

Slade Primary School and Attached Unit for Children with Hearing Impairment

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118285
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358299
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Sheena MacDonald HMI

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	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brett Egan
Headteacher	Vivienne Resch
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons, and carried out a further series of short drop-in sessions to all classes, including the Hearing Impaired Unit. They visited three assemblies and held discussions with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, two governors and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, monitoring and assessment information, the minutes of the governing body's meetings, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, case studies relating to a sample of pupils and pupils' books. In addition, inspectors considered the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 246 parents and carers.

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

- Whether lessons provide sufficient opportunities and challenge for pupils to develop independent learning, speaking, listening and thinking skills.
- The quality of teaching and whether it is consistently good enough to ensure rapid progress for all groups including more-able pupils.
- The effectiveness of assessment at all levels, including pupils' self-assessment, and whether targets are challenging enough.
- The effectiveness of self-evaluation, including that of all senior leaders, in setting challenging targets, planning and driving improvement.

Information about the school

Slade Primary is larger than most primary schools. The school has an attached unit for pupils, between the ages of 4–11, with hearing impairment. Most pupils are White British and there are small, but increasing, numbers of pupils from a range of other ethnic groups. A smaller than average number of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language and very few of these are at the early stages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is less than half the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national average and covers a range of different needs. Slightly fewer than average have a statement of special educational needs and these are usually pupils with hearing impairment. The school provides before- and after-school care.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. The most obvious feature is the excellent behaviour of the pupils which is a credit to the school, parents and carers and to the pupils themselves. This is matched by, and related to, the exceptionally high quality of care, guidance and support provided and exemplary arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Parents and carers commented positively on various strengths of the school including the fostering of a sense of community which, along with opportunities for pupils to experience excitement and develop enthusiasm for learning, mean that pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is also exceptional. Pupils are very well prepared for the future, not only by good achievement in literacy and numeracy and information communication technology (ICT), but also because they develop important life skills such as team working and confidence. Pupils love coming to school and attendance is high.

All pupils, including those with special needs and hearing impairment, make consistently good progress throughout the school. This is, in part, due to excellent assessment and tracking systems which ensure that individual needs are identified and well provided for. Children arrive with skills which are at about those levels expected for their age although this varies between cohorts. They achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and build on that achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that by the time they leave in Year 6 they attain above the national averages in English and mathematics. Recent upward trends in attainment in writing and continued high achievement in mathematics are testament to the success of strategies the school has used to focus on and improve attainment in these subjects. There is more that could be done to raise the attainment of more-able pupils across all classes.

The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons well, using information from assessment to target particular skills and knowledge. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution during whole-class sessions as well as with small groups. Pupils have a good understanding of their next steps in learning; this has improved since the previous inspection. In some lessons, the work is too easy for more-able pupils and, in a few, there is a lack of clarity about what successful learning might look like which slows down the pace of learning.

The excellent curriculum is very well designed to spark interest and develop pupils' learning in depth across all subjects. The school places great importance on

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developing pupils' personal and social skills and the success of the provision is reflected in the very high achievement in these important areas.

The headteacher, ably supported by the leadership team, ensures that there is a strong shared ethos and high aspirations, that self-evaluation is accurate, and priorities for improvement are sharply focused on pupils' achievement. The support and challenge provided by the governing body are excellent and make a strong contribution to school improvement. Continuing high quality education and important improvements since the previous inspection demonstrate that the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase further the rate of progress of more-able pupils by:
 - increasing the challenge and pace of learning and raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in line with the school's challenging targets
 - using the good practice which exists in the school to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The pupils' outstanding personal qualities make a strong contribution to their good attainment and progress. They enjoy lessons and are keen to learn. They show stamina and perseverance which means that the quality of their work is good. There are examples across the school which demonstrate that pupils make good progress in other subjects as well as in English and mathematics. High quality and very active music sessions seen during the inspection were enhanced by the incorporation of British Sign Language. This is also an indication of the strength of the school's inclusion of all pupils including those with hearing impairment. The school rightly judges pupils' attainment as above average and progress as good rather than outstanding because although, over time, attainment is higher than average and progress is consistently good, more could be done to raise attainment still further and speed up progress.

