

PROTECT-INSPECTION

Lady Joanna Thornhill Endowed Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118706
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326876
Inspection dates	15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Tony Shield

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jonathan Spencer
Headteacher	Kevin Grout
Date of previous school inspection	8-9 June 2006
School address	Bridge St Wye Ashford, Kent TN25 5EA
Telephone number	01233 812781
Fax number	01233 813846

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and investigated the following issues:

- Whether the school's self-evaluation of 'outstanding' was justified when compared with schools nationally, and which aspects in particular contribute to the school's success.
- Whether teaching is consistently challenging in all years, particularly for the more able boys.
- How effectively the school takes action to drive up standards even further.

Evidence was gathered from an analysis of nationally published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, scrutiny of policies and other school documentation, observation of the school at work, interviews with teachers, governors and pupils, and from parents' responses to a questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but 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

Lady Joanna Thornhill Endowed Primary School serves the village of Wye, near Ashford in Kent. It is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils are from a White British background, with small numbers from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'A truly amazing school' is how one parent describes Lady Joanna Thornhill Endowed Primary School. This is an outstanding school in which pupils flourish, reaching high standards and developing excellent personal qualities. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and as proud of the school as their children. Typical of many other parents' comments were: 'a marvellous school...children are taught respect, kindness and teamwork'.

So what is it that makes the school so successful? Above all it is the sense of enjoyment which the school encourages. 'Both my children come out of school with smiles on their faces' is the way one parent expressed her children's delight in school. The school's purpose is clear. Trust and respect are evident in the way staff and pupils treat each other. Excellent relationships within the whole school community create a special bond of shared values and expectations. Despite its size, individuals are known well, there is a real sense of family, and everyone cares for each other. Above all, high expectations coupled with a relentless ambition to be even better ensure that everyone aims for the stars!

It is the headteacher's vision which has made the school what it is. He has encouraged an ethos in which staff and pupils are confident to lead and to be reflective and self-critical. There is a strong sense of teamwork, reflecting the school's motto, 'Together, Everyone Achieves More'. As a result, leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. Self-evaluation is highly accurate, realistic and based very securely on a comprehensive analysis of performance data. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. As one parent commented, 'I am especially impressed with the way they teach children to understand and respect different cultures and backgrounds.' The school's extensive range of initiatives promoting and involving the local and wider community, for example, the school's international week and links with schools in South Africa, aims to give pupils an exceptional awareness of their responsibilities to the community. The school is increasingly involved in spreading its good practice more widely. Much of this is very successful, and it is the school's view that the capacity of all staff to contribute to this programme should be further developed. Governors provide dedicated and hard-working support, offering support and challenge in equal measure.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are exceptionally high and results in national tests and assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been consistently well above average. Given pupils' average attainment on entry, this represents outstanding achievement. Significant proportions of pupils reach higher levels and challenging targets are met and often exceeded. In line with findings nationally children perform relatively less well in writing than other areas. However, the school's standards are still significantly above average with some good examples seen of extended imaginative writing. There is no evidence to suggest that more able boys do not fulfil their potential. Vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language also make excellent progress, because of the careful attention to their individual needs. Another particular strength of the school is music, with over 100 pupils learning a musical instrument at school.

Pupils do well because the teaching is of such a high quality. Classrooms hum with industry and a strong work ethic pervades. While much learning is fun, there is also a seriousness of purpose and pupils strive hard to do their best. High expectations characterise the teachers' approach and activities are well planned to challenge everybody. A brisk pace and interesting tasks ensure pupils learn to concentrate. Effective questioning prompts pupils to think more deeply and persevere when they get stuck. Above all, learning is active and participative. Increasingly good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to sharpen pupils' interest and motivation. This was a key issue for improvement at the last inspection, and marked improvements have been made since then. Teaching assistants offer good support and make a strong contribution to the progress of all pupils. Much marking is exemplary, offering praise where appropriate and making clear how learning might be improved. Pupils know their personal targets and are given clear direction about how to improve their learning.

Pupils are friendly, confident and thoughtful. Several acts of kindness were observed during the inspection. Older pupils display considerable maturity in the responsible way in which they look after younger pupils. Pupils look forward to helping out with the day-to-day running of the school, one of the reasons the school runs like clockwork. Pupils often offer to help without being asked. In this respect, the school does extremely well to develop a sense of responsibility. The school council offers further very good opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility, and pupils' contribution to the school community is a particular strength. A regular citizenship award recognises the work of pupils in making a difference to those around them. A number of clubs and charitable events are organised by the pupils themselves. Attendance is above average and pupils speak with warmth and pride of their school. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They have an excellent awareness of a healthy lifestyle where sport plays an important part in many pupils' lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and one another and behaviour is outstanding. Overall, pupils' personal development is exemplary, encouraged by the school's ethos and outstanding procedures for their care, guidance and support. A high priority is given to pupils care and welfare. The care and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils are particularly good. All arrangements for safeguarding children are securely in place. Pupils' academic progress is carefully monitored and regular assessments enable a close watch to be kept on any potential underachievement.

The excellent curriculum is planned exceptionally well to meet pupils' academic and personal needs. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. As one parent of a child with learning difficulties commented, 'I am most impressed with the way the class teacher has tailored her approach to suit my child.' Themed weeks are planned to reflect real life and focus on areas such as problem-solving, design technology or the international dimension, giving pupils insights into what it means to be a global citizen. In this respect, pupils are well prepared for their future beyond school.

A final word should go to some of the pupils themselves, who are confident and articulate when asked to explain what makes the school so good. 'We really enjoy

coming... and we all get along – it doesn't matter where everyone comes from, it's about making new friends!' Given the school's ambition and qualities, the school has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage **Grade: 1**

Children make outstanding progress in the Reception class so that they start Year 1 with attainment well above expected levels in all areas of learning. This is especially true of pupils' attitudes, their ability to manipulate numbers and their creative and social development. An impressive range of resources are well used to bring out the best in the children. Well designed activities and outstanding teaching ensure the children take part in everything with enthusiasm and energy. Activities are set up to excite the children's learning, promoting their development across all areas of learning. Children are encouraged to make choices, share and take turns, developing their independence and personal development. Induction arrangements are well established and sensitively managed. Parents appreciate the care with which their children are treated. Adults are responsive to individual children's needs and the caring environment ensures children grow up confident that they are safe. Assessment is extremely thorough and well used to build up a complete picture of each child's development. Overall, children are very well prepared for entry to Year 1. The EYFS is extremely well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Inspectors judge that there are no significant areas of weakness in the school. Minor areas for improvement are already identified in the school's improvement plan, and include building the capacity of all staff to share their expertise.

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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 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 is 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

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.

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
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	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



16 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lady Joanna Thornhill Endowed Primary School, Wye, TN25 5EA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited. We were very impressed by the friendly smile you gave us throughout the day, and we really enjoyed meeting and talking with you. What a great school you attend! Yours is an outstanding school! The sensible way in which you answered our questions is a reflection of your excellent personal development. It is obvious that you really enjoy coming to school. These are some of our findings.

- You are extremely polite and thoughtful and growing up into very sensible young people.
- Everybody at school gets on exceptionally well together.
- You feel trusted by the staff, and know that your views will be taken seriously.
- Most of you make excellent progress, and the teachers make things interesting and fun to learn.
- You try hard to please and do your best in lessons.
- The school takes extremely good care of you, ensuring you feel safe and well looked after.
- The headteacher and all the teachers are working hard to make your school even better and know how to make this happen.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and good luck with your work in the future!

Yours faithfully

Tony Shield
Lead inspector