

Bredhurst Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 118619 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 326859 |
| Inspection date | 27 January 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Peter Sudworth |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 116 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Julie Robson |
| Headteacher | Chris James |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 May 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | The Street Bredhurst Gillingham ME7 3JY |
| Telephone number | 01634 231271 |
| Fax number | 01634 231271 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspection team evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school with a particular focus on the following:

- whether boys were achieving as well as the girls
- provision in the mixed-age classes
- pupils' own knowledge of their progress.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, various staff and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and visits made to lessons. Work samples and a range of documents were examined. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail but the inspection team found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments given in its self-evaluation were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with four classes, all of mixed age. Year 1 pupils are distributed between the Reception and the Year 2 classes. Almost all the children are of a White British background. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils who have difficulties learning the basic skills is around the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) begin school in the September after their fourth birthday.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is oversubscribed and popular, and caringly and compassionately led by its headteacher, who sets a good tone for learning. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6. The overwhelming majority of parents are most supportive of the school and praise the approachability of staff and the swift resolution of any concerns. There is a strong community feel, including good church links. Parents praise the many opportunities for their children to develop socially through mixing with a wide range of ages both in school and in the organised events in the local community. Pupils entertain the elderly with productions in school and occasionally pay them visits. The pupils play a full part in traditional annual events, such as May Day, which bring the whole community together. They arrange and man the stalls, which supports their economic understanding and social skills very well. The atmosphere in school is disciplined and fosters hard work and enthusiasm. The staff's concern for the pupils' well-being is exemplary. One parent reported to inspectors, 'The school is delightful, the teachers are brilliant. Our daughter receives positive and kind attention from the staff.'

The children achieve well in the EYFS and this provides a good basis for later learning. However, the progress of Year 1 pupils in the mixed-age classes is not as swift, especially in spelling and in their ability to construct sentences when they write. This is because the teaching of these aspects does not build on the pupils' attainment at the end of the Reception age securely enough. Consequently, pupils miss out some developmental stages in these areas of English, which affects their progress. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 2, results in key areas of learning are usually above the national average. Over time, mathematics has been the strongest subject in Year 2 because of the good match of work to pupils' abilities. Pupils go on to make good all-round progress in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 to reach well above average standards in national tests. However, their spelling is still a weaker aspect of their work, and handwriting and presentation skills are not as good as they could be. For example, they do not consistently use rulers to draw tables or always label graphs accurately in science. Boys and girls make equally good rates of progress.

Staff manage pupils well. They create attractive learning environments. These support pupils' learning and place value on the work they produce. Attractive, well-designed and well-constructed 'stick puppets' adorned the walls in the Years 5 and 6 class, stimulated by a theatre visit to see *The Lion King*. Staff use modern technology effectively to present lessons visually, which helps to keep the pupils' concentration. Teachers deploy resources well in mathematics lessons to assist pupils' understanding. Effective use is made of investigation in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, which pupils enjoy. However, these particular activities are sometimes over-challenging for the pupils' capabilities and then they do not benefit fully from the experiences.

Pupils demonstrate good working attitudes. Most enjoy school. They feel secure and apply their good knowledge of safe and healthy living, for example eating vegetables and fruit. Their behaviour is excellent. Very good quality assemblies make a very significant contribution to pupils' very strong sense of spiritual development. Pupils acquire an excellent understanding of being a member of different communities through regular practical help for others, both locally and around the world, and through studies of specific countries.

The curriculum is developing well as the school strives to make it even more interesting and creative for pupils. Visitors from the fire and police services support pupils' understanding of

keeping safe. Visits to places of worship of different faiths support their very strong sense of respect for others. Special themed curriculum weeks, such as 'carnivals', add to the variety of work and help to retain pupils' interest in learning. Provision for French is well established and supports the pupils' excellent cultural development.

The governing body is effective and challenges and questions. It has a good range of expertise, for example in finance and health and safety. The governing body keeps abreast of school developments and specific governors keep a track of school improvements. The self-review committee helps particular members to keep involved with curriculum development and standards. The school's provision for community cohesion is excellent. Pupils' outstanding contributions to the school and local community are supported fully by very good curriculum experiences and assemblies that help them to respect and learn about others in today's multicultural society.

A key to the good teaching in the school, which leads to the pupils' good progress, is the use of continuous monitoring procedures that retain a clear focus on moving forward. Senior staff, for example, monitor lessons frequently and map out strengths and areas for development in teaching, which keeps staff focused on achieving even higher quality. Teachers also monitor all pupils' progress regularly to check if they are making at least expected rates of progress. Booster programmes are quickly set up to support pupils who are not making sufficient progress. Initiatives on the well- devised school improvement plan are kept at the forefront of the staff's thinking when professional development is planned and staff meetings are held. The school's vision is clear and is also interpreted for children in language that they can understand so that they too can be part of the vision.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. It is marked carefully against the learning intentions. Pupils know very well what they need to do to improve their English work, but this is less well developed in mathematics. Pupils' knowledge of how they can assess their own work is not yet securely developed. Nevertheless, the school sets highly challenging targets for end of Year 6 tests in English, mathematics and science and is very successful in meeting them.

The school has made good progress in developing the EYFS since the last inspection and in improving its assessment systems across the school. These have led to sustained improvement. The commitment of staff in wanting to improve even further is apparent. The school clearly demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

On entry, the children's skills and knowledge are at levels expected for their age. The children make good progress in all areas of their learning under the good teaching and leadership of the EYFS in an attractive learning environment. Most children reach, and a good proportion exceed, the expectations for the end of the Reception year. The outside learning environment is small, but the staff do their best with the facilities available. The children's personal development and the care for their well-being are excellent. They make particularly good progress in speaking and listening and reading, such as in learning letter sounds. Such activities support their early writing skills effectively. The many worthwhile practical activities develop the children's thinking and independence well and support their mathematical development effectively. A group of able children searched for coins in the sand tray to add amounts to make 10p. Assessment is good. The children's progress is tracked rigorously. Assessments are undertaken regularly and used to evaluate progress and provision. There is a good balance of

self-chosen tasks and those that staff direct. The staff form an effective team and work closely together.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that staff build more successfully on the children's writing skills acquired in the EYFS when pupils progress into Year 1.
- Improve pupils' spelling skills and the standards of handwriting and presentation by Year 6.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| 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 | 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 |

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Bredhurst C of E VC Primary School, Gillingham ME7 3JY

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when we visited your school. Your parents are really happy that you attend Bredhurst and we can understand why. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. You attend a good school and the staff take exceptionally good care of you and make your lessons interesting. Your behaviour is outstanding. You have an excellent understanding of what it means to be a member of a community. We were very interested to learn about your involvement in the different village events and your support for people in the world who are less fortunate.

You make good progress and reach standards above those that are usual for your age. We were interested to learn that you can make suggestions to the staff about the school through the school council. Your climbing apparatus was a really good suggestion and it gives you lots of fun.

The staff are really keen to go on improving the school with your best interests at heart. There are two things that the staff could do to help you make even better progress. We found that the Year 1 pupils' progress in writing could be better. We also found that spelling and presentation of work in your exercise books, including handwriting, could be better by Year 6. We have asked the staff to give attention to these matters.

Thank you once again for your help and for talking to us about your school. We really enjoyed meeting you. We would like to wish you all the very best for the future. If you continue to work as hard as you do, we are sure you will continue to do well.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector