

Sedley's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118595
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	379644
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Brown
Headteacher	Alison Coppitters
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons taught by four teachers, and also observed an assembly. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, school evaluations, assessment information and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 40 parents and carers as well as others from a sample of staff and pupils.

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

- The impact of the school's strategies in improving pupils' writing skills.
- The effectiveness of assessment procedures in helping teachers to monitor pupils' progress and helping pupils to understand the quality of their work and what they have to do to improve.
- Whether pupils' personal development and well-being and the quality of care, guidance and support are as good as the school indicates.
- The effectiveness of the school's analyses its own performance and how this has been used to develop the correct priorities.

Information about the school

Most pupils in this below-average-sized school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. Pupils' identified needs are related mainly to autism or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. Other pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during their primary education is high in relation to most schools. The school's awards include Healthy Schools and Safe School.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Sedley's Church of England Primary School has improved well since its last inspection and is now good. The headteacher, with strong support from the staff team, has introduced improvements in teaching and learning effectively. The improvements have reduced inconsistencies and have resulted in a steady increase in pupils' achievements over the last three years. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate so that the governing body and staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where further improvements can be made. They have correctly identified the most important priorities for improvement in this year's school development plan. Planned developments include participation in a local literacy project to develop pupils' writing skills further, which shows the school's commitment to continual improvement. Good relationships with outside agencies enable the school to provide opportunities for all groups of pupils to learn well and to enjoy a range of activities which otherwise would be difficult to provide in a small school. As a result of the improvements made already and its awareness of current priorities, the school has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

From the secure start children make in the Reception class, which gives them the early literacy and numeracy skills to prepare them for more formal learning, pupils make good progress throughout the school. Their attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. Although not yet as strong as in reading and mathematics, pupils' writing is improving well throughout the school and is particularly strong in Key Stage 1. That gives pupils a strong foundation to accelerate progress in Key Stage 2, preparing them well for secondary school. The good teaching observed during the inspection is reflected in the range and quality of pupils' current work and seen in books retained from last year. On occasion, teachers' inputs in lessons are overly long, restricting the time available for pupils to test out their understanding by completing tasks independently or to review learning against the objectives shared at the beginning of the lesson. The development of the Early Years Foundation Stage has not been as rapid as in other areas of the school, partly because the school has not yet reached a solution within local planning restrictions to enhance the outdoor area. At present, the limitations in outdoor provision restrict the range of outdoor activities and this slows children's progress in some areas of their learning. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has changed recently. The environment is not yet rich enough to promote children's imaginative play and creative development to its full potential.

Pupils enjoy thoroughly the topic-based curriculum which makes learning interesting

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and gives them opportunities to pursue areas of particular interest to them. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in the positive relationships with one another and with adults. Pupils' understanding of their own faith promotes a set of shared values and provides a secure base for their understanding of different religions and cultures. Pupils support village activities regularly, such as the monthly church parade at Sunday services. They feel safe and are cared for well within a friendly, family style environment. As a result, they behave well and are keen to take on responsibilities which develop their leadership skills, as well as helping to ensure that younger pupils are looked after and integrated fully into playground activities. The impact of the school's good support and guidance, which removes many barriers to learning effectively, is seen in pupils' high attendance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by January 2012, by:
 - improving the outdoor area so that it can be used throughout the year for a broader range of learning
 - reorganising the classroom so that it gives children richer opportunities for their creative development.
- Improve aspects of teaching to raise pupils' attainment by:
 - giving pupils more time for independent work to consolidate their understanding by doing things for themselves
 - helping pupils to reflect on their achievements by routinely checking learning at the end of the lesson against the objectives shared at the beginning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and concentration levels. Pupils' positive attitudes to their work make a strong contribution to the good progress they make and are shown in their enthusiasm for learning new skills. In lessons, there is a tangible atmosphere of excitement about learning. It was seen, for example, in a phonics (letters and sounds) lesson when pupils made rapid progress in their spelling and handwriting because the teacher gave them frequent opportunities to practise a new skill so that they were motivated well by seeing their achievements. Although pupils' writing skills are not as strong as their reading and numeracy skills, the school's data show that progress in writing is accelerating, partly as a result of the changes made to teaching phonics. Good concentration levels were seen in a lesson when pupils were researching information for themselves as part of their 'communications' topic. Pupils showed their ability to work things out for themselves, developing their information and communication (ICT) skills, but questioned maturely when there was something they did not understand. They took pride in presenting their findings well. Because pupils enjoy their learning, behaviour is good and often excellent in lessons. Pupils indicate that there are some incidents of inconsiderate behaviour in the playground, but that these are resolved quickly

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when brought to the attention of an adult. The inconsistencies in pupils’ progress reported in the last inspection have been removed. Pupils’ progress is consistent through the school and they achieve well from their starting points. Because teachers monitor progress closely, any loss of momentum is picked up quickly and additional support provided. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join part way through their primary education, make good progress.

Pupils’ good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy is reflected in the school’s Safe School and Healthy Schools awards. Pupils are energetic at playtimes and there is enthusiastic participation in sports clubs. Pupils are polite and keen to talk about the things they do in school. They contribute keenly to the school and local community. Older pupils take on school responsibilities, such as helping younger ones at lunch, and, as all pupils eat at the same time, the occasion promotes the school’s family ethos. Younger pupils make their contribution well, for example, through representing their class’ views at the school council. Pupils are good ambassadors for their school at many local events, including singing at the ‘Prom in the Park’ event in the village field and participating alongside the local farming community in the May Fair. Such involvement develops pupils’ understanding of citizenship effectively and they show their concern for others through regular charity fundraising events.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
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	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	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

Consistently good teaching, with examples of inspiring practice, is contributing effectively to pupils' enjoyment of school and their good progress. Good relationships exist between adults and pupils and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers have improved their use of assessment information since the last inspection so that they match the work closely to pupils' needs and so improve learning from individuals' starting points. Consequently, the needs and talents of the different age groups within each class are met well. Targets for improvement are set for pupils so that they have a good understanding of the next steps they need to achieve. Teachers' marking reflects pupils' achievements regularly against the purpose of the lessons and, in the best cases, requires pupils to make an immediate response to a suggestion about how work could be improved. Teaching assistants have been trained to run a wide range of programmes which increase pupils' progress effectively, particularly in reading. Teachers guide the work of teaching assistants well so that they make a good contribution to pupils' learning, both in small 'booster groups' and within lessons.

The curriculum makes good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT and pupils use and develop these skills well in their topic work. Visitors to the school, together with school trips, bring excitement to learning and encourage pupils to do their best. Members of the school council commented particularly on how teachers make learning fun, how much they learn on the school trips linked to almost all topics, and how much they look forward to the residential visits. They gain from well-resourced lessons and first-hand experiences, for example, when measurements were made relevant by estimating and measuring parts of the building and objects outdoors.

Pastoral care is good. Pupils are confident that adults look after them well and respond to concerns they may have. Good links with outside specialists and effective engagement with parents and carers ensure that the wide range of specific needs of pupils, including those who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, are met well. Well-chosen clubs, some of which are run by local volunteers, meet a variety of interests and foster pupils' social and emotional development successfully. Transition arrangements within the school ensure that pupils settle quickly when moving from one class to another.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has harnessed the enthusiasm of staff and, consequently, teamwork is strong and there is a shared view of where improvements need to be made. Staff have the skills and expertise to implement the identified priorities successfully. The governing body provides a strong strategic lead and is not afraid to ask searching questions to ensure that the school remains on course to continue to improve the quality of education for pupils. A carefully planned and cost-effective programme of professional development has brought about improvements in teaching and plans are being implemented to give teachers additional opportunities to reflect on their own practice by sharing ideas with colleagues in other schools.

Safeguarding procedures, including those relating to child protection, are good and meet current requirements. Elements, such as internet safety, are taught within the curriculum so that pupils learn how to look after their own safety. The school's success in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is seen in how the improvements in using assessment information have evened out the progress pupils make through the school. The school is a happy, cohesive society with no evidence of prejudice, reflecting the school's good promotion of community cohesion. Pupils develop their understanding of different societies in Britain by taking part in events such as a multicultural festival in Dartford celebrating a range of world religions.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Sound provision enables children to settle quickly and have a positive start to school. Children are happy to come to school because they have been introduced to the school's routines gradually so that they feel safe and secure. The teacher is new to the class and has developed good links with parents and carers within a short time; this was seen in the positive comments in the daily contact book. Children get on together well and show much enthusiasm for the new things they are learning. For example, they reinforced their learning while enjoying thoroughly a treasure hunt to find objects beginning with the 'p' sound. While this activity was well resourced, some other elements of provision are less well developed. Although the governing body has sought planning permission to erect a shelter for Reception Year children, the outdoor area has not been developed sufficiently to ensure that it provides opportunities for children to engage in all their areas of learning.

Plans are in place for the Early Years Foundation Stage leader to observe practice and to share expertise with other practitioners locally, but there has not been time to implement them so far during this academic year. Children begin the Reception Year with skills levels that are similar to those found typically. They make good progress, particularly in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, and attainment in these areas when they join Year 1 is generally above average. However, pupils' creative development is weaker than other aspects and the classroom environment does not provide sufficient opportunities to stimulate children's curiosity and introduce them to activities which kindle their imagination. Overall, there is an effective balance between activities which are chosen by children and others led by adults. Staff promote children's language skills well and try to build on their interests, for example, by extending a game to look for 'pirate treasure' in the sand begun by a few children. Daily observations and assessments are detailed and beginning to be used to identify children who may need additional support.

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	2
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 who returned the questionnaire are positive about all aspects of the school. Parents and carers express particular satisfaction that children are safe, enjoy school and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. Parental comments indicate appreciation of the school's encouragement of a sense of community and how children are helped to achieve their potential. A few parents and carers are

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concerned that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively and that the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. The inspection found that the school deals well with the rare incidents of unacceptable behaviour and that poor behaviour does not impact negatively on the learning of other pupils. The school provides a number of opportunities for parents and carers to share their views, including regular questionnaires and information evenings, and these are used to inform the school's development plan and make changes in line with significant parental requests. A few parents and carers raised individual concerns and their views were taken account of during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sedley’s Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	50	19	48	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	26	65	14	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	10	25	24	60	4	10	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	23	23	58	1	3	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	10	25	23	58	2	5	2	5
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	15	38	19	48	2	5	2	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	40	23	58	1	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)	8	20	18	45	3	8	1	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	12	30	23	58	1	3	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	38	14	35	5	13	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	28	16	40	4	10	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	14	35	18	45	1	3	4	10
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	21	53	14	35	2	5	2	5

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 08 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.



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sedley's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Gravesend DA13 9NR

I am one of the inspectors who visited your school recently and this letter is to tell you what we found out. First, I would like to thank you for making us welcome and for being so polite and helpful. We have judged that your school is a good school.

These are the things that we liked about your school.

- You enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about the good range of activities on offer.
- You are keen to learn and give of your best.
- Your attendance is excellent.
- You make good progress so that you are prepared well for secondary school.
- Your behaviour is good and you get on together well.
- Adults care for you well so that you are safe and secure.
- Your faith is an important part of school life and you learn well about other cultures and lifestyles.
- You are involved well in school and community life, raising money for charities and joining in village events such as singing at the 'Prom in the Park'.

We have asked the headteacher and the governing body to improve two things.

- Improve the Reception Year classroom and outdoor area so that children have even more exciting things to do.
- Spend less time in whole-class work to give you more time for your own tasks and to check your progress against the learning objective at the end of all lessons.

We are sure you will continue to work hard and ask when you do not understand.

Yours sincerely
Helen Hutchings
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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