

Hartlip Endowed Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	118734
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	379673
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	Margaret Coussins

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 of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Addicott
Headteacher	Lesley Lawson
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2007
School address	The Street Hartlip Sittingbourne ME9 7TL
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed seven lessons and five teachers as well as spending shorter sessions in each class, hearing children read and looking at their work. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, all class teachers, members of the governing body and pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, pupils' progress records and the safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires from 59 parents and carers were received and analysed along with those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Hartlip is smaller than the average sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at 'school action' level is above average, while the proportion of those who are supported at 'school action plus' or by a statement of special educational needs is average. Provision is made for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The school meets the current floor standard. The school has Healthy Schools Status

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils are great ambassadors for their school. They are confident, friendly and polite, work hard and have excellent attitudes to learning and their school, of which they are very proud. This is reflected in consistently above average attendance.
- Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above average and the school is currently working to ensure that attainment in writing improves to match that in reading.
- Lessons are consistently well planned to effectively meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in each class. Teaching inspires and motivates pupils who develop good independent and reflective learning skills. A broad, balanced and creative curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school provides a secure, safe environment for learning, pupils are well cared for and good behaviour has a very positive impact on learning.
- There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff and the school knows its pupils very well. Individual progress is carefully tracked and teachers know where pupils are and the next steps in their learning. There is, however, a lack of an overview of the progress of different groups across the school to provide information to leaders and governors.
- Leaders, including the governing body, share high aspirations for the school's future. School improvement planning is clearly focused on the right priorities; however, the success criteria are not sharply enough focused on measurable outcomes to enable senior leaders and governors to evaluate the impact.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing to more closely match that in reading by:
 - embedding the agreed approach to writing so it is consistently applied across the school
 - using pupils' knowledge as good readers to influence the choices they make in their writing
 - continuing to develop pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling while maintaining an enthusiasm and enjoyment of writing.
- Ensure that there is a strategic overview of the ongoing progress of different groups of pupils and include sharper, measurable success criteria in school improvement plans, to enable more effective evaluation of school improvement by leaders.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills at the expected level for their age. Pupils, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well from their starting points. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English and mathematics. In English, pupils' attainment in reading is stronger than in writing. All responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire confirmed inspection evidence that pupils make good progress.

In the Reception year, children make good progress and reach the required goals for learning by the time they move into Year 1. Children develop a good sense of story and can retell their favourite stories such as Jack and the Beanstalk. Their knowledge of phonics (linking sounds and letters) is good. They are given good opportunities to apply their early writing skills and can write simple sentences with full stops and capital letters, such as 'Come to my party at the castle at 10 o'clock.' Children can add and subtract and use mathematical skills to record number problems such as knowing how many more are needed to add to 2 to make 10.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above average. Younger pupils regularly practise 'high frequency' words at home and school and are enthused by their parents' and carers' support. One girl said that her favourite story 'is about a princess that my mum wrote, I think it might be about me!' By Year 2, competent, fluent readers are clearly reading to make sense as well as using phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. By Year 6, pupils read confidently and with enjoyment. They develop good comprehension skills and are able to read between the lines to infer and deduce meaning and empathise with characters. They have a good knowledge of a wide range of authors and can express preferences for different styles of writing and make good use of their reading skills for research in a range of subjects.

The recently agreed approach to teaching writing means that pupils are enjoying writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences in different genres, in tandem with having regular opportunities to develop and practise basic skills. The impact on the quality of writing is becoming evident although the approaches are not yet fully embedded. Descriptive writing makes good use of metaphor, simile and personification; for example, 'I can hear the wind whistling its gloomy song', and 'The mud is submerging the boats, washing over the edge like a group of pirates invading a ship'. Reading, writing and mathematical skills are used well across the curriculum. As part of a topic on light, pupils were able to draw on their good knowledge of angles and measurement to make periscopes, and their writing skills to record their evaluation of what went well and how they could improve. Pupils' excellent attitudes to school, their determination and perseverance and their maturity in collaboration and negotiation support their learning very well.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and pupils are unanimous in their view that teaching is good. This is confirmed by inspection findings. Pupils describe their lessons as fun and interesting and feel they are supported to do as well as they can so they work hard and want to do their best. Work is generally pitched at the right level to provide appropriate challenges for all abilities so that all pupils learn at a good pace, demonstrated well when tackling challenging work on fractions and decimals in Years 5 and 6. Teaching and the curriculum effectively motivate and inspire pupils and promote a good work ethic, independent learning skills and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teaching assistants provide good support for the groups and individuals they work with. They are effective in ensuring that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others through well-targeted support and activities that meet their learning needs well. Teachers' good subject knowledge and skilled questioning extend the depth and range of learning and ensure that pupils are not just clear about what they are learning, but for what purpose. A group of pupils working on improving their descriptive writing agreed when one said that, 'It's important to grab your readers' interest and keep them wanting to read on.'

