

Singlewell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118479
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358356
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Fenning
Headteacher	Michelle Brown
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited fifteen lessons, observed eight teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, school leaders and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including policies, pupils' progress data, attendance figures and the school's development planning. They scrutinised pupils' work and evaluated 138 parental and carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies for improving the learning and progress for all pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The use staff make of assessment information to support and challenge pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of leaders in checking, reviewing and taking actions to improve teaching and pupils' progress and tackle any underachievement in order to improve progress.

Information about the school

Singlewell is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, although none has a statement of special educational needs. The range of barriers to learning includes specific and moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication issues and behavioural, emotional and social needs.

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

This is a satisfactory school. Since its previous inspection, it has successfully maintained the good level of pastoral care, guidance and support it provides, ensuring that pupils feel safe, well cared for and thrive in their personal development. One of the key factors in pupils' extremely high levels of attendance is the considerable enthusiasm they have for their school. Pupils benefit from good relationships with staff; their behaviour is good both in lessons and at play, and they show considerable support for one another regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle, as demonstrated in their keen take-up of clubs.

The school is now solidly focused on improving teaching and learning for the pupils after a period of declining standards at Key Stage 2. There is a strong shared commitment to raising attainment for all pupils. Senior leaders have an accurate awareness of the school's effectiveness and what it needs to do to bring about improvement. Satisfactory self-evaluation procedures, combined with the effective action to tackle previous underachievement, show the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement. It is now focusing on ensuring that leaders at all levels and the governing body become less reliant on receiving information from the headteacher and develop the skills to check the school's effectiveness themselves.

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory, and attainment is broadly average at Year 6. While teaching is satisfactory overall, it is good in an increasing number of lessons and classes throughout the school. This is because leaders have focused successfully on improving the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain and, as a result, pupils' progress is better in some lessons and classes than others. Consequently, pupils do not build consistently well on their learning as they move through the school. All teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing, but some do not make sufficiently accurate use of this information to set suitably challenging work for all pupils. This hinders the progress made by some pupils, particularly the most able. While day-to-day assessment, including marking, is good in some classes and better in English than in mathematics, it is not used well enough. Not all pupils are made aware of the next small steps needed to improve their work, and this limits their ability to take responsibility for their learning. As part of its drive to raise attainment the school has begun to focus increasingly on sharing 'must', 'should' and 'could' targets with pupils in their mathematics lessons.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - developing teachers' regular use of individual and group targets to remind pupils exactly what to do to improve their work and the next steps in their learning
 - building on the best practice in marking already seen in English to ensure pupils know how to improve their work in mathematics.
- Accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - improving teachers' use of assessment information to ensure that lessons always challenge and engage pupils well, particularly the most able.
- Increase the effectiveness of all leaders by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring by all leaders is thorough enough to secure consistently good or better teaching across the school
 - developing the role of the governing body in regularly monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in their academic learning, helped by their good attitudes towards school. However, while progress is good in Key Stage 1 and increasingly elsewhere, it is not yet a consistent feature. This is because planned learning is not always matched closely enough to the differing abilities of each group or individual to enable all pupils to achieve consistently well. In such cases, pupils' interest and progress dip. Where learning is good, pupils are motivated and engaged, talking eagerly about what they have learnt. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson the classroom buzzed with pupils' enthusiasm as they successfully changed percentages into fractions and decimals. Working well collaboratively and as a result of skilful questioning and challenge, they explained confidently how this could then be used to work out prices of items in a sale reduced by different percentages.

Children start in the Reception class with skills and understanding that are below the levels expected for their age, although this can vary between years. They make satisfactory progress at this early point. With the effective focus in Years 1 and 2 on the teaching of basic skills, attainment in reading and writing has been consistently above average by the time pupils reach Year 2, and broadly average in mathematics. However, while children over the past years have reached average standards by the time they leave in Year 6, this has represented underachievement from their levels at Year 2. The school recognised this and has worked hard over the last two years to reverse this trend. However, there still remains too much inconsistency in the rate of progress across the year groups for progress as a whole to be any greater than satisfactory. The school is well aware that attainment for Key Stage 2 pupils still has to rise, and has already taken steps to hasten its improvement, but these have yet to make a full impact. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress.

Pupils achieve well in many aspects of their personal and social development. Behaviour is well managed, with most pupils saying that they enjoy school, feel cared for and know they can talk to someone if they have any problems. As a result, although a small minority

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of parents, carers and pupils have concerns, inspectors judge behaviour to be good. Pupils' enjoyment of school life is evident in their eagerness to take on responsibilities and they are keen to become involved in local projects. They successfully lobbied for the local library in the past and are currently involved in the design for a cycle park as part of the 2012 Olympics. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and development is good. Pupils' cultural development is also good because of the strong promotion of sports and the arts. In the school, relationships are good and children are considerate of each other, valuing and celebrating each other's differences. However, the school is less successful in extending pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures within the United Kingdom. Pupils' development of basic skills and preparation for their future life and learning are satisfactory.

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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships between staff and pupils and the effective way in which behaviour is managed by all staff help to foster pupils' positive attitudes towards learning. Some lessons are planned and organised well, with interesting activities to engage the pupils and high expectations set by teachers. For example, Year 2 pupils were able to build on their basic number skills in a mathematics lesson as a result of the teacher's good modelling and effective questioning. A group of more-able pupils made good progress because of the well-planned support they received from the teaching assistant.

