

Guestling Bradshaw Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114551
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311643
Inspection date	4 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Hodge

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Taylor
Headteacher	Carolyn Weston
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Rye Road Guestling Hastings TN35 4LS
Telephone number	01424 812279
Fax number	01424 814139

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and looked at the following specific aspects: the progress pupils make in the Foundation Stage; the pupils' writing skills; the quality of teaching; and how senior leaders manage subjects to help the school to improve. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work and school documents. Parents' questionnaires, and discussions with pupils, three governors, some parents and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were justified in nearly all areas, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. When children enter the school, they have ability levels that are broadly typical for their age. Most pupils are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where enthusiastic and happy pupils make good progress because they are well taught and well cared for. Their physical and emotional care is high profile and effectively promoted so that pupils enjoy attending. The school's positive and welcoming ethos is a key feature that is noticeable to visitors. Parents, pupils, staff and governors are right to be so confident in the quality of education on offer. 'My children are always happy to attend and enjoy both the educational and fun side of learning', was a typical parental comment. A very small number of parents were concerned with some aspects of pupils' behaviour and the difficulties caused by the busy road and parking. The school is endeavouring to reduce and remedy the parking difficulties. It provides good additional support for those very few pupils who find it harder to reach the school's high standards. On balance, there is overwhelming support and the links that there are between home and school help pupils' learning. 'We always have fun things to do and we really like our teachers', one group of pupils told the inspector. There is very effective teamwork, clear educational direction, and a good capacity to make further improvement.

Children start school with skills and experience that overall are typical of this age group, although there are weaknesses in some elements of communication, language and literacy. They get off to a secure start in the Foundation Stage class and their progress steps up as they move through the school. Although this progress sometimes varies slightly between classes, they make good progress overall through the school.

Standards are consistently above average at the end of Year 6. Some elements of mathematics and science are particularly good. In English, standards are usually above average, but the school recognised that pupils' writing could improve. Staff made a thorough analysis of why this was. They have introduced a range of initiatives, such as 'Big Writing' and this is beginning to have a positive effect. At the end of Year 2, standards have not always mirrored those reached by Year 6 pupils, but have been broadly average over a period of years. Currently, Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average. The work to improve pupils' spelling and punctuation, and to encourage them use a wider vocabulary, is beginning to take effect. There is still some way to go before they become fully confident in their writing, but their skills are used well within other subjects, such as science. The introduction of target setting is helping pupils know how well they are doing, particularly in English, although some found difficulty remembering their number targets. Staff use a mix of whole-class and individual pupil targets to measure progress and make adjustments to their planning. This helps pupils of all abilities make good progress, and support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed. It makes sure such pupils achieve as well as their classmates.

Underpinning this good progress is the typically good teaching. Highlights are in the way it promotes good relationships between all, the practical nature of the activities and the opportunities for pupils to work with others, not just friends. Teachers use technology, such as computers and interactive whiteboards, to bring lessons alive. In some activities, pupils' thinking could be stretched further to aid their confidence in writing and more frequent help given to extend children's play in the Foundation Stage. Given these positive aspects, it is not surprising that pupils feel safe, respond well and generally make good progress in lessons.

Driving the success of the school are the senior leaders who have built a good team that wants to improve further. The headteacher leads the school well, supported by staff and governors.

Self-evaluation is thorough and takes into account the views of parents and pupils as well as staff through structured questionnaires. Subject leaders are effective in leading their subjects, and improvements in English are already evident. The checks on teaching are regular and helpful, although not all observations pinpoint those aspects clearly which could improve pupils' learning further. Overall, the school's checks on its performance accurately identify its strengths and areas for development. Good management ensures that the team approach to improvement focuses on appropriate priorities. Governance is good. Governors are well informed and, despite some recent changes to their approach to monitoring, are in a good position to act as critical friends and ensure the school continues to improve.

As the senior leaders promote effective levels of care, the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. There are particular strengths in the moral and social aspects, with pupils showing consideration for others and working well together. The school's links with global charities and local schools widen their knowledge and awareness of other cultures and pupils from different backgrounds, but this remains limited. The school has identified that pupils' understanding of different lifestyles nationally and internationally is an area they want to develop further. Pupils enjoy influencing improvement in the school through their work on the school council. Through its good curriculum, which includes a modern foreign language and extra-curricular activities, the school actively seeks to promote pupils' local cultural awareness and their enthusiasm to keep fit, stay safe and be healthy. The 'Healthy School' gold award is an example of how successful this is. Indoor activities in the Foundation Stage are well planned but, despite a large outside area, activities are hampered by a lack of larger scale resources. Pupils say they are well prepared for their next schools. Initiatives, such as working with local business partnerships, help them feel ready for the challenges of work and later life.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care ensures that children are happy and make a smooth start to school life. Children make at least satisfactory progress in all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Progress in children's personal, social and emotional development is good, with children learning the benefits of taking their turn and sharing. They enjoy working together and readily respond to adults and classmates. This lays a good base for the effective way pupils work together higher up the school. Staff and helpers present them with a good balance of indoor activities that they can choose for themselves and those that they are directed to. The outside area, although large, is not well equipped with larger scale equipment or as stimulating as the classroom. This hinders aspects of their physical development, including play and their creative development. There is a strong commitment to getting this aspect right and some improvements, such as developing a garden area, are successful. Children develop good basic communication skills, such as matching letters to sounds, and fun activities develop their practical skills, for example making hats for when they take part in the local carnival. They listen carefully to the teacher and are beginning to learn simple skills to help them read and write.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils in Years 1 to 6 to spell more accurately and use a wider vocabulary to enable them to write more confidently and creatively.
- Improve the resources in the outside activity areas for Foundation Stage children so they have better opportunities to enrich their physical, cooperative and creative skills.

- Help raise pupils' awareness and understanding of the range of cultures and beliefs represented in this country and beyond.

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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?	2
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Inspection of Guestling Bradshaw CE Primary School, Hastings, TN35 4LS

I liked visiting your school recently. Thank you for chatting to me and telling me what you thought. Yours is a good school that is trying hard to be even better. Here are some of the things that I thought were particularly good.

- You make good progress in your work and reach higher than average standards by the time you leave, but your writing could still improve more.
- You all really enjoy being at the school and you help make it a very happy place to be.
- Children in the Reception class have a happy start to school, although the outside area for them to use could do with more equipment to help them develop their skills.
- You said you feel extremely safe and all the adults are good at helping you.
- You know that getting exercise, drinking water and eating certain foods are good for you.
- You behave well in class, in the playground and in worship time. (You sing really well in worship time too, especially with actions.)
- Teaching is usually fun and teachers try hard to make lessons exciting.
- The activities planned in lessons, along with extra help for those who need it, make sure you do not feel left behind.
- Your headteacher, governors and other staff lead the school well and know what needs to be done to make it even better.

There are three things we have asked the school to do to help improve it some more.

- Give you more help developing your writing skills so that you will really be able to write with confidence and be able to use your 'wow' words to good effect in your stories.
- Make the outside activity area for the Reception classes a bit more exciting, perhaps by having some better equipment and more things to use.
- Give you more opportunities to find out about different people's lifestyles and backgrounds that are found in other parts of our country. Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge Lead Inspector



5 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Guestling Bradshaw CE Primary School, Hastings, TN35 4LS

I liked visiting your school recently. Thank you for chatting to me and telling me what you thought. Yours is a good school that is trying hard to be even better. Here are some of the things that I thought were particularly good.

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Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge
Lead Inspector