Regular marking and feedback generally give pupils clear pointers on how to improve their work and encourage them to evaluate their own progress towards meeting their targets. On occasion, however, marking is positive about what pupils have achieved but does not give clear guidance to move their learning on. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a good balance of activities that are directed by adults and those where children can make their own choices. The classroom and outdoor area provide stimulating learning environments to promote progress in all areas of learning. There is a good focus on children's early reading, writing and number skills that are promoted well, for example, in the castle role-play area.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers all agree that the school keeps children safe and that behaviour in the school is good. These views agree with inspection findings. Most pupils, in their questionnaire, also said they feel safe in school. A few felt that behaviour was good only sometimes, but behaviour around the school and in lessons during the inspection was good with pupils showing care, respect and kindness towards each other and adults. School records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. Pupils are aware that there are one or two pupils who find it hard to behave as well as others but show great maturity and acceptance of their needs and say that teachers never let any inappropriate behaviour stop them learning. The behaviour policies are well established and promote high expectations which pupils meet. As a result they manage their own behaviour with little intervention from adults and say that if there is the occasional falling out, they sort it out themselves. Excellent relationships and the atmosphere and ethos of the school make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand what constitutes bullying in all its forms including cyber bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They are confident that there is none in the school but are equally confident that teachers would deal with any incidents should they occur.

Leadership and management

A notable feature of the school is the strong teamwork and the shared drive to tailor the provision to provide the best possible learning experiences for each child in this small school community. As a consequence, equality of opportunity is promoted well and the school ensures that pupils learn in a safe, secure and supportive environment without fear of discrimination. Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. All parents and carers rightly feel that the school takes good care of their children.

Leadership capacity is developed well with all staff, including members of the governing body, taking a key role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school with shared high expectations and ambition. Tracking systems and staff discussions provide clear and detailed information about the progress of individual pupils. However, there is a lack of a clear, strategic overview of the progress made by different groups of pupils.

Accurate and thorough self-assessment informs priorities for development and effective action is taken, including a strong focus on professional development, resulting in, for example, improved outcomes in mathematics, particularly the increase in the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5. School improvement planning is clearly focused on the right priorities but the success criteria are not sharply enough focused on measurable outcomes to enable senior leaders and governors to evaluate the impact. The school has consolidated previous good performance demonstrating a good capacity for further improvement.

The well-planned curriculum is effective because there is a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills as well as the promotion of spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development. There is, however, a good emphasis on other aspects. The arts have a high profile in the school; for example, all pupils in Years 5 and 6 play at least one musical instrument. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported in their learning, including where appropriate through good links with external agencies, enabling them to learn alongside their peers but also through additional support where necessary. Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of school life and the school engages them well, providing regular communication on their children's progress and school events.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



10 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Hartlip Endowed Church of England Primary School,
Sittingbourne, ME9 7TL**

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking to you and your teachers and looking at the work you have been doing. You are very polite, friendly and interesting to talk to and I appreciated the way you helped me find out about your school. You are right to enjoy coming to Hartlip because I agree with you that it is a good school. These are the things that your school does particularly well.

- You are doing well in your mathematics and English and you are beginning to make better progress in your writing than previously.
- The very positive attitudes you have to learning and your determination to succeed are two of the main reasons why you are doing well, including those of you who find learning harder than others.
- Although in your questionnaires you were not all very sure about this, your behaviour is good. You learn together well and support and care for each other.
- You think teaching is good in your school and I agree. Teachers plan interesting lessons to help you learn well and motivate you and give you work that is just right for each one of you.

Although the school is doing well there are still things it can improve. I have asked the governors and headteacher to keep a better check on how well different groups of you are making progress and to make sure that they know exactly how well the school is doing. I have asked your teachers to help you to be as good writers as you are readers by:

- making sure that the way they have agreed to develop your writing is used by everyone
- helping you to use your knowledge as good readers to influence the choices you make in your writing
- continuing to develop your skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling but making sure that you carry on enjoying writing for lots of different reasons.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Coussins
Lead inspector

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