

Borden Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118731
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313068
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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 on roll	119
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Woodland
Headteacher	Allan Ginman
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	School Lane Borden Sittingbourne ME9 8JS
Telephone number	01795 472593
Fax number	01795 472593

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The progress children make in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, especially the more capable pupils.
- The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 to check if high standards were being maintained for eleven-year-olds.
- The impact of leadership and management, particularly through school initiatives for improving standards. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, reviewing the assessment data the school uses to track the pupils' progress, and analysis of pupils' work. 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 primary school serves the local parish as well as the surrounding area. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although this includes a higher proportion with a statement of special educational needs than found in most schools. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly at the level expected but there is a wide range. The school holds Healthy Schools and Gold Travel Plan awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school is outstanding. Parents are correct in believing that their children receive an excellent all-round education and, as one rightly observed, 'Borden School is a great small school that has very high standards.' The outstanding quality of relationships and the caring environment help all pupils to grow in confidence and self-worth. Their academic performance and personal development, including their behaviour, are excellent. The vibrant curriculum also enables pupils to develop their creative, practical and sporting abilities to high levels. The talented and greatly committed staff have high expectations of pupils and prepare them extremely well for learning and adult life.

Achievement is outstanding and standards are exceptionally high. The Foundation Stage gives children an excellent start and, by the end of Reception, they have attained or exceeded the standards expected for their age. By Year 2, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in reading and writing and well above average standards in mathematics. In recent years, there has been an improvement in standards in Reception and Years 1 and 2 because of the strong focus on making sure teaching is consistently good, and better systems for checking pupils' progress. This has accelerated the achievement of more capable pupils. The current Year 6 pupils reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science, and these outcomes have been consistent for the past few years. By Year 6, pupils are avid readers and very proficient writers and mathematicians. They make excellent progress in developing their scientific experimental skills and use mathematics particularly well for investigative work. Pupils make very good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) because the school has stepped up provision enormously since the last inspection. At the heart of the school's success is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Senior staff and subject leaders have been empowered to play a full part in raising achievement, and the headteacher has created a climate where staff have high expectations of their pupils. These are met, in part, because teachers are given strong professional development opportunities so their subject skills are kept up to date. The rigorous focus on checking teaching and assessing pupils' performance has also contributed to rising standards. Self-evaluation systems are extremely strong and enable the school to know how well it is performing. Governors are very well led by a knowledgeable chair, and play key roles in helping to steer the school, despite a significant number of new governors still receiving training.

Consistently high quality teaching is the major reason why pupils' progress is so good. Staff capture pupils' interest and promote a wide range of skills, including evaluative, analytical and creative thinking. They skilfully match work to pupils' prior attainment, making sure gifted and talented pupils are stretched by setting harder work. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are extremely well supported, make excellent progress and, by the time they leave, very nearly all reach the nationally expected standards. Support staff make a valuable contribution to this. The performance of all pupils is carefully evaluated and discussed regularly by staff. Pupils are set demanding targets and provision is carefully directed at ensuring they are met and, more often, exceeded.

Excellent links with the community, including the church, help to promote pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel very safe and are very caring about each other and their environment. They are well prepared for life in a multicultural society because they learn to respect people from different backgrounds and faiths. The thriving school council is a very good vehicle for enabling pupils to contribute to whole-school decision making.

Pupils also contribute regularly to local events and raise money for charities. Pupils develop very good teamwork, decision making and problem solving skills, and benefit from a wide range of visitors who enlighten them about the world of work. However, there are limited opportunities for them to develop their enterprise awareness and skills. The school vigorously promotes good attendance.

The rich curriculum covers all subjects very well and is complemented by a very good range of outdoor activities. It enables pupils to excel not only in English and mathematics but also in the arts and science. Links between subjects are well made and lead to experiences of a high quality in art, design and technology and science. The pupils reveal their enjoyment of many subjects, including the wealth of opportunities for extra-curricular activities, sport and trips. They develop a superb understanding of how regular exercise and a healthy diet helps their bodies grow strong. Close links with secondary and other schools enhance pupils' learning and ease the transfer from small to larger schools at the end of Year 6. The accommodation has been improved substantially since the last inspection because governors have created a budget that effectively supports the implementation of a well-conceived improvement plan. However, despite excellent planning, the school still awaits funding to provide indoor toilets for some of its older pupils. The rate of improvement has been rapid in the last few years and this shows the school has an excellent capacity to maintain its momentum.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents appreciate the welcoming ethos and exceptional care their children receive. There are excellent partnerships with parents and the playgroup. Children settle quickly and come to love school because of many interesting and worthwhile learning activities. There is a good balance for children to learn through purposeful play and the direct teaching of basic skills through adult led sessions. Children join Reception with skills that are broadly average for their age. They make excellent progress and by the time they begin Year 1, their attainment is above average, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Daily sessions focusing on letters, sounds and simple spelling help to boost early reading and writing. High quality teaching matches children's learning to their needs very well. The school has worked hard and successfully to raise standards for more capable children and they are now quickly identified and given more challenging work. This raises attainment on entry to Year 1. Accommodation for Reception is good and been considerably enhanced since the last inspection, both indoors and out. The outside learning area is used very effectively to stimulate children's skills across all areas of learning. Assessments are thorough and carefully checked to make sure all children are making the progress of which they are capable. The leadership of the Foundation Stage and teamwork between staff are strong.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' enterprise awareness and skills.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

12 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Borden Church of England Primary School, Sittingbourne ME9 8JS

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you, and our discussions helped me to get to know your school in a short time. It was good to find that your views of your school matched mine.

Firstly, you need to know your school is outstanding and you make excellent progress. Here are some brilliant things about your school.

- You reach very high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- You have many wonderful learning opportunities, for example in ICT, art, design and technology and sport.
- You become very good thinkers and solve problems very well.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are very helpful.
- Teachers take superb care of you and really help you with your learning.
- Your headteacher and other staff are working hard to make sure you always have such good opportunities for learning.

This is what we are asking the school to do next to make it even better:

- Help you to understand the importance of enterprise and develop your own enterprise skills.

I hope you will continue to enjoy school and try hard in all you do so your work gets better and better.

Best wishes

Eileen Chadwick Lead Inspector