

St Nicholas At Wade Church of England Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	118698
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326874
Inspection date	26 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	208
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	Ross MacRae
Headteacher	Adrian Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Down Barton Road St Nicholas-at-Wade Birchington CT7 0PY
Telephone number	01843 847253

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	26 March 2009
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Fax number

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Age group 4-11

Inspection date 26 March 2009

Inspection number 326874

Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The provision for, and progress made by, pupils with identified learning difficulties.
- The impact of subject co-ordinators on school improvement.
- The degree to which pupils know how well they are doing, and how to improve their work.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of school and nationally published data, school documents, the views of parents, and discussions with pupils, staff, representatives of the governing body and the school improvement partner. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

St Nicholas-at-Wade School is an average-sized school, drawing pupils from the immediate area and surrounding villages. The majority of children join the school in Reception, the last part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils holding a statement of special educational needs. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Since the last inspection, the school has been awarded Healthy School status and it works with a local secondary school on the School Sports Co-ordinator Programme to provide pupils with a range of sporting activities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Nicholas-at-Wade School has improved on the good performance when it was last inspected and is now an outstanding school, providing high quality education and care for its pupils. The school has the confidence of parents, many of whom wrote in support of its work, for example in the comment, 'Our daughter has received a wonderful education at St Nicholas-at-Wade and has blossomed in the caring, family atmosphere.' The key reason for the school's success is the professionalism, commitment and hard work of staff, described in another parental comment: 'Excellent school, very dedicated staff and managers.'

Children receive an excellent start to their education in the Reception class and develop a thirst for learning. Pupils build really well on this foundation and achieve outstandingly well throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards which are well above national averages in English, mathematics and science. They also reach high standards in other subjects, such as information and communication technology, history and art. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of all the pupils in their classes and plan work which matches pupils' abilities very closely. The introduction of a range of new programmes, for example to help pupils' spelling, has been particularly successful. These are also used as the basis of additional support for pupils who have learning difficulties, so that learning is coherent for them and helps them to make rapid progress.

Pupils' progress and achievement are very strongly supported by excellent teaching and an outstandingly broad and creative curriculum. They are underpinned by an emphasis on literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology, but teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other subjects exceptionally well through interesting themes and topics which engage and stimulate their love of learning. For example, a task for pupils in Year 2 to design a 'Victorian' means of transport was very challenging; pupils responded well to this, showing a good knowledge of when different sources of power became available. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work, such as their 'evacuation' when learning about the Second World War; they demonstrated their enthusiasm during a lesson on 'wartime recipes' in which they combined literacy, history and technology skills. Teachers and pupils use interactive whiteboards skilfully and this makes learning interesting and enjoyable. Teachers evaluate pupils' work accurately and older pupils in particular are given excellent written guidance about how their work could be improved further. Information from assessments is used effectively to set targets which challenge pupils to achieve as much as they can.

Staff know each child exceptionally well and this ensures that all pupils feel secure at school because they have someone to turn to in times of need. This contributes to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils' views are valued and sought frequently through questionnaires. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle and have many opportunities to learn about food and its production, such as through the 'Potato Project'. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular sport, with considerable success in local competitions. Additionally, pupils' personal development is supported well through music, art and drama. High quality artwork is valued and displayed prominently around the school. Pupils play instruments confidently and proficiently. This was seen to good effect in an assembly, when music added an additional dimension that reflected the school's faith status well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as shown in the mature interactions pupils have with each other and with adults. Pupils' exemplary behaviour and enjoyment of school were evident when visiting classrooms,

and members of the community have given unsolicited praise for the way in which pupils conduct themselves when on visits away from the school. Pupils develop a wide range of skills in preparation for working life, often using their literacy and numeracy skills in relevant real-life situations, for example understanding budgets in Year 5.