Pupils' very strong personal values are demonstrated in their respect and concern for

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others. They take responsibility for the safety and well-being of others both formally through systems such as buddying arrangements and also informally, for example, by making sure that everyone is included in paired or group work. Pupils understand the importance of diet and exercise in keeping healthy and are interested in the health of the environment as well as themselves. This has resulted in well-embedded activities and the achievement of the second green flag ECO award. The pupil council plays an active role in school improvement such as evaluating and bringing about changes to the reward system and homework policy. Pupils' understanding of, and contribution to, the wider community is good but there is scope for further development. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and respectful and this contributes to a good learning environment. Teachers make good use of resources, including new technology, to enhance the learning and engage the pupils' interest. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and told inspectors that they particularly liked the practical ones. This was evident in their anticipation of, and participation in, a Key Stage 1 science lesson where they were exploring the sense of taste by sampling different flavoured crisps. Teachers have a good knowledge of different subjects so that lessons have clear learning objectives and activities are designed to meet the needs of different ability groups. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to discuss their

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 with each other and these enable pupils to develop team working and good communication skills. In a small number of lessons seen during the inspection, the learning was over-directed by adults which left insufficient time for pupils to develop or extend their learning. Teachers mark pupils' work very well and this helps pupils know what they have achieved and what the next steps are. This is enhanced by opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning in lessons and good use of individual learning conversations which deepen the pupils' understanding of their learning, targets and progress.

The curriculum makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development and is well designed to meet pupils' needs and interests. All subjects are covered well and valuable links between subjects provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to practise and to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. These opportunities also deepen pupils' learning and make it more interesting and relevant. A good example of this was seen in a Year 3/4 lesson where pupils were reading intently different story settings and using clues in the language to discuss and decide whether the story was contemporary or set in the distant past. An emphasis on practical real-life learning means that pupils experience many visits, visitors and themed weeks such as International Week. All pupils take part in performances and there is a wide range of well-attended clubs and activities which provide further enrichment. Effective partnership working, particularly with other schools, extends the provision, for example, through the valuable programme for gifted and talented pupils.

The care and welfare of pupils are very clearly accepted as the responsibility of all and systems to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils are carried out meticulously. Transition arrangements are robust so that pupils settle quickly into school, move smoothly from class to class and on to secondary schools with confidence. Pupils enjoy the breakfast and after-school clubs and, for the pupils who attend, these make a positive contribution to their life at school. Information from assessment is well used to identify pupils who are underachieving and those with special educational needs. This is followed up with effective support and, where appropriate, the school makes good use of the expertise of external agencies. Pupils with hearing impairment are extremely well supported. Parents and carers speak very highly of this service and they are right in doing so.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders share a strong sense of purpose and a well-articulated vision of what constitutes high quality, all-round education. They systematically monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning and also gather and use the views of pupils, staff, governors, carers and parents to inform improvement planning. They have high aspirations and set challenging targets, for example by increasing the emphasis on pupils achieving well at the higher levels. This now needs to be translated into consistent practice at classroom level. Good communication systems and an emphasis on collegiate responsibility mean that the schools' strengths and key priorities for further improvement are shared and sharply focused.

The systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are exemplary and used effectively, for example to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve equally well and participate in all activities. Assessment is also generally used well at classroom level to inform teachers' planning although the best practice is not fully shared across all classes.

Governors are knowledgeable and influential. They provide high levels of professional challenge through regular monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school and have been proactive in reviewing and seeking to enhance their effectiveness. There is a carefully orchestrated approach to managing the safety of pupils. Responsibilities are very clear and well understood, training of staff and governors is thorough and the procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are excellent.

