

Ethelbert Road Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118337
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312894
Inspection date	16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Eira Gill

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vivienne Barratt
Headteacher	Samantha Fenn
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Ethelbert Road Faversham ME13 8SQ
Telephone number	01795 533124
Fax number	01795 537408

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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. • Provision and achievement in the Foundation Stage. • Achievement in Years 1 and 2. • The development of language skills throughout the school, particularly in speaking and listening. • The quality of teaching and learning. • How effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement by setting and using targets. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' work and morning assembly. Discussions took place with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in such 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 is a small school where most pupils come from a White British background and a small minority speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above the national average. The school serves an area where there are pockets of economic disadvantage.

The school holds the following quality marks. Healthy Schools and Activemark School currently being assessed for the Gold Artsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ethelbert Road Infant School is a good school with a strong sense of community. It is improving well and has a number of outstanding qualities. Links with parents are excellent. Parents are exceptionally supportive of the school and are extremely pleased with the education their children are receiving. One typical comment is, 'This is the most magical school. It develops and nurtures every aspect of a child.' Another parent said, 'It's like winning the lottery having my child at this school.' The exceptional leadership of the headteacher and effective strategic direction from the governing body ensure that pupils' academic achievement is good and the school has good capacity to improve further.

Children's skills are below average when they start in the Reception classes, particularly in the social, emotional and language areas of learning. Their progress is good in all areas and the children begin to catch up although attainment remains below expectations by the end of the Reception Year. The inside environment for learning is good but the outdoor learning environment needs attention to improve resources and the quality of the space available. The school has already begun to work on this aspect.

Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics as they were in the 2007 national tests. Pupils working at the higher levels in all three subjects perform equally well as those nationally. The much improved tracking procedures have identified that some pupils are not making sufficient progress in their speaking and listening skills. Senior leaders are aware that teachers do not always give pupils sufficient opportunity to chat to each other about how to solve a mathematics problem, for example, or how to plan a story or to act out real life dramas to improve spoken language. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is good with outstanding elements. High expectations of pupils result in exemplary behaviour. The school's success in promoting pupils' personal qualities very effectively is evident in the calm atmosphere. Pupils maintain their concentration well and work with others very amicably. Imaginative planning with a significant challenge is evident. A sense of enjoyment is high especially when teachers act out characters from fairy tales. Skilled teaching assistants play a major role. Assistants give very specific help, leading small intervention groups of pupils who find learning difficult. Many parents make appreciative comments and one writes, 'We feel the staff have paced learning to my daughter's individual needs and she has thrived. The school is truly inclusive.'

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and governors include pupils equally, whatever their needs, and monitor and evaluate the school effectively. They are continuously seeking to improve the school further. The school's use of targets to secure improved attainment for all groups of pupils is outstanding. Targets are used rigorously and are linked with the fairly new tracking system. This organisation is proving extremely useful so that timely interventions and new targets are quickly organised to ensure better improvement in pupils' progress. As a result, teachers' skills of assessment as well as their skills in leading and managing subjects have moved forward measurably. The headteacher involves all staff fully in this small school in a collegiate approach to leadership and management. Their capacity is developing well as a result of strong professional development and support from the headteacher.

Care, guidance and support are good overall with outstanding care shown to pupils. Many parents wrote expressing their total confidence in the school's care of their children. Pupils know their targets for improvement and teachers refer to them. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very effective and supported well by excellent links with special schools and other outside agencies. 'Outreach' links result in individual children from special schools visiting for short sessions to get them used to being in a bigger school. This system extends pupils' emotional skills and they gain a better understanding of the needs of other children. The school provides a good curriculum and the Healthy School and Activemark awards reflect the strengths. However, undemanding worksheets in science, religious education and geography limit the older pupils' experience of drafting and improving their written work. Enrichment of the curriculum is outstanding with several after-school sporting and other activities.

In response to excellent care, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are extremely knowledgeable about how to live healthily and safely. Behaviour is exemplary. Good progress in learning the basic skills means that pupils are well prepared for the future. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils speak confidently and their contribution to the school and community is excellent. The young members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and seek other children's views particularly on how to improve the school. Pupils' moral and social development is excellent and their spiritual and cultural development good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Very close links with parents and the on-site pre-school ensure that children settle quickly. Small numbers in each class and skilled assistants contribute to the good progress made across all areas of learning from, often, low starting points. Several children enter with limited social skills but soon learn to co-operate with others because of warm, effective adult support. Teaching and learning are good with a strong emphasis on personal skills and literacy and numeracy. Children make good progress in acquiring these skills. There is an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning with a wide range of stimulating activities. The school has made a start in improving the outdoor learning environment but needs to ensure that children have good resources and sufficient space in the play area to encourage their independent learning and physical skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities and challenge for pupils to talk together more frequently in pairs or groups to ensure their speaking and listening skills improve.
- The equipment, space and quality of the outside learning environment for children in the Reception classes.

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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 ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
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	3
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

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?	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	1
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

18 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ethelbert Road Infant School, Faversham, Kent ME13 8SQ

This letter is to tell you what I found out during the recent inspection. I really enjoyed coming to the school to meet you and I would like to thank those of you who took time to speak to me, especially the school council. I was very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. I found your school to be good with some aspects quite outstanding and could tell that you and your parents quite rightly feel the same.

Here are the things that I found to be best about your school.

- You are all making good progress in your work.
- You are all being taught well by your teachers.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors take great care of you.
- Your behaviour is exemplary and you have excellent attitudes to your work.
- You enjoy school very much and attend regularly.
- Your outstanding relationships reflect the excellent care provided by all the adults.
- Your ability in assembly to think about all sorts of things sensibly is very good.
- You enjoy a very wide range of learning activities that help you to become very clear about how to live healthily and safely and how to be a very caring member of a community.

Here are the things that I have asked the school to do better.

- I have asked the headteacher and governors to make sure your teachers give you more time in lessons to talk to a partner or a small group of children to get ideas about how to work things out.
- I have also asked the headteacher and governors to make the outdoor learning area for those of you in the Reception classes a more exciting place to play in with better things to play with.

Those of you who are a bit older can help to improve the school even more by asking your teachers to let you talk over the problems they ask you to solve in maths, for example, with your friends.

Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future.

Eira Gill ? Lead inspector

Annex B

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Eira Gill 😊

Lead inspector