The care and concern for pupils provided on a daily basis are outstanding. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place, making sure that pupils work and play in a safe and well-ordered environment. Pupils who are vulnerable, for example those who have emotional difficulties or disabilities, are identified early and programmes such as the early morning activity to develop their physical skills are proving highly effective in boosting pupils' confidence and well-being.

One parent accurately summed up leadership in the school in the comment, 'There is strong leadership coming from the headteacher, who has a holistic view of the school and direction, yet knows all the children well.' The headteacher is very ably supported by other leaders, and teamwork is exceptionally strong across the school. This is seen, for example, in the way staff work together to use the restricted hall and temporary classrooms to ensure that all groups have equal access to the available facilities. The focus on achieving high standards by giving pupils a rich range of experiences has meant that the school has built well on its successes since the last inspection, and shows that it has an excellent capacity for future development. In particular, subject leadership has developed exceptionally well. Coordinators monitor and develop their subjects very well, and provide good support for colleagues.

Senior staff have a very clear awareness of the school's strengths as well as the aspects that could be improved. Staff value the regular informal feedback and support they receive from the headteacher. However, the governing body has recently reviewed its procedures and has identified a need for the school to formalise its planning, monitoring and evaluation cycle so that staff and governors have a fuller picture on which to base strategic decision making. The school works very closely with the local community, using places of worship and interest particularly well to enrich pupils' experiences. This makes an important contribution to community cohesion, which is also fostered through pupils' developing understanding of other faiths and cultures, including older pupils' understanding of a different area of Britain through their visit to Wales.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are generally in line with, or a little above, those expected for their age. The high level of care and support for children's well-being helps them to develop very positive attitudes to school. Their enthusiasm is seen in the interest they take in visitors and the way they talk to adults. Over the last two years, the majority of children in the Reception classes have been relatively young, having spring or summer birthdays. This is reflected in lower social, emotional and creative skills than in other areas of their development. The interest and enjoyment in their activities enable them to make first-rate gains and mean that by the time they move into Year 1, they reach high standards. Children are clear about what they are doing. During the inspection, they described how all their 'jobs' were linked to the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. They develop independence very effectively, for example in writing their ideas about what they might find at the top of the beanstalk and then sticking their 'leaves' onto the beanstalk themselves. Leadership and management are very effective, particularly in terms of the impact of careful planning on linking learning into Year 1, ensuring continuity into more formal learning. Children's progress is

monitored closely and the opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's portfolio keep them very well informed, and help them to support their child's learning at home. The outdoor area is large and used well, although the space available in wet weather is limited. Plans are well advanced to improve this area to give children even better opportunities for imaginative play and creative development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the plan to improve the outdoor area for Reception children and Year 1 pupils.
- Introduce a structured cycle for planning, monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	1

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

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	1
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**

27 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Nicholas-at-Wade Church of England Primary School, Birchington CT7 0PY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. You were all so welcoming and seemed very happy in school. We thoroughly enjoyed hearing about all the exciting things you do in school and seeing the displays of your work. St Nicholas-at-Wade Church of England Primary School is an exceptionally good school.

- These are some of the best things we found:
- You are really enthusiastic about your learning and your behaviour is outstanding, so you are able to concentrate and work very hard.
- You are all doing very well in all your subjects, and this prepares you very well for the future.
- You have a very good awareness of the importance of healthy eating and you take a lot of physical exercise.
- Teachers are very skilled and plan topics to make learning really interesting.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you, and you always have an adult to talk to if there is a problem.
- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and staff work very hard to make sure that the school improves all the time.
- We have agreed with the staff the most important things to do next:
- Improve the outdoor area for Reception children and Year 1 pupils so that they can use it more in all weathers.
- Check out and write down how well things are working, and then use the resulting information to plan for the next set of improvements. Staff already ask you for your views about the school and we are sure that they will involve you in the next phase of planning for the school's future.

Please thank your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires. It was very helpful to hear what they think about the school. We wish everyone at St Nicholas-at-Wade School well in the future.

Best wishes

Mrs Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector