

Bredgar Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118732
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313069
Inspection date	3 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	106
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	15
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Evans
Headteacher	David Whitehead
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bexon Lane Bredgar Sittingbourne ME9 8HB
Telephone number	01622 884359
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Attainment on entry to the school is very variable due to the very small number of pupils, but the trend is average. This small school operates a breakfast and after school club to which two children from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) attend. The school has achieved a Healthy Schools Award in 2007. The school has had an 80% turnover of staff within the last calendar year and, at the time of the inspection, staff had only been working together as a team since September. The newly appointed headteacher took up his post in April 2008.

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 quality of education for its pupils. Its strengths lie in the outstanding pastoral care and pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which result in exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils love coming to school, as demonstrated by their high attendance levels and punctuality.

'A friendly school with a community feeling,' said one of the overwhelmingly supportive parents of the school. 'Our children are exceptionally well looked after,' said another. Good care, guidance and support starts in the Reception class where, from average attainment on entry, children exceed the developmental stages in personal, social and emotional development and make good progress. The very safe learning environment, coupled with outstanding relationships, throughout the school contributes to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils are confident, happy, exceptionally aware of healthy life choices and make outstanding contribution to the school and local community.

Standards are broadly average throughout the school and are improving but this is not yet reflected in the end-of-year tests as staff have only been working together as a team since September. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, as demonstrated by the 2008 national tests. They are good in reading where standards are above those expected nationally both in Year 2 and Year 6. In writing, too few pupils reach the higher levels. Overall, all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress but, at times, more capable pupils spend too long consolidating learning in writing and mathematics instead of acquiring new knowledge. In lessons, use of information from good tracking procedures recently introduced by the new headteacher is not yet consistently embedded in practice. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a watchful eye is kept on their learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Nevertheless, some outstanding practice was observed in Years 3 to 6 where pupils fly through their work. The curriculum is innovative and exciting and there are a wide range of good extra-curricular activities that stimulate the pupils.

The success of pupils' personal development and well-being and the recent shoots of good progress are the result of the very hard work of the newly appointed headteacher. He is ably supported by the chair of the governing body in bringing about staff accountability. The chair shares fully the headteacher's vision for the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and governors check that the decisions are the right ones to improve the school's work. School self-evaluation is accurate. The recent rise in standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 tests, coupled with the good improvement since the last inspection, demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is satisfactory. Good provision is made for children's personal, social and emotional development enhanced by the after school club and by peer buddying where the older pupils look after the younger ones and set them a positive example of how to behave the 'Bredgar way'. A well structured and stimulating outdoor play environment, where children learn by using all their senses, contributes to the children's satisfactory achievement in all areas of learning. However, in their personal, social and emotional

development, achievement is good. Most of the children enter Year 1 attaining the expected standards of children of this age but too often children who find learning easy are not given sufficient opportunities to develop correct letter and number formation skills. Children are valued for their uniqueness and are well looked after by a caring staff. All welfare requirements are met. The leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory. A sound attempt has been made by staff to record children's interest levels, involvement and progress but this information is not used fully to plan the next steps of learning. Partnership with parents is good and parents are very pleased with the induction process both on entry to Reception and Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more capable children in the EYFS are given more opportunities to form their letters and numbers correctly.
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics of more capable pupils throughout the school by ensuring that information from assessment is used to plan the next steps of learning.
- Improve teaching throughout the school to that of the best.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

By the end of Year 6, pupils attain the expected levels in English, mathematics and science but too few attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics. In reading, standards are above those expected nationally and pupils' achievements are good. In 2007 national tests in Year 6, standards in science dipped and pupils' progress was not as good as it was in mathematics. The school took immediate action to rectify the low science results. As a result of thorough self-evaluation, improved teaching and learning, and implementation of tracking procedures, standards have risen and are now broadly average.

In Year 1, pupils do not find writing easy and work in exercise books is often left unfinished. This is because in Reception, too few opportunities are provided for those children who are ready for it to write, an area now being addressed. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 accelerate their learning because of very focused teaching and exemplary marking in Year 6. Throughout the school, the recent implementation of individuals' targets is paying dividends. Pupils know what they need to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers and make good gains in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good start made in the Reception class in personal, social and emotional development sets a solid foundation for pupils to build upon as they move up the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and pupils have excellent links with the church and local community. They take an active part in Remembrance Day and 'Bear Keepers' (Year 6 pupils who look after Reception children) undertake their duties exceptionally well. The achievement of the 'Healthy Schools Award' has resulted in pupils' exemplary knowledge of being healthy. Pupils explain the effect of poor diet on health and are aware of the dangers of