The very high and overwhelmingly positive response of parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire confirms the very good relationship between the school and its families. Effective partnerships with a wide range of external agencies underpin the excellent provision. Professional development is enhanced through the school sharing its expertise with other schools and activities such as joint moderation to ensure accurate assessment.

The school is a harmonious and cohesive community where pupils and adults show respect for themselves and for others. This is supported by curriculum provision and developing links with schools elsewhere in the world which deepen pupils' understanding of different views and cultures. The inclusion of pupils from the Hearing Impairment Unit in the full life of the school makes a strong contribution to all of the pupils' understanding and celebration of difference.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and

1

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driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start in the Reception classes. Good relationships with parents and carers help the children to make a confident beginning and enjoy school life. The staff have established a safe and welcoming environment in which children feel secure so that, even at this early stage in the term, they are settled and happy, joining in enthusiastically with the wide range of activities on offer.

The children achieve well in all areas of learning and make outstanding progress in their personal and social skills. They develop good early reading and number skills and, as a result, when they move into Key Stage 1, the number of children attaining at expected levels is higher than the national average. However, the number of children achieving well-above the expected levels for their age is below average.

Teachers and assistants work well together to provide a good range of activities, both indoors and outside, and there is a good focus on making learning active and enjoyable. An example of this was a lively early reading session where all of the children enjoyed learning and using a new sound, blending sounds to make words at the request of a soft toy and beginning to learn how to write. Ongoing assessment systems are outstanding and the individual records provide excellent information about children's learning and progress. Although this assessment information is used effectively to track and plan for further learning, it is not used sufficiently well to extend the learning of more-able children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and, as a result, raising the attainment of more-able pupils has already been identified as a priority for improvement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are very happy with the school. They believe that their children enjoy their time at school and are kept safe. These strengths are confirmed by the inspection. The responses to all of the questions were overwhelmingly positive and many parents and carers took the time to comment in writing on a variety of aspects. Most comments related to how well the school fosters a caring atmosphere resulting in happy children. A small number expressed concerns about pupils' progress particularly that of more-able pupils and the inspection confirmed that more could be done in this area. A further small number of comments expressed the view that communication with parents and carers and the level of information they receive about their children's progress could be improved. The inspection found that communication with parents is good and new arrangements have recently been implemented to improve this aspect further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Slade Primary School and Attached Unit for Children with Hearing Impairment 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 246 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 313 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	173	70	70	28	2	1	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	173	70	72	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	99	40	129	52	8	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	96	40	121	49	12	5	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	127	52	111	45	5	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	124	50	112	46	3	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	132	54	109	44	2	1	2	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)	99	40	121	49	6	2	1	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	103	42	124	50	8	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	97	39	113	46	13	5	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	92	37	121	49	14	6	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	150	61	86	35	8	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	153	62	79	32	5	2	1	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 8 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



23 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Slade Primary School and Attached Unit for Children with Hearing Impairment, Tonbridge TN9 1HR

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when inspectors visited your school recently. What you told us, especially those of you who met with us, helped us when we were thinking about our findings. After having a very close look at all sorts of things, including coming in to lots of your lessons, we think that your school is **outstanding**. Well done!

Here are the highlights.

- Your behaviour and your attitudes to other people and to your learning.
- The way the adults in your school care for you, support those of you who need extra help, and make sure you are all safe.
- Your high attendance, good achievement in English, mathematics and ICT and skills such as team working give you an excellent start in life.
- The way the school plans the learning so that you do all sorts of interesting activities and learn about a wide range of subjects.
- Your headteacher and other leaders, including the governors, set everyone very challenging targets and keep a very close eye on things to make sure you are receiving a good education.

You achieve well and make good progress in all parts of the school but we think you could do even better! Although the lessons are usually good, sometimes the work is a bit easy for some of you and sometimes the learning is not clear enough. So we have asked the teachers to plan lessons which have plenty of opportunities for you all to do harder work and use your thinking skills a bit more. We have also asked the teachers to share their good ideas more so that all of the teaching is as good as the best.

Your motto 'best team happy' really sums up your school very well. I wish you all continued success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald HMI

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