

# Churchwood Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114470
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311615
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Timothy Feast

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	198
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Council
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jan Gough
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Church-in-the-Wood Lane St Leonards-on-Sea TN38 9PB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 852326
<b>Fax number</b>	01424 854326

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves an area of considerable social disadvantage and the mobility of children who are admitted to and leave the school is much higher than that found nationally. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below the expectations for the age of the children, being particularly weak in communication, language and literacy skills. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is rising but still smaller than that found nationally. Very few of these children are learning to speak English as an additional language. Just over a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this is a higher proportion than is seen in most schools. There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection, especially in 2006–2007. The headteacher was appointed in 2004 and the deputy headteacher in 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Churchwood is an improving school, which provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. The pace of improvement was fairly slow until recently and there was considerable underachievement by pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2. Senior leaders now focus relentlessly on raising standards. As a result standards are improving, in some cases rapidly, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The rate of progress is not yet fast enough in Years 1 and 2 but, since the start of the autumn term 2007, these pupils' progress has been satisfactory. Progress is accelerating because of improvements in teaching, careful tracking of pupils' progress and good strategies to support those pupils still underachieving. However, the school is still working to eliminate a legacy of underachievement and has set itself challenging targets to ensure all children now make good progress.

The school has been successful in raising standards by the end of Year 6, particularly in English. There is now a focus on raising standards in mathematics and science, which are weaker aspects of the curriculum. Pupils' achievement in these subjects is hindered by shortcomings in mathematical problem solving and scientific investigations and, in some cases, by teachers' subject knowledge.

The school is taking effective steps to adapt and improve the curriculum in the light of national guidance. Good provision in the Nursery and Reception helps children make good progress. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. In Years 1 to 6 the 'Cre8' programme is beginning to make the lessons more interesting and enjoyable.

Pupils' personal development is improving in response to the good care and support provided. Behaviour has improved in the last three years and is satisfactory. However, the behaviour of a small group of pupils is still inappropriate. Most pupils say they enjoy school and their parents agree. They usually work with enthusiasm and show enjoyment in their lessons. Pupils respond well when asked to take on responsibility, for example, as peer mediators.

The quality of teaching has a number of good features and is steadily improving, but is not yet consistently good enough to ensure all pupils make rapid progress. This is because lessons do not always meet the needs of different groups of pupils and the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers are using the tracking system to good effect in determining pupils' progress and identifying who still needs support. In many classes pupils are successfully involved in assessing their own work but this is not consistent throughout the school.

The school has taken good advantage of staffing changes to restructure the leadership team. This has supported the development of teachers' leadership skills but improvements are not consistent across all areas. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and effective in identifying where priorities for improvement lie. The school works effectively in partnership with external agencies to provide good additional support and guidance for pupils. The progress shown in raising standards last year provides positive evidence that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve and to eradicate any remaining underperformance.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and reach higher standards than those seen nationally by the end of Reception. They make particularly good progress with skills in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. They

are prepared well for their next stage of learning. Teachers plan learning effectively so there is a free flow between indoor and outdoor activities and a good balance between activities chosen by pupils and those led by adults. In both classes the outdoor area is well equipped and well organised. The indoor learning environment is colourful and stimulating. All areas of learning that children are expected to experience are reflected in the attractive displays. There is good tracking of children's progress and future learning is planned well. The school has rightly identified the need to develop further aspects of the creative curriculum and provide greater opportunities for children to develop their skills of speaking and listening. It also recognises the need to develop stronger links between the Nursery and Reception classes and between the Foundation Stage and Year 1.

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

- Accelerate rates of progress for all pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2, in order to raise standards throughout the school.
- Ensure that all lessons are of good quality so that all pupils are given work that is appropriate to their needs and are encouraged to work at a good pace.
- Improve the provision for problem solving in mathematics and investigative work in science to enable pupils to reach higher standards in these subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards in the Year 6 national tests improved significantly in 2007 to below average levels, having been well below average for the previous three years. Pupils made up considerable lost ground and achieved well. This improvement has been sustained this academic year and pupils are making satisfactory progress towards the school's challenging targets.

Standards in the Year 2 tests in 2007 remained significantly below national figures and progress for these pupils was inadequate. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are making better progress and their achievement is now satisfactory, mainly because of better teaching in Year 2. Children in the Foundation Stage are making good progress.

