

Icklesham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114527
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338391
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Jacque Buttriss

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 of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Kirton
Headteacher	Pauline Higgs
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Five lessons were observed and all the class teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the self-evaluation form, the school development plan, policies, records of pupils' progress and 56 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the levels of children's skills when they first start school and their attainment at the end of their Reception Year in order to establish their progress and to judge the starting points for their next stage of learning
- the current attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics throughout the school and whether more able pupils are sufficiently challenged.
- what the school is doing to adapt teaching and the curriculum to the needs of mixed-age classes in its focus areas of writing and mathematics
- recent and current absence figures to judge whether attendance is now satisfactory, as indicated in the self-evaluation form.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school in a rural area. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Mobility is higher than in most schools. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or whose first language is not English. A small proportion of pupils have free school meals. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The school has gained many awards, including the Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school raised the funding to build the privately run children's centre on the school site. This provides both a breakfast club and after-school care.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and improving school. It has several outstanding features. Principal of these is the excellent care, guidance and support given to pupils of all ages and abilities. As a school council member said, 'The teachers are always kind and encourage us.' Relationships are excellent throughout the school which supports a strong ethos of care and respect. Safeguarding procedures are good, with excellent use of closed-circuit television to ensure security of access. Parents and pupils are unanimous that the school keeps everyone safe.

The school's vision is ABC 'Aspire, Believe and Care'. Everyone shares this vision and it shows. Pupils work hard and make good progress, so that they achieve above average standards by the time they are ready to leave the school. Pupils are friendly, courteous, confident and articulate. They demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning and to all the exciting activities the school provides to enrich the curriculum. Behaviour is outstanding. 'No one ever gets bullied,' said one pupil, with immediate agreement from the rest of her group. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and are particularly proactive in this. For example, they helped devise new lunch menus 'with lots of healthy choices', as one pupil put it. They especially enjoy their three hours of physical education each week and use of the popular school swimming pool during the summer months.

'I think our teachers are really good because we've all turned out very clever, so they must have taught us well,' said one Year 6 pupil. Inspectors agree that the teaching is good overall. Some teachers have high expectations and pace their lessons well so that pupils make great strides with their learning. However, in the middle classes, the pace sometimes drops, with the result that progress slows. In these lessons, there is not always sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. Teachers' marking of pupils' literacy is highly constructive and helps them to know how to improve their work. However, this is not always the case in mathematics. The curriculum is relevant and motivating. Pupils say 'school is very exciting' and 'lessons are fun'.

The school is well led by a very dedicated and caring headteacher, 'who provides stability, care and professionalism at all times', as one parent put it. Another commented: 'She is constantly moving the school forward and introducing new projects involving all ' pupils, parents and members of the community.' There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection, such as the whole-school focus on developing writing skills, which has led to higher levels being attained in writing. The self-evaluation form is accurate in its judgements. The school's capacity to make further sustained improvements is good.

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Parents are full of praise for the school, its leaders and its staff. 'I travel a great distance for my child to attend this school,' said one parent. Another succinctly summarised the views of many with the comment: 'We love this school.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide greater challenge for more able pupils in each of the middle classes, so that work set more fully matches their needs and enables them to achieve as highly as they can.
- Build on the good and informative marking of pupils' work in English to help improve teachers' marking of mathematics, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work in this subject.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children join the school at the beginning of their Reception Year with skills below expectations for their age. Pupils make good progress across the school. This progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6, so that by the time they are ready to move on to the secondary school, they are attaining above average levels. The few more able pupils achieve well above average in the Reception and Year 1 class and very highly in the top class. However, they are not always sufficiently challenged in the middle years, where their progress sometimes slows. As a result of the excellent support they receive, vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs often achieve as well as their peers. As a result of a big focus on improving writing skills through the school, there are now many excellent examples to be seen of expressive writing.

Pupils evidently enjoy coming to school and are well-motivated learners. My child is very happy, commented several parents. I like everything about school It s cool, said a pupil. Attendance has improved and is broadly average. Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. There have been no exclusions for the past three years and pupils are very caring of each other. Older pupils take on a lot of responsibilities for different aspects of school life and they have a strong voice on the school council. Several older pupils enjoy their roles of mentors or buddies to pupils in younger classes and Year 6 pupils are trained mediators in cases of friendship disputes on the playground. In all of these ways, they contribute outstandingly well to the school community. They also participate very actively in local community activities, for example selling the produce they grow in the school vegetable gardens at the weekly market. Pupils gain a wide variety of skills, as their Quality Mark indicates. This prepares them well for the next stages in their learning. Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, for example in their visits to places of worship, such as a mosque in Neasden, and in cultural exchanges with schools in France and Gambia.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are confident that lessons are interesting and the teachers are good at explaining things, as one put it. Parents comment on the calm and creative learning environment. Good teaching in this school is characterised by well-planned lessons in which teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and develop learning at a good pace. For example, during a lesson on constructing geometric shapes and measuring angles, Years 5 and 6 pupils were set a series of motivating tasks at five different levels of difficulty. In particular, the most able thoroughly enjoyed their investigation of polygons with different numbers of sides, swiftly noticing a pattern between the totals of angles in each. However, this is not yet consistent across all classes. There are still a few lessons where there is less challenge for the more able pupils. This means that progress is not always as rapid as it could be.

Assessment has improved considerably since the last inspection and all pupils have individual learning targets which are regularly reviewed. They know their targets and say this helps them improve. Teachers' marking is often good and is very constructive in some classes' literacy books. However, pupils' mathematics work is marked for accuracy, rather than with suggestions for how to improve their skills.

As one parent commented, 'The school is a happy community with dedicated staff who strive to give the children a rich curriculum with plenty of direct experience.' Pupils certainly appreciate the many stimulating opportunities they have to develop their learning in a fun and exciting way. The curriculum has developed more creatively since the last inspection, for example incorporating gardening and daily swimming lessons in the summer term. There is good enrichment from a variety of visits, visitors

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and the very well attended after-school activities, including several sports clubs. During the inspection, no lessons were seen in which classroom computers were used by pupils for their learning, although some use was made of computers in the information and communication technology suite.

There is excellent provision for the care, guidance and support of all pupils. Well-trained teaching assistants and excellent links with outside professionals ensure optimum support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Very good induction and transition arrangements help pupils settle in happily when they arrive at the school and prepare them well for their next schools. There is excellent personal, social and health education throughout the school. Pupils value the care of staff who know them all and their individual needs very well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Inspectors agree with the parent who wrote: The school is well led by an exceptional headteacher with a great team supporting her. The staff work very well together and share the headteacher's vision and ambition for the school. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher, staff and governors is very thorough and has made a significant contribution towards maintaining the drive for school improvement. There is regular tracking of pupils' progress, and the school makes analysis of this data to identify and provide for pupils who may need additional support. However, attainment targets are not sufficiently challenging to raise some teachers' expectations of what pupils can do.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is excellent. This is reflected in the unanimously positive responses to the majority of questions on the parental questionnaire. The school has created some outstanding partnerships with other schools and organisations to promote pupils' learning and well-being. For example, there is an excellent link with a nearby independent school which provides opportunities for older pupils to attend additional classes in classics and French. There is excellent equality of opportunity and a highly inclusive ethos amongst both staff and pupils, which ensures that any rare incidence of discrimination is very well tackled.

Community cohesion is good overall. There are particular strengths in both school and global cohesion. For example, the link that has been forged with a school in Gambia is enabling staff and pupils to correspond with each other, describing their daily lives and

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school experiences. This has been eye-opening for Icklesham pupils. As one Year 6 pupil put it, You expect them to be like us, but theyre not. Another pupil added They have a much harder life than us. Their awareness of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom is less well developed. The school has suitable plans to address this by developing links with one or more schools in contrasting locations in this country.

The dedicated and well-informed governors give strong support to the school. They undertake their roles and responsibilities enthusiastically and challenge the school effectively to hold it to account. Safeguarding procedures are fully in place and provide good measures to ensure the safety and security of everyone in the school. Resources are well deployed to achieve good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage children are all in the Reception class, together with the six youngest Year 1 pupils. Children are helped to settle in quickly and gain confidence. Both year groups enjoy a very varied and exciting curriculum across all areas of learning. Indeed, as one parent put it, Icklesham School provides a great start for all children, whatever their needs. Good teaching ensures that all Reception and Year 1 children in this class are fully challenged.

Children join the school with skills below age-related expectations. They make good progress throughout the Reception Year to reach average levels by the time they are ready to join Year 1. The classroom is stimulating and lively, with a wide variety of themed learning activities, for example linked to the beans they are growing. There is a

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good outside area with an all-weather canopy and children make good use of the outside learning activities provided for them. This area is being developed and it currently lacks a full range of resources across all the areas of learning, especially some larger items such as climbing and construction equipment.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was an unusually high return of questionnaires, with more than half of parents and carers responding and an overwhelming majority of completely positive support. There were hardly any negative responses and none with the same concern. Typical comments included: We are very lucky to have our daughter at this school and We are very happy with the school and our child s progress. Several parents praised the high levels of the school s engagement with them. For example, one parent wrote: The teachers and headteacher all communicate particularly well with parents, which creates a sense of community with everyone working together for the interest of their children and the school itself.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Icklesham Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 109 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	70	15	27	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	44	79	11	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	61	22	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	52	26	46	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	66	19	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	63	21	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	74	14	25	2	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	43	27	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	52	26	47	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	59	20	36	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	61	20	36	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	73	16	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	64	18	32	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Icklesham C of E Primary School, Winchelsea TN36 4BX

Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We very much enjoyed talking with you. Yours is a good and improving school that cares for you exceptionally well.

These are the things that we especially like about your school:

- You all very much enjoy your learning and work hard. You make good progress and achieve well. Keep it up!
- You have an excellent awareness of how to be healthy. You enjoy all the extra sports activities and have helped the school to develop healthy lunch choices.
- The staff and governors keep you all very safe.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you tell us that nobody ever gets bullied in your school. Well done!
- The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for you all.
- Relationships are excellent throughout your school and you respect and look after each other exceptionally well.
- Some of your writing is excellent and very enjoyable to read.
- Most of you know your learning targets well and make good use of them to improve your work.
- Your school communicates very well with your parents and carers.
- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

These are the things your school could do to improve:

- Teachers in the middle classes could set more challenging activities for those of you who are fast learners to help you achieve as highly as you can.
- Teachers already mark your literacy books with helpful suggestions about how to improve your work. We have asked them to use the same approach when marking your mathematics books so that you have a clearer idea of how to improve in this subject.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard and enjoy your lessons. I would like to wish you all lots of success in your future learning.

Yours sincerely

Jacquie Buttriss

Lead Inspector

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