

# Snodland CofE Primary School

Roberts Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5HL

**Inspection dates** 17–18 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they feel very safe. They really enjoy school and are extremely keen to learn. Attendance is above average for all groups of pupils.
- Progress is good throughout the school and pupils achieve above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. From their starting points, pupils make particularly good progress in reading and mathematics.
- Those pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make especially good progress. This is because of the highly effective support they receive from staff and work that is closely matched to their needs.
- The quality of teaching and learning is at least good. Teachers are very skilled at helping pupils to improve their work through their oral and written feedback. They use new technology effectively to make learning interesting and fun for the pupils.
- The excellent leadership of the acting headteacher, very well supported by the acting deputy headteacher, has ensured the school has continued to move forward during a period of staff changes. They have very successfully encouraged a 'can do' spirit amongst staff.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make the same progress, or reach the same levels, in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Some differences remain in the quality of teaching in some classes and lessons. Teachers miss the chance to make sure pupils in each ability group know just what they are expected to achieve in each lesson.
- In some literacy lessons, particularly those teaching how to link sounds and letters (phonics), pupils are not involved quickly enough in activities that are closely matched to their abilities. At other times pupils, especially the most able, are not always moved on quickly enough during lessons to more challenging work. This hinders their progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons or part lessons, taught by 12 teachers, and were accompanied by the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher for the vast majority of these.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Pupils were observed during break and lunch times.
- In considering reading within the school, groups of pupils reading with adults were observed. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read individually.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at documentation such as policies, including those relating to safeguarding, data on pupils’ progress, attendance figures, planning and monitoring documentation and the school’s development planning. They scrutinised work in pupils’ books and homework learning journals and looked at the school’s website.
- The inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the on-line Parent View survey as well as talking to parents and carers informally during the inspection and reviewing the school’s own parental surveys. Questionnaires from staff and leaders were also considered.

## Inspection team

Jacqueline Marshall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Howard Jones	Additional Inspector
Christine Fogg	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school.
- Over the past year, there have been a number of staff changes as well as changes to the leadership team. The acting headteacher has been in post since September 2011. A number of governors, including the chair of the governing body, are also new to their roles.
- A large majority of the pupils come from a White British background. Others are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils receiving the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is extra money given to schools by the government to support, amongst others, pupils who receive or have received free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and receive support at school action, school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- There are two classes in each year group, except for Years 4, 5 and 6. Currently pupils here are taught in three mixed Year 4 and 5 classes and one Year 6 class.
- The school exceeds the current government's floor target, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and so improve achievement in writing by ensuring that:
  - pupils are quickly moved on to more challenging work once they have demonstrated their understanding of what is being taught
  - in phonics (letters and sounds) lessons, pupils are actively interested and involved in work which is well matched to their ability at all times
  - teachers explain clearly to different ability groups exactly what they need to do to be successful in every lesson.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment by the time pupils leave in Year 6 is significantly above average. Pupils from all backgrounds make good progress and achieve especially well over time in reading and mathematics.
- Standards in English have risen steadily over the last two years, as a result of the school's successful focus on reading. They have been well above average in national tests, matching those in mathematics. However, within English, the levels reached in writing, although in line with the national average, do not match those achieved in reading and fewer pupils reach the highest levels.
- From expected skills and understanding when they start, children make good progress in the Reception classes in all areas of learning. As a result, an increasing proportion are leaving the Reception classes having achieved levels above those expected for their age. Similarly, achievement has accelerated in Key Stage 1 and standards achieved in Year 2 rose last year, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils of all ages are clear about what they are learning, confident to take part in lessons and share their ideas willingly with one another. They really enjoy lessons and demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm and concentration even when at times the level of challenge in the work could be greater.
- From Reception to Year 6, they talk eagerly about their learning and, in those lessons where they make the most progress, discuss whether they have met the success criteria or 'steps for success'. They are fully involved in what they need to do to improve and pay careful attention to comments teachers make when marking work during lessons and in their books.
- Parents and carers are satisfied their children make good progress. Those with children with disabilities or with special educational needs are particularly happy. These pupils, and those receiving the pupil premium, make progress at a similar rate to their peers and, in some cases, faster, because the work that is planned for them is very closely tailored to their needs.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' achievements, work in their books, parents' and pupils' views indicate that the quality of teaching is good overall. Some is outstanding and pupils make rapid progress.
- Where teaching is less successful, teachers do not pay enough attention to what pupils already know or respond quickly enough to the progress they make during a lesson. Sometimes class discussions are not tailored to the needs of all groups sufficiently, particularly in those phonics lessons not grouped by ability. This hinders the rate pupils, in particular the most able, make progress, and sometimes leads to unnecessary repetition of work they can already do before they reach work that stretches them.
- In lessons, teachers always start by explaining how pupils will show they have been successful in their learning. At times, these statements are too general and teachers miss the chance to give each ability group a specific target to achieve in order to accelerate learning. Year 3 pupils were asked to demonstrate that they could set out speech correctly in their writing. Several were already beginning to do this. However, although challenged to use better words than 'said', they had the same success criteria for the lesson as those who found using speech marks hard.
- Lessons capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm and, in many, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) keeps them focused and supports learning well. Year 1 pupils were very motivated creating a 'film' encouraging tourists to visit Kent. After deciding attractions to photograph on tablet computers, they enjoyed creating the accompanying text. They successfully grasped the idea of persuasive language, suggesting, 'Dover Castle is awesome', and, 'Come to Diggerland, it's fun'.