Standards have risen in English because of the school's successful focus on improving teaching strategies, targeting support for pupils falling behind and improving resources. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils show interest and enjoyment in learning, participating enthusiastically in most lessons. Improving attendance reflects their enjoyment. Most pupils behave well. A few pupils disrupt the learning of others on occasions. Pupils generally feel safe at school and instances of bullying have reduced significantly, but a minority still feel vulnerable to unkind behaviour from other pupils. Pupils engage in a wide range of physical activity to keep fit but many packed lunches do not reflect the school's emphasis on healthy eating. Pupils do well in taking on roles of

responsibility such as house captains and contribute well to the wider community, for example, by growing oak trees to replenish the local wood.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils from different faiths and cultures mix well and enjoy positive relationships. Pupils are beginning to develop a knowledge of the world of work but their below average basic skills do not prepare them well for their next school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers focus well on enabling pupils to meet challenging targets. They are good at making clear to pupils what it is they want them to learn but do not always find time in lessons to allow pupils to reflect on how well they have done. Teachers manage behaviour well and this results in good learning in most classes. Pupils say that good lessons often have practical activities, which enable them to understand the topic. In other lessons pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher and sitting on the carpet. Then their progress is only satisfactory. Teachers' planning to meet the needs of differing groups in their lessons has improved but is not yet effective across all classes. Pupils' books are marked well throughout the school, with both praise and good guidance on how to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school has improved the curriculum by focusing on improving basic skills. The result is that pupils' progress is now satisfactory. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to solve mathematical problems or conduct scientific investigations. The introduction of a creative approach to curricular planning, still a developing area, is helping to make effective links between subjects. Displays of good quality artwork, specialist provision in Spanish and music and a range of sporting activities illustrate the school's commitment to providing a relevant and exciting curriculum. There are good links with providers such as the Excellence Cluster that enrich the curriculum, for example, in music and for gifted and talented pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Effective procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare ensure they are cared for well. Rigorous monitoring of attendance is reducing the absence rate. The consistent strategies for monitoring and managing behaviour and the 'zero tolerance' approach are having a good impact on reducing instances of unacceptable behaviour. The school actively promotes equality for all groups and there is good provision, including work with a wide range of external agencies, for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Teachers make effective use of the good systems for tracking pupils' progress to identify those who are falling behind and the support they need. Progress is improving as a result. Teachers set individual and group targets for pupils. Pupils know these targets and are increasingly involved in assessing their own and others' progress towards meeting them. These thorough systems are clearly focused on raising attainment, but are not yet used with equal rigour in every year group.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Senior leaders have a clear and shared vision, strongly focused on raising standards. They have successfully established good teamwork amongst the staff and have taken a tough stance on tackling inadequate teaching. This has led to marked improvement in teaching and learning. Where improvements are still needed, the leadership's coaching and mentoring strategies are proving effective.

Leaders give equally strong emphasis to improving pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. They have successfully established a calm atmosphere for learning where pupils and adults treat each other with mutual respect. Managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through effective self-evaluation. This good understanding has been developed by taking into account the views of pupils, parents, staff and governors. Governors' involvement in the school's strategic planning is growing and they are becoming more effective as 'critical friends'.

Some subject leaders are not yet fully effective in their roles. The part-time mathematics co-ordinator has insufficient time to monitor provision and share good practice. The science co-ordinator is new in post and has yet to get to grips with the main issues facing the school. The pace of improvement is accelerating as new initiatives take effect. Progress previously had not been as rapid as it should have been, partly because of high staff turnover.

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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	No
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

29 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Churchwood Primary School, St Leonards-on-Sea, TN38 9PB

Thank you for helping us with the inspection and making us feel welcome in the school. We enjoyed talking with you about your work during our recent visit. We think that your school is improving and is giving you a satisfactory education. We found out that some of you had not been making enough progress in the past, but you are now making satisfactory progress. We have asked the school to help you make even better progress, especially in Years 1 and 2, so that you can reach higher standards. We have also asked the school to make sure that you make good progress in every lesson.

We think that you make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes. This is because of the way the teachers plan so well for you to work indoors and outdoors and give you plenty of opportunities to decide your own activities, as well as being taught by adults.

We saw you working hard in most lessons and most of you were enjoying your work. Most of you behave well in lessons and around school and really take your opportunities to be responsible very seriously. A few of you do not always behave as well as you should. The adults take good care of you and support you well when you need help. Some of you said that bullying was still a problem but that it improves after events such as Anti-Bullying Week.

You told us that you like your work when it is practical and active and we have asked the teachers, particularly in mathematics and science lessons, to give you more opportunities to solve problems and conduct your own investigations.

We think you are given good advice on how to improve and you like the praise you are given when you do well. You are developing your skills well to mark your own work and to decide what you need to do to improve.

We are sure that the school will continue to improve and you will continue to enjoy your time at Churchwood. We wish you all success this year and in the future.

With best wishes

Tim Feast Lead inspector