crossing busy roads. Pupils are confident and articulate ambassadors of the school. They make informed choices about developing the outside area. When asked what could be improved in aspects of school life, they eagerly ask for the school to be opened at weekends. 'We are one big happy family here, that is why we love coming to school,' said one member of the school council. 'There is no bullying and we work in a very safe environment,' added another member. The school is at the heart of the community and the local residents support all aspects of school life. This helps pupils feel cherished. Pupils' preparation for their next steps of education is satisfactory. Very good attendance, punctuality and outstanding behaviour and attitudes ensure that pupils get off to the best start in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The newly formed team of teachers is very open to learning from best practice. Teaching is satisfactory with good and outstanding features. Marking in the oldest class is exemplary but this is not consistent throughout the school as staff have only been working as a team for a very short time. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good because of the staff's expertise of matching the right level of task to challenge pupils' thinking. Learning is practical, lively and based on imaginative teaching with the recent introductions of role-play areas in each class. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning; they meticulously support any pupils who are struggling to learn. The outstanding relationships between pupils and staff are a contributory factor to the very orderly classrooms and steady pace in learning. What prevents teaching from being consistently good is the lack of use of assessment to plan the next steps of learning this is now being addressed through assessment procedures in the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is stimulating and involving for all pupils. Every effort is made to bring learning alive. For example, archaeological digs, residential sculptors, star gazing camp, quizzes, science week and sports activities are just a few things on offer which stimulate pupils' interest levels and develop outstanding attitudes to learning. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education which has a positive effect on developing their skills of emotional literacy. There is a good programme of out-of-school activities and after-school club which enables the school to offer a broader range of activities than normal. The school is working effectively to develop pupils' creativity in subjects but, on occasions, especially in science, more capable pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write up their experiments by synthesising information on what they have observed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care offered to pupils is outstanding. Children who are in the EYFS and who attend Breakfast Club are very well looked after by adults and by older pupils and this enables them to feel part of the school community. Due concern is given to pupils who may be vulnerable in some way. Systems to vet the adults working in school and to ensure rigorous child protection are robust. The welfare of pupils is taken very seriously, starting from children in the Reception class. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has good procedures in place to track

pupils' progress and writing books showing samples of their work are particularly valuable as a record. Challenging targets are set for pupils and they work hard to meet them. What prevents care, guidance and support from being outstanding, is the inconsistency of use of information from assessment to move pupils on in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The newly appointed headteacher has a very clear vision and educational direction for the school. He is ably supported by his deputy and the governors. Whilst systems to raise standards are secure, the new team of dedicated and motivated teachers have only been together for a very short time. Community cohesion is outstanding and the school is seen as the heart of the community. There is a very strong desire to do well and this is reflected in accurate self-evaluation and secure improvement planning. However, the success criteria on the school development plan are not sufficiently sharp enough to ensure good progress. The chair of governors leads the governing body very expertly. The refurbished building, alongside secure deployment of resources, has a positive impact on pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning. Performance management is rigorous and includes all support staff.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 learners' needs?	3
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

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

4 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bredgar Church of England Primary School, Bredgar, ME9 8HB

Thank you for helping us to undertake a successful inspection of your school. You are right, school is a good place to be and we are delighted that you have such outstanding relationships with your teachers. Your new headteacher is doing all he can to help you learn and we are pleased to know that you value him so highly.

You clearly enjoy learning and have outstanding attitudes, your behaviour is exemplary and you have excellent knowledge of healthy lifestyles. You are exceptionally well looked after by your teachers and your school is a safe place to be. Your designs for the playground are fantastic, you make an outstanding contribution to the community and you are excellent ambassadors of your school. You work well and your achievements are satisfactory, and your reading skills are good. Well done for knowing about healthy eating; I am sure that the new playground that you have designed will help even more in developing your fitness levels.

Your school offers you a satisfactory quality of education and it has many strengths but there are also some areas for development which you can help with. We have asked your teachers to help you learn at a faster rate by ensuring that those of you in the youngest class (Reception) have more opportunities to practise writing letters and numbers correctly, and that teachers use information from observations to plan tasks that will help you learn more quickly. This also applies to those of you further up the school; we have also asked your teachers to look more closely at your assessments and push you on in getting higher levels in writing and mathematics, especially those of you who find learning easy. We have also asked your teachers to learn best practice from one another. You can help by not rushing your work and making sure that it is of a high standard. Please thank your parents for returning so many questionnaires and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley Lead Inspector