- Pupils from all ability groups really enjoy reading and many displays around school encourage a love of reading across the age ranges. Pupils are successfully encouraged to draw from a range of strategies to help if they are stuck. They do this very confidently because teachers and other staff regularly remind pupils how to use these skills as they read in other subjects.
- Teaching assistants are often particularly well deployed to ensure pupils' individual needs are met, including for those receiving the pupil premium and those with special educational needs. Some have benefited from extra training as part of the school's focus on reading. This ability to target skilled support where most needed in lessons or small focused groups enables pupils to achieve well. In a Year 4/5 reading session, a teaching assistant was very effective in supporting lower achieving pupils tackling 'tricky' words together.
- Effective marking both during the lesson and in their books ensures pupils receive good advice on how to improve. They are skilled at checking their own and others' work. A Year 1 pupil asked his friend to check he had used a question mark if he was writing a question. Similarly a group of Year 4/5 pupils used check lists to assess whether they had included the key features needed to be judged a Level 4 writer.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Attitudes to learning are extremely positive and pupils show their enthusiasm for learning in subjects across the curriculum. Even when in a few lessons pupils have to listen to instructions for other pupils before they can begin their own learning, they remain attentive and keen. This is because of the very positive relationships between staff and pupils as well as the interesting activities they plan.
- The school's positive promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key factor in pupils' exemplary behaviour. Pupils' moral awareness and social skills are developed extremely well so that pupils work cooperatively, get on together well and show considerable support for one another regardless of age, gender or ethnicity.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of risk and how to keep safe. The school works hard to ensure they develop a thorough understanding of their own personal safety and how to use the internet safely. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree the school keeps the pupils safe.
- Incidences of bullying, such as name calling and cyber bullying, are rare. Indeed, pupils told inspectors they just did not happen. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded commented positively that any problems they and their children may have are dealt with. Pupils agree and know whom they could turn to for help if they need to.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The acting headteacher's commitment to raising achievement through improving teaching has been key to maintaining and building upon the school's effectiveness since the last inspection. That she has done this, working closely with her acting deputy headteacher, whilst also managing the many staff and leadership changes is a testament to her outstanding leadership.
- Together they have encouraged a real team feeling amongst the staff, who overwhelmingly support the school, commenting 'I feel part of a great team and proud to be part of it'. Teachers and non-teaching staff are full of praise for the support they receive to improve their own roles and are willing to go that extra mile when needed. One wrote that the acting headteacher 'gets the most from the staff and has their utmost respect'.
- Leaders new to the senior leadership team feel equally valued and supported. They have yet to match the levels of effectiveness of the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. However, they are increasingly taking responsibility for finding out how things are going themselves, such as where pupils make the best progress, through the checks they

carry out on lessons, pupils' work and through analysing progress data.

- Key leaders have concentrated on improving the quality of teaching. Staff speak positively about the targets that have been set for their performance and how these have helped to raise their effectiveness and pupils' achievement. Those staff new to the school this term have already been observed several times and know what they are working on to improve further. This process has a proven track record, with teachers who once needed to improve being seen teaching outstanding lessons during the inspection.
  - Pupil progress meetings are increasingly used to make sure all pupils are doing equally well. They enable additional support, such as one-to-one targeted teaching, to be effectively tailored to the needs of individuals and groups. This has been successful in ensuring pupils, including those receiving the pupil premium, make the same and sometimes better progress than other pupils.
  - Accelerated progress in reading and for younger pupils have been secured through the school's focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in these areas. Although writing results rose in 2012, not all pupils make the same strong progress in writing as they do in other subjects. Writing is the next area for development and a number of initiatives have begun to tackle this.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - has worked closely alongside the local authority during changes to the leadership. Governors have been involved in taking necessary action to tackle weaknesses in provision and have secured a very effective leadership team to drive improvements further
    - is keen to become less reliant on the acting headteacher and senior leaders for the information and data they use to gain insight into the school's effectiveness
    - ensures that statutory duties are met, particularly regarding health and safety and safeguarding issues.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118846
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	403367

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	315
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Reverend Hugh Broadbent
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline Hobson
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Holley Blount
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 June 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 241251
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