

Cage Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118574
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339248
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Vale

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Barr
Headteacher	Karen Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	6 September 2006
School address	Cage Green Road Tonbridge Kent TN10 4PT
Telephone number	01732354325
Fax number	01732369468
Email address	headteacher@cage-green.kent.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as more able or having special educational needs and/or learning difficulties, minutes of governors' meetings, pupils' work in English and mathematics from Year 1 to Year 6, staff and pupil questionnaires and 77 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the level of achievement of the current pupils, including the more able and those with special educational needs, and the impact of assessment on learning
- what the school is doing to stop the decline in standards
- the impact of the school's provision on pupils' personal development
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governors, in enabling improvements in achievement and raising standards
- the inclusive nature of the school and the provision for the autistic unit.

Information about the school

Cage Green is a larger than average primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. A higher than average number of pupils start and leave the school other than at the expected times. A smaller number than average are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average, in part due to the 27 place provision for pupils with autism. Other needs relate to language, literacy and communication, and emotional difficulties. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in two Reception classes. There is a privately run Nursery and breakfast and after-school clubs on the site but they were not included in this inspection.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Cage Green Primary School is a satisfactory school, where pupils are cared for very well. Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes, both in staffing and in membership of the governing body. The school has halted the decline that took place over the last three years and attainment is now broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are now making more rapid progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and this is helping them to make up lost ground.

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels broadly as expected in some areas of learning, but lower in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. They are currently making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. The outdoor learning environment for Reception is not a sufficiently stimulating environment to encourage learning, particularly to support children's physical development.

Despite concerns expressed by some parents, most pupils behave well. On the few occasions when pupils find it harder to behave, staff employ appropriate strategies to support and guide them. Consequently the majority of pupils enjoy school and feel safe and cared for. Attendance is satisfactory.

Teaching is satisfactory with some good elements, but not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Satisfactory procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress enable teachers to identify and address early signs of underachievement. However these systems are not used consistently well by all staff to set realistic yet challenging targets for improvement in lessons. Likewise good marking was seen in some books, while in others too much work had been left unmarked.

Cage Green is a very inclusive school. Safeguarding procedures at the time of the inspection were good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and there is excellent one-to-one tuition for those who need it. Provision for the pupils in the autistic centre is good. In this centre, teaching is good, pupils are very well supported and consequently they make good progress. However, more rapid progress is hampered by the inadequate building and limited resources available for these pupils.

Care, guidance and support for the pupils are good. A typical comment from a parent was, 'A particular strength of the school is their nurturing and inclusive approach treating each child individually.' Another commented, 'One of my children has a serious long-term medical condition ' the school supports her brilliantly to stay well, feel confident and keep on track with her learning.' Inspection evidence agrees with these views.

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Leadership and management including governance are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and strategies are securely in place to continue moving the school forward. Consequently the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise all teaching to the level of the best in order to raise standards by:
 - ensuring all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - marking work consistently and regularly in order to help pupils improve
 - using assessment information more rigorously to set realistic yet challenging targets for improvement.
- Ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to a well-resourced outdoor learning area.
- As a matter of urgency review the facilities and resources in the autistic centre in order to improve the quality of provision and ensure progress for these pupils is maximised.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement has improved and progress is accelerating. Although the rate of progress is better in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6, pupils now build well upon their previous learning across the school. Pupils with special educational needs have carefully targeted work and receive effective support in class. In Year 2 and Year 6 lessons, teachers provided equally effective support and challenge for the more-able pupils.

Standards in the current Year 6 are now broadly average. Although standards were below average in 2009, particularly in mathematics, rapid progress and a greater understanding of what should be taught in English, mathematics and science has ensured that pupils are starting to make up for lost time. The school continues to focus strongly on embedding crucial basic skills. Evidence from lessons and pupils' work shows that progress from Reception to Year 2 is at least satisfactory and often good, particularly where the teaching is stronger. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson on measuring, for example, pupils were learning very well as a result of hands-on practical activities. The pace of teaching was good, and the variety of different strategies used kept the pupils well focused, enabling them to make rapid progress in their learning. Intensive support for pupils from the centre has contributed to the improvement in pupils' progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There is a strong sense of inclusiveness and community within the school. Pupils feel safe, recognising that behaviour has improved. Christmas dinner was celebrated by all and Year 6 pupils delighted in helping younger ones afterwards in the playground, and pupils from the centre were fully involved in the celebrations.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and outstanding lessons seen. In good lessons, teachers plan activities effectively to reflect the range of abilities within the class, including pupils from the autistic centre. Consequently pupils make rapid progress. This was seen in mathematics lessons in Year 6 where outstanding partnerships between the teacher and teaching assistants ensured that targeted pupils and groups were given work well matched to their abilities which was exciting and challenging. This included very good provision and support for the visually impaired pupils. In satisfactory lessons, the content is not as exciting, the pace is slower and the needs of different groups of pupils are not met as effectively.

Assessment in the past has not been used well enough to raise attainment. Changes, including better tracking systems and more frequent evaluation of what pupils know and can do, are giving teachers more detailed and relevant information. This is proving successful in helping to accelerate pupils' progress as is seen in the best lessons. It is not used consistently well to help move pupils on in their learning.

