

# Sholden Church of England Primary School

London Road, Sholden, Deal, CT14 0AB

**Inspection dates** 8–9 July 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher, appointed since the last inspection, has guided the school successfully through recent changes so it remains good. It is still improving.
- Pupils achieve well. They reach higher than expected levels in national test results when they leave. Pupils are well prepared to start their next schools because their basic skills are developed to a good level.
- Pupils speak confidently and articulately. They are good at discussing their work and views.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, or who are eligible for additional funding, have effective support. This enables them to achieve well.
- The quality of teaching has stayed at typically good levels. This ensures that pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils relate well to each other and visitors. Many say that their friends and the staff are the best things about the school. Pupils enjoy attending. They say they feel safe.
- The school uses additional funding for sports provision effectively. A high number of pupils take part in sports both within the school and locally.
- Governors give good support. They know the school well. They are familiar visitors to both staff and pupils. They support staff well, are not complacent, and are eager to identify ways the school can improve.
- Parents are very positive about the way the school provides for their children.
- The early years provision has stayed at the outstanding levels found at the last inspection. Children have an extremely secure, happy and productive start to their education.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always confident in spelling accurately in Years 1 to 6, which detracts from the quality of their writing.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are not always confident to apply their mathematical skills in a variety of ways.
- Pupils are not fully aware of the differing backgrounds and beliefs of others in more distant or contrasting areas of modern Britain.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 would occasionally like to have more influence over what and how they learn.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine lessons or part lessons. Five of these observations took place jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils from Years 2, 5 and 6 reading. He observed playtimes and lunchtimes on both days.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, as well as a representative from the local authority. He also held informal discussions with a number of parents at the start of the school day.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspector took account of the 44 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. He considered 11 questionnaires completed by teaching and support staff. One letter from a parent was also considered and he took account of results from the school's recent parental questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the school's work. He looked at a wide range of documents including safeguarding policies, school improvement plans, and the school's systems for judging its effectiveness. He also looked at pupils' past work in their books and work on display in classes and around the school.
- On the second day of the inspection, Year 6 pupils spent the day visiting their new secondary school in preparation for their start in September.

## Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Sholden is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher started in April 2014, taking over from an interim headteacher who ran the school from January 2014. There have been a number of staff changes since the previous inspection.
- Most pupils are White British. The school has four classes. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in mixed-aged classes. Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school is part of a local collaboration with other schools called the Deal Learning Alliance.
- A breakfast and after-school club, managed by the school, take place each day.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average. As there were fewer than five Year 6 pupils eligible last year for funding, their attainment is not reported.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in the school to outstanding levels by:
  - ensuring that teaching helps pupils in Years 1 to 6 to spell accurately in their written work
  - ensuring pupils are more confident to use their mathematical skills in a variety of different ways
  - paying more attention to pupils' views about what and how they learn.
- Develop pupils' awareness of others in modern Britain who have different backgrounds and/or beliefs.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Since taking over, the headteacher has successfully navigated the school through a period of change. Supported by staff and governors, he has identified those areas that need attention while maintaining existing strengths, such as the school's Christian values. Staff are positive about working in the school. They are enthusiastic about seeking ways of fulfilling the school's motto of 'soaring to success'.
- A high proportion of