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Questioning successfully challenged and extended the pupils as they subtracted two-digit numbers and regularly referred to their learning target for the lesson. In other lessons, teachers often miss opportunities to capitalise on pupils' enthusiasm for learning, to encourage them to explain in detail their ideas and to challenge their thinking further, particularly the most able. In these lessons, the tasks do not move pupils' learning forward sufficiently and the pace of teaching is not quick enough for them to achieve well. As a result, progress slows and pupils become less engaged and attentive. While marking in English is good because teachers refer to the next steps in pupils' learning, this has yet to become a consistent feature in mathematics. Similarly, in lessons teachers sometimes miss the opportunity to refer to the next steps in pupils' learning or to pupils' individual targets, in order to show them how to improve their work.

Through its evolving tracking systems the school is increasingly holding teachers to account for the pupils' progress. The improvements in these systems are enabling staff to track pupils' progress more closely and identify particular learning needs more rapidly than before. As a result, the curriculum is increasingly tailored carefully to pupils' needs in lessons, in small-group work or on a one-to-one basis, and this is beginning to quicken the progress of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as the most able. The curriculum is enriched well through a wide variety of visits and visitors as well as a good range of extra-curricular activities which help to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils' welfare and personal, social and health needs are well catered for because the school works closely with parents and outside agencies.

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 headteacher has a clear vision for how the school can move forward and has developed good links and partnerships with parents and the local authority to help achieve this. There is a positive team spirit and a strong atmosphere of 'can do' among the staff. Leaders and staff have become increasingly involved in analysing performance data to see how well the school is doing and to plan actions for improvement. However, while such information is shared with all leaders, some, including the governing body, have yet to use this fully when checking how well the school is doing and planning for improvement. Consequently, while the governing body is conscientious in fulfilling its statutory duties to ensure the safety of the children and agree policies, its role in driving forward school improvement is less well established.

At the time of the inspection, leaders at all levels, and staff, were seen to play their part in ensuring that safeguarding procedures were adequately carried out, with the safeguarding

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governor making appropriate checks on the school's procedures and systems. All leaders appropriately support the drive for equality of opportunity and freedom from any form of discrimination. They have put in place more rigorous systems to make sure pupils from all groups increasingly receive the same level of support and achieve well. Pupils are encouraged to play their part in the school and the local community, and their understanding and contribution are developing well in these areas. The school is also beginning to promote pupils' understanding of different cultures in national and global contexts but this remains an area for further development.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 in the Reception class make satisfactory progress and grow in confidence while developing their levels of skills and understanding. However, attainment remains generally below average in the different areas of learning as they start in Year 1. The curriculum as a whole is adapted suitably to engage the children in active learning both inside and outdoors. Adults appropriately engage children's interests through the activities planned. For example, a group worked outside preparing a picnic, encouraged in their play by the teaching assistant. Opportunities for children to practise their writing were provided when, using clip boards, children made lists of what they needed so that they gained in their communication, language and literacy skills. However, teachers' planning lacks sufficient regular and quality opportunities to extend and challenge pupils' learning or to enthuse and engage them sufficiently to achieve well, particularly the boys.

Teaching overall is satisfactory, with an appropriate mixture of activities led by staff and those chosen by the children themselves. While assessment information is used effectively to record children's progress, it is not yet used well enough in planning ahead to ensure they make good gains in their learning from day to day. Adults miss opportunities to

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extend children's learning by tailoring activities more closely to meet their needs and interests. Communication with parents and carers is good, with regular opportunities provided to give them a better understanding of their children's development. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensures children are provided with a safe environment in which to learn and grow.

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

The return rate of questionnaires from parents and carers was above average. The very large majority of these were positive and most of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. Parents and carers commended the caring attitude of the school, the quality of teaching and how much their child enjoys school. Typical comments about the school included, 'A lovely community school that you feel part of', 'They have enjoyed the clubs/activities provided by the staff' and 'Children are well cared for in a safe and secure environment.'

A very small minority of parents and carers reported concerns over how the school deals with disruptive behaviour, the progress their child is making and whether the school meets individual pupils' needs. While there are occasional displays of challenging behaviour by pupils, these are effectively managed, with minimal impact on other learners. Several parents and carers commented positively on this aspect of the school's work in their questionnaires. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that pupils' progress does vary across the school; however, the school has worked hard to eradicate underachievement and progress overall is satisfactory. As part of this process the school is increasingly adapting the curriculum more closely to support pupils' individual needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Singlewell 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 138 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	84	61	48	35	2	1	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	95	69	39	28	0	0	4	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	67	49	63	46	8	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	47	58	42	8	6	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	71	51	59	43	2	1	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	46	56	41	9	7	4	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	43	69	50	5	4	1	1
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)	48	35	66	48	10	7	4	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	43	69	50	1	1	5	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	36	70	51	9	7	7	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	36	69	50	6	4	6	4
The school is led and managed effectively	64	46	57	41	7	5	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	54	56	41	1	1	5	4

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



16 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend, DA12 5TY

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear that you like school and we agree that you do best when your teachers plan many interesting things for you to do. You get on with one another well and behave well in lessons and around the school. We think your school gives you the right help so that you know how to keep healthy and safe.

The inspection team has found that your school is satisfactory. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs as it should and teachers do what is expected to help you make satisfactory progress in your work. The leaders in the school know what needs to be done to make your school better. In order to help you to make faster progress, we have asked the staff at your school to do three things.

- Make better use of marking and your targets to help you understand how to improve, particularly in mathematics.
- Make sure your lessons are always challenging enough and interesting and that teachers have high expectations of what you can do.
- Keep checking to make sure your lessons help you to make good progress and that the school is doing as well as it should.

You can all help by continuing to respect others' values and always using the advice teachers give you on how to improve your work. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall

Lead inspector

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