Information and communication technology is used well by teachers to support pupils'

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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learning. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned, although there are limited links between subjects. It is enhanced by a rich variety of clubs and activities which are enjoyed by the pupils. School trips, including residential visits and themed days in school, such as dressing up as Romans or Vikings, also enrich the curriculum and stimulate pupils' interest in learning.

Pupils are well cared for and parents agree. Teaching assistants are particularly supportive and considerate of pupils in their care. Pupils say that they can always talk to an adult if they are worried about anything. Pupils are receiving more focused group support to accelerate learning and achievement. The care of vulnerable pupils is good and staff clearly know the pupils and their families very well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders have had to face a number of challenges, including the decline in attainment since the last inspection and poor behaviour among a small minority of pupils. The headteacher has a clear vision for improving the school and has successfully tackled the previous weaknesses in the leadership team that had slowed the pace of improvement. Subject leaders are clearer about their roles and responsibilities. They have been instrumental in ensuring that their subjects are now being taught more effectively. This has resulted in a clear improvement in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Some staff have been resistant to the necessary changes. This has slowed school development and improvement in areas where progress needed to be more robust. The headteacher has been resolute, along with good support from the local authority, in ensuring these changes take place.

An audit, at the request of the headteacher, at the beginning of the year showed that there were a number of procedural irregularities in the financial organisation of the school. The headteacher has moved the school on considerably in a short time. The latest audit shows that the financial systems are now good. The governing body has undergone a number of changes in the last 12 months and members are fully aware of what the school has been through and what it needs to do to improve. They have been involved in training with the school and are more aware of their roles and responsibilities. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met, including the good procedures for safeguarding pupils.

Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted. As one parent commented, 'The fact that

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children from the centre come over to main school is a huge asset as my daughter has learnt that everyone is different and is socially able to deal with anyone from any background.' The school tackles community cohesion issues satisfactorily and has recently undertaken an audit of provision. Significant strengths on local issues are counterbalanced by lesser activity in relation to the national or international aspects.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle rapidly in the Reception classes because of the good induction arrangements and the good level of adult support. They are well cared for and build good relationships with staff. They feel safe and secure and the majority behave well. Teaching is satisfactory, with some examples seen of good questioning by staff to extend children's learning. There is a reasonable balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning. Regular teaching of letters and sounds provides a firm basis for developing children's reading and writing skills. They respond well, recognising different sounds such as 'll' in 'hill', which the majority are starting to sound out.

The outdoor learning area is not adequately resourced and does not support children's learning well enough, particularly their physical development. Leadership and management of the provision are satisfactory. At the time of the inspection the Early Years Foundation Stage co-ordinator had been in Reception for three weeks due to the resignation of the previous coordinator. While observations are made of what children know and understand, the information gathered is not used rigorously enough to plan the next steps for learning for all children. Support staff are a real asset in the Reception

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classes and are a significant reason why children feel so supported and make the progress that they do.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers have positive views of the school. There were relatively few written comments. A few praise the school's support for pupils with additional learning needs although others feel that more could be done. Likewise some parents of pupils in the autistic unit felt that there was good communication between home and school while others felt strongly that this could be improved. Inspectors feel that these children are, overall, supported well. Other comments related to perceived failings in communication between the school and parents and to the time spent managing pupils' behaviour. The team considered all points carefully. The school has had a history of behavioural problems arising from a small minority of pupils. Behaviour seen during the inspection was never less than good. Overall, the consensus suggests that this is a caring school where pupils are well supported in their personal development. Inspection findings generally endorse parents' and carers' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cage Green Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 415 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	60	26	34	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	45	36	47	2	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	31	44	57	8	10	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	43	33	43	9	12	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	37	48	32	42	6	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	42	33	43	8	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	40	39	51	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	40	29	38	5	6	3	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	40	33	43	8	10	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	27	29	38	18	23	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	25	37	48	10	13	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	29	38	26	34	14	18	5	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	43	34	44	7	9	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



9 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cage Green Primary School, Tonbridge, Kent, TN10 4PT

I am writing to thank you for your help when we inspected your school and to let you know what we found out. We spent time in some of your lessons and talked to some of you. We also looked at the work of the school and talked to many of the staff and the chair of governors. We were interested in what your parents think of your school, and we enjoyed listening to what you had to say.

Overall your school is satisfactory. These are some of the things it does particularly well.

- The school looks after you extremely well and you are all making better progress in your learning.
- The majority of you behave well and you work and play well together.
- You feel safe at school.
- Those of you who are in the centre are taught well and make good progress.

There are some things we have asked your school to do to help it to become even better. We have asked your headteacher and the governors to make sure that all staff have high expectations of what you can achieve. We have asked them to make sure that all your work is regularly marked and that assessment is used to help set challenging targets so that you get better in your work. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the outdoor learning area needs improving. As a matter of urgency we have asked the school to review the facilities and resources in the autistic centre in order to improve the quality of provision, and ensure even better progress for pupils there.

In turn, you must all carry on working hard and behaving well. This will help you to make good progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

Sue Vale

Lead inspector

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