



Headcorn Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 118291
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291078
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kings Road
School category	Community		Headcorn
Age range of pupils	4–11		Ashford TN27 9QT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01622 891289
Number on roll (school)	215	Fax number	01622 891285
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Jim Holditch
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006	Inspection number 291078
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Headcorn Primary School serves a village community between Maidstone and Ashford in Kent. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Some co-ordinators of key subjects are new to their role.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Headcorn is a very friendly school in which all are valued as individuals. It provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Children's education gets off to a good start in the Reception Class. As a result, almost all reach and several surpass the early learning goals expected of children of that age. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. The school has focused on improving standards in writing over the last two years. This has proved successful. Pupils have not done quite as well in mathematics because they are not always set work that matches their individual needs.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but work does not always effectively meet pupils' individual abilities and pupils are sometimes not given enough guidance on what they need to do to do better. Relationships are good throughout the school and classrooms are friendly places in which to work. Pupils respond positively to the activities they are given, concentrating well. They are keen to make contributions during group and whole-class discussions. They enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in the above average attendance figures of recent years.

There is a satisfactory curriculum that is effectively extended by a wide range of enrichment activities, particularly after school clubs. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development. In the Reception Class, children are provided with a variety of stimulating activities that develop effectively their ability to work independently. The school takes good care of its pupils, ensuring their health and safety. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who need extra care and attention are supported well to help them take full part in all activities. Parents are very appreciative of the way the school looks after their children.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher sets a clear direction for the school. There has been disruption to subject leadership over the last year. This has led to some co-ordinators not having an effective view of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. However, the satisfactory improvement since the last inspection shows that the school has sound capacity to make the improvements needed.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Raise standards by setting work that effectively meets pupils' individual needs, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils are given clearer guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.
- Develop the role of subject leaders to more effectively evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The attainment of most children on starting school is broadly average. However a significant number of them have learning difficulties. Their individual needs are catered for well and, as a result, they make good progress in the Foundation Stage of their education. Most children reach the age expected levels, and a significant number exceed them, by the time they enter Year 1. Through the rest of the school achievement is satisfactory. Pupils reach broadly average standards, although they do not do as well in mathematics as they do in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are well behaved, friendly and show interest in their learning. They are aware of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and feel safe and secure in school. Many of them are eager to take part in the wide range of after school clubs available to them. Pupils make good contributions to the school and the wider community. For example, the school is represented well by the choir who participate in the Christmas concert at the local church, as well as other events. Pupils on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and feel that they have been effective in helping the school improve. Pupils in Year 6 confidently take on a variety of responsibilities, such as working in the office at lunchtime, and supporting younger children in the playground. Pupils are appropriately prepared for the next stage of education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers give careful explanations during the introductions to lessons. This ensures that pupils are clear about what they are to learn and how to set about their activities. Interactive whiteboards are used well to focus pupils' attention and add further interest to lessons. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively with others, which makes a good contribution to their personal and social development. The school acknowledges that the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. As a result, they are not always clear about how they might improve their performance, particularly in mathematics. Learning support assistants provide effective help to all pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and those who need extra care and attention.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a broad and interesting range of work. In the Reception Class the emphasis is on giving children practical activities that enable them to work with others and so develop their personal and social skills. Through the rest of the school the wide range of enrichment activities available continues this development for all pupils. For example, educational visits and visitors to the school add interest to the pupils' work. On the first day of inspection, pupils in Year 4 went on a visit to Dover Castle. They came back enthused and keen to find out more about the castle's history. The curriculum for mathematics lacks sufficient breadth and balance. As a result, pupils' learning is superficial and they lack a solid understanding of key mathematical concepts. The school is effective in promoting an understanding of how to stay safe and healthy through work in science, physical education, sporting activities and personal, social and health education. There are good links with the community to support pupils' learning. For example, working with local secondary schools has helped pupils develop further their skills in speaking and listening and in music. Links with an ethnically diverse school promote effectively pupils' understanding of the beliefs and traditions of other cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. There is strong concern for pupils' well-being, health and safety. Rigorous child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place. Adults have a good understanding of their responsibilities in these areas. Pupils said, 'We feel really safe in school.' They also said they knew they could talk to any member of staff if they had any personal worries. Parents and carers agree that their children feel safe and well cared for. The procedures for tracking pupils' academic development are satisfactory. However, the information gathered is not always used consistently to show pupils how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear awareness of the needs of the school and has introduced a number of initiatives to improve provision. For example, the focus on developing pupils' skills in writing has led to a rise in standards in English, particularly for more able pupils. The senior management team has been reorganised so that it now has a better overview of the school's strengths and the areas that require development. This is reflected in the school's broadly accurate self-evaluation.

The recent disruption to subject co-ordination means that some subject leaders are not fully effective in evaluating the quality of provision in their subjects. There are comprehensive systems to track how well pupils are making progress towards achieving their targets. However, the information collected is not always used successfully to

help pupils improve their performance. There is a significant number of new governors on the governing body. Consequently, though it is very supportive of the school it has not done enough to contribute to school improvement by constructively challenging its procedures.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Headcorn Primary School Kings road Ashford Kent TN27 9QT

29 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the things you do. We would like to tell you what we found your school does well and how it could improve further.

Your school is a very friendly place in which to work and play. You work hard in lessons and try your best. However, some of you could be doing better in mathematics. The school knows this and has set out a good plan to help teachers give you work that better meets your individual needs in this subject. You enjoy coming to school, are well behaved and keen to learn. You are given interesting things to do in lessons and in the many after school clubs. The school takes good care of you and makes sure you feel safe and secure. You are good at taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council or a playground buddy. Some teachers who are in charge of subjects are new to the role and need help in finding out what needs improving. The people running the school are working hard to help you to do even better, especially in mathematics.

How we think your school could make things better for you:

- Help you do well, especially in mathematics, by making sure that the work you are given meets your individual needs.
- Give you a clearer idea of what you need to do to improve your work.
- Help teachers who are subject leaders to carry out their responsibilities more effectively.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Best wishes

Melvyn Hemmings Lead Inspector