

Nonington Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118688
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313047
Inspection date	5 March 2008
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Cox
Headteacher	Marilyn Thorn
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2003
School address	Church Street Nonington Dover CT15 4LB
Telephone number	01304 840348
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school serves the village of Nonington. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number are learning English as an additional language. A small number of pupils are from Gypsy/Roma families. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly above the national average, although none has a statement of special educational need. More pupils enter or leave the school than at the usual times and numbers in some year groups are very low. The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy Schools, Active mark and Eco-Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Nonington Church of England Primary is a good school. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked successfully to tackle areas of underperformance and to create a school that is valued by pupils and parents. As a parent typically commented, 'My children have progressed immensely due to excellent teachers'. Central to the school's success is the high ratio of adult support and the consistency and continuity of effective teaching. Effective induction procedures, careful planning and good teaching ensure that Reception children achieve well and have a successful start to school. By the end of the year, most reach the expected goals for their age, and a few exceed them. Consistently effective teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensures that this initial momentum is sustained. Standards in the Key Stage 1 tests have risen steadily over several years and were above average in 2007. Although marginally lower at present, standards remain above average by Year 2, particularly in reading. More erratic achievement in Years 3 to 6 reflects the high turnover of pupils and the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards in Year 6 are currently below average, but through good teaching and academic guidance, most pupils achieve well, given that most have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and few have had their whole education in Nonington. Inclusion is a key strength. The few pupils who do not speak English as their first language make rapid progress in their oral skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they receive effective support. Older pupils that are more able do not always have the same priority. Recent initiatives have increased the focus on able and gifted pupils. However, provision remains underdeveloped and has not been given sufficient priority. Pupils' learning is supported well by good pastoral arrangements. The school engages successfully with the families of pupils from Gypsy/Roma backgrounds, sustaining above average levels of attendance and good achievement. Pupils behave well and respond enthusiastically to what the school offers. They understand clearly the importance of eating healthily, and of regular exercise, and make a good contribution to the school and village communities. The good curriculum, with its many extra activities, successfully enriches pupils' experiences. Good leadership and management are the driving force behind recent improvements. The leadership team is cohesive and effective, with a clear view of what needs to be done. Middle managers are committed to change, and make good use of data to evaluate performance. Staff development and the sharing of good practice through links with other schools are well established. Governors, while committed to the school, do not yet provide sufficient challenge to its leadership.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with skills that are slightly below the level expected. They are taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2 for part of the day. They are cared for well and benefit from a well-planned curriculum, which provides a variety of engaging experiences to broaden their understanding. They receive a high level of adult support and interaction, so that relationships are a strength, ensuring that children make good gains in their personal development. They relate confidently to each other. With rigorous assessment and planning, and effective teaching, children make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development and in their language and mathematical skills. Occasionally, activities do not fully challenge children who are more advanced. The outdoor area contributes significantly to children's independence. Children show good attitudes, confidently initiate activities and are increasingly able to sustain good levels of concentration.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able pupils, particularly those who are older, are consistently challenged to make even better progress.
- Develop the governors' role to provide greater challenge for the school's leadership.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 and standards have risen steadily over several years. The favourable staffing ratio contributes significantly to this good progress. Although currently not as high as in 2007, standards in Year 2 remain above average, particularly in reading. More pupils, especially some able pupils, leave the school before they reach Year 6. Many of those who enter after Year 2 have identified additional needs. While more erratic, achievement in Years 3 to 6 has improved steadily and is good overall. Current standards in Year 6, however, are below average. Although most pupils in this small group have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, their progress over time has been good. Standards in science, unsatisfactory at the last inspection, have improved significantly. The school recognises the need to support more able pupils as effectively as it does those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and is developing its provision for able and gifted pupils. Year 6 targets in English and mathematics were met in 2007, other than for the higher attainers in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because support is deployed carefully. Gypsy/Roma pupils make particularly good progress because they are settled and attend frequently.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Relationships are close and caring, ensuring that pupils feel secure and develop positive attitudes to learning. They are confident, friendly and enjoy school. They behave well and there have been no recent exclusions. Pupils conduct themselves safely, being well aware of both physical dangers and the less overt risks of, for example, the internet. They say that bullying is rare. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. The tightly knit school community supports social development well, while good links with the church promote children's spiritual development. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity through links with other countries is satisfactory. In general, attendance is satisfactory, although attendance of Gypsy/Roma pupils is much higher than is typically found. Pupils contribute well to the school community through the school council and many posts of responsibility. Although the local community is small, the school is central to village life and has a role in most events. Pupils develop good skills that contribute well to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching effectively meets the needs of a diverse group of pupils. Stability and continuity of staffing underpins teachers' very close knowledge of pupils, eliciting a trusting response. Teachers manage pupils well. They sustain a brisk pace in lessons, motivating pupils well. Teaching assistants successfully support the learning of individuals and small groups. Teachers

