

# Little Horsted Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114557
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311645
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Browning

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lisa Crosby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 January 2005
<b>School address</b>	Little Horsted Uckfield TN22 5TS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01825 750380
<b>Fax number</b>	01825 750380

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially that of the more able pupils • pupils' attitudes and enjoyment for learning • the role of subject leaders. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of documentation and an analysis of parents' views. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This small school takes most of its pupils from the local community, although some travel from further afield. Most pupils are White British and a few come from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than that found nationally. In recognition of its work, the school has gained a Basic Quality Skills Mark, an Arts Mark, the silver Healthy Schools award and an ICT Mark for its use of information and communication technology.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school that has some outstanding features. Good and effective leadership and management have brought about improvements in the learning environment, teaching and the curriculum. As a result, pupils' achievement is good across the school and is improving, especially in mathematics and science. Pupils are nurtured in this very happy and caring school. Consequently, their attitudes, behaviour and their personal development are exemplary. The good curriculum places a high priority on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology, and this prepares them well for their future. At the same time, the school is developing a more creative curriculum, with links between subjects to make learning more exciting and relevant. Pupils swim, learn German and visit places of educational interest. A good emphasis is given to the arts and sports, and some high quality work is on display. The numerous enrichment opportunities, from breakfast club to multi-cultural and enterprise days, provide pupils with a real enjoyment for learning. Their excellent attendance and their views reflect this. As one commented, 'there's very little we would change'.

Pupils' show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They can explain why fizzy drinks and unhealthy snacks should be avoided. Older pupils know how to respond to emergencies and younger ones take part in road safety training. Through a link with a school in West Africa, they correspond with letters and pictures of life in East Sussex. They happily take up responsibilities as play buddies, class and school councillors. They have been involved in the new playground markings, water fountains and recycling, and are planning an environmental wildlife area. Pupils show an acute awareness of cultural diversity, are clearly very sociable, know right from wrong and demonstrate a good spiritual awareness.

Pupils make good progress from their average starting points because teaching is good. Pupils build on their good skills in Years 1 to 6 and, by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average and are on track to rise this year. More able pupils achieve well because the work set is suitably challenging. Teachers make learning interesting, and the positive relationships throughout the school are a real strength. Across the school, standards are improving in English, though standards in writing are not as high as in reading. Pupils generally write well in their literacy lessons and books but they do not readily transfer such good writing skills in other subjects. Writing is very varied in its quality and content in other subjects. With this in mind, a whole-school focus on writing has been planned for next year. Standards in science are well above average and pupils' knowledge and understanding reflect the strong teaching and many practical learning opportunities that enthuse pupils. One pupil, reflecting a typical view, commented, 'Science is just great.'

Pupils are extremely well cared for and kept very safe. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified quickly and supported, enabling them to achieve well. The more able pupils are also encouraged to join in extension activities, both in and out of school hours. Rigorous checking systems help the school to know how well pupils are achieving and when needed this triggers support early on. Except for Years 5 and 6, pupils are not as involved as they could be in checking their own progress towards their set targets. At present, staff do not consistently check that pupils are always involved and really understand what they need to do to achieve their very best. The strong leadership by the headteacher has been crucial in bringing about the improvements made in the buildings, resources and curriculum. Statistical data is thoroughly analysed. Monitoring and evaluation systems are used well to find any weaknesses or concerns and effective action is taken to tackle them. For instance, in mathematics, standards fell last

year. Though this partly reflected the specific nature of the cohort, the school quickly remedied the situation. Good intervention and support, improved resources and a focus on raising girls' confidence in mathematics have resulted in standards set to exceed all expectations. Year 6 girls spoke proudly of their presentation on mathematics teaching to parents. The school is introducing the new numeracy strategy successfully and is about to embark on the literacy strategy.

Senior leaders form a strong team and they are ably supported by informed middle managers, including subject leaders. Their monitoring work contributes well to the improving standards and curriculum. Governors are supportive, proactive and challenge the school well. In all, this is a school that has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and all staff work as one to continue to improve the school. Challenging targets are met and the school's track record shows that it is well placed to further improve. Excellent links and consultation with parents and the community help secure a 'family atmosphere'. Almost all parents are positive about the school's work and links with external agencies and parents are strong. One parent expressed the views of many in commenting that, 'children achieve a lot here both academically and socially.'

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children have a good start in Reception. On joining, children have skills that meet typical expectations for their age. By the time children start Year 1, most exceed the expected standards for their age. Good teaching underpins their good achievement and enjoyment for learning. Through a well-balanced range of exciting activities directed by the teacher and chosen by children, they become confident independent learners. Wearing waterproofs on a pretend fishing trip, they caught fish and were thrilled when they handled real fish and looked at them through magnifying glasses. This sparked off lots of talk about 'fish mouths and their smelly slippery scales'. Robust systems are used to check children's progress and, because teachers know the children so well, any support is well matched to individual needs. Parents rightly comment on the good care, support and guidance given. The school is currently improving and extending its environment so that learning can be even more exciting.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Build on the opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- Involve pupils more in checking their own progress against targets set, and ensure that teachers consistently check that pupils know what they need to do to achieve their best.

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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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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 disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Horsted C of E Primary School, Uckfield TN22 5TS

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. You are very polite and friendly and extremely well behaved. I enjoyed talking with you and agree that your school is good and it does so much to help you to do well.

Some of the things I found out about your school:

- You are very happy at school and really enjoy it because adults do so much to make learning fun, especially for the younger ones.
- You work well in lessons, and your achievement as you move up through the school is good. This helps you to reach above average standards.
- You have an exciting curriculum and teaching is good.
- Your personal development is excellent and you are confident, polite and very responsible. You told me how proud you were to be buddies and councillors.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives and enjoy all the numerous sporting activities offered.
- All the adults are very kind and caring and they really look after you well.
- Your school is well led and managed and the headteacher and other staff are working hard together to make sure it keeps on improving.
- Almost all of your parents are very pleased that you are at Little Horsted.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- Help you improve your writing even more by ensuring that you have lots of opportunities to write well in different subjects.
- Involve all of you in checking how well you are getting on against your targets and help you to understand how to do even better.

You can help, too, by writing as well as you can in every subject. Also, you can check whether or not you are meeting your targets and ask teachers what you need to do to improve further.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning Lead inspector