudes are helping the pupils to make improving progress over time.

Recent work by teachers on improving the quality and use of assessment has begun to make a difference, particularly in identifying the learning needs of individuals and groups in English and mathematics. In these subjects, teachers regularly check the pupils' progress and keep detailed records of their achievements. The information is generally used well to set targets for improvement. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics there is inadequate checking of progress because assessment is not carried out frequently enough.

The school's evaluation of the quality of teaching shows it ranging from satisfactory to outstanding, and is graded as satisfactory overall. School leaders rightly identify the quality of lesson planning as an area for improvement. Inspectors found that the most successful lessons they observed feature detailed planning that includes specific learning objectives for pupils of different abilities. In these lessons, progress is increased because of the careful match of work to ability. However, this is not consistent, especially in science and for more able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum provision is good. Comprehensive guidelines ensure that all subjects are relevant to the needs of the pupils. Curriculum planning is based on the systematic building of skills and knowledge but the impact of this planning is inconsistent, especially in science for the more able pupils. Well-planned visits enrich pupils' learning across a number of subjects. They visit museums, environmental centres and other local places of interest. A good range of popular clubs is offered after school which successfully develop the pupils' interests and skills. Music and physical education are particular strengths of the school, with a wide range of activities both during and after school time. Links with the local community, the church and other local schools supplement the curriculum well. Personal, social, health and citizenship education helps pupils to understand the importance of staying safe and being healthy, and prepares them very well to make effective contributions to the community. Events such as the historical days and the multi-cultural week are a great success, adding to the richness of the curriculum and indicating the school's emphasis on making learning enjoyable.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for care, guidance and support is good. The school provides a very caring environment where pupils are happy and confident. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support. The pupils say that they feel secure and well cared for and are confident in expressing their opinions. Health and safety procedures are regularly reviewed and are effective. The school's involvement in a network of partnerships across the community means that it readily uses the services of external agencies to meet particular needs. Child protection and health and safety procedures are securely

in place. Procedures for coping with accidents and illnesses are very good. All school staff are aware of vulnerable pupils and as a result these pupils feel safe. Educational guidance is improving through the developing use of target setting. However, pupils do not get sufficient feedback from teachers' marking of their work, which generally fails to say how work can be improved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There is a clear commitment to raising standards, ensuring that pupils are cared for and improving the overall quality of education. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, although this has mostly been achieved since the headteacher's appointment in January 2005. There is better analysis and use of test data. Assessment has improved in English and mathematics, although this area has yet to be developed in other subjects. The new senior management team has quickly introduced ideas that have had positive effects, reversing the trend of falling standards in English and mathematics by thorough and useful analysis of test results. This indicates that there is a secure capacity for future improvement. Senior managers accept that the expectations of leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are not clear enough and this is hampering the development of their role in self-evaluation.

The school's assessment of its effectiveness is accurate. However, its views of leadership and management were more generous than inspectors found. This is because, following a period of leadership problems due to ill health and staffing changes, there has not yet been sufficient time for the impact of some of the initiatives of the new headteacher and senior management team to be seen. Where there has been underachievement by pupils in the past, senior managers, subject leaders and teachers have worked hard at raising standards. This has been most successful in English. Progress is slower in mathematics but, after checking the quality of teaching and learning, senior staff have guided teachers on key things to improve. Because of this standards and pupils' progress are already an improvement on recent national test results. However, the school has been too slow in addressing the falling standards in science.

Satisfactory attention is paid to the views of pupils and parents in identifying areas for improvement. The school improvement plan establishes priorities that are generally right for the next stage of the school's development. Governors have become more involved in this plan. Despite many recent changes in personnel, the governing body has quickly become very effective by developing its monitoring of the school's standards and challenging senior staff rigorously and constructively.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

We enjoyed visiting your school very much. We saw that you get on well with each other, are friendly and polite and behave well. You are very sensible when you move round the school and especially when you are outdoors playing because there is not much room when you are all on the playground together.

The adults in the school look after you well and make sure that you are safe. They encourage you to have regular exercise and eat healthily. As well as planning interesting work for you in lessons, your teachers and other adults organise a very good range of clubs and activities for you at lunchtime and after school, especially in music and sport.

Your teachers are helping you to learn new things in reading and writing. We saw that your work in mathematics is getting better but we think that you can improve in science. We have therefore asked your teachers to make sure that your work is a bit harder and to check quite often how well you are doing in science and all the other subjects. We also want the marking of your work to tell you more about how you can improve. We have asked your headteacher and subject leaders to make sure that their plans for improvement help the school to move forward quickly.

Thank you for your help and for talking to us about your school.