make good use of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils' interest, while group discussions enable pupils to think about their learning and develop speaking and listening skills. Independent self-evaluation of pupils' own work is promoted well. Marking is used well to comment on the effectiveness of pupils' learning, clearly indicating how they can improve. However, there is insufficient emphasis on improving handwriting and the layout and presentation of written work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The restructured curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is based imaginatively around welldeveloped themes. This makes for efficiencies in the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The Foundation Stage curriculum is tailored carefully to children's needs. The curriculum for older pupils meets current needs well. Opportunities for practical activities in mathematics and science have improved, thereby addressing a criticism from the last inspection. Information and communication technology skills are used regularly across the curriculum. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those beginning to learn English is focused sharply on what they need to learn to improve. Small group support is effective and helps pupils to make better progress. The school has started to support academically gifted pupils, such as able writers, through joint activities with linked schools and is planning to develop this provision further, so that the needs of these pupils are met fully. Provision for personal, social and health education is good, as seen in pupils' good attitudes to school. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are good, particularly in music and sport. Residential visits enhance pupils' personal development significantly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Adults promote pupils' health, safety and welfare well. The school has good links with external agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly in relation to behavioural issues and visual impairment. Teaching assistants ensure that pupils' welfare needs are met effectively and that children make good progress in their learning. Academic guidance is good. Staff know the pupils extremely well. Tracking systems enable them to monitor progress closely. Individual improvement targets motivate pupils successfully and most know their targets well. Teachers' marking reflects these targets and pupils' progress towards them, so that pupils understand how their work can be improved. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently evaluate their work and assess its quality against the expected standards. The school wishes to extend this good practice to achieve consistency of approach across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is strongly committed to developing the skills of her staff. There is a clear, shared vision for improving the school's work. Effective middle managers have contributed significantly to the establishment of robust assessment procedures and have been central to the good improvement achieved. Past weaknesses have been tackled successfully. Effective monitoring ensures that pupils make increasingly consistent progress. Core subject leaders make a strong impact on standards in their subjects. The analysis of data is used well to identify

underperformance and to guide staff deployment. Governors are supportive and are increasingly confident in evaluating the school's performance. However, they recognise the need to challenge school leaders more incisively, so that the pace of change is increased. Effective and accurate self-evaluation demonstrates a good understanding of current strengths and weaknesses. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 7 March 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of Nonington Church of England Primary School, Nonington, CT15 4LB Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. You are keen to meet visitors and we enjoyed talking to you. We could see that you are proud of your school and recognise that it is important to the village community. You look after each other very well. We felt that Nonington Church of England Primary is a good school. These are the main things that we found.
- You behave well in lessons and work hard.
- The teaching is good and you make good progress; those of you who find learning more difficult are supported well and make good progress.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for well, and you understand the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise.
- The curriculum is good and there are lots of interesting extra activities.
- Those in charge of the school make sure it runs very smoothly and know what to do to improve it still further. We are asking the school to make two changes so that you do even better.
- Use information about how well you are learning to give you tasks where you have to think hard, especially those of you who are older and who find work quite easy.
- Ensure that governors help and support the school leaders to make the school even better. You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future. Yours sincerely George Logan Lead inspector

7 March 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Nonington Church of England Primary School,
Nonington, CT15 4LB**

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- The teaching is good and you make good progress; those of you who find learning more difficult are supported well and make good progress.
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- Ensure that governors help and support the school leaders to make the school even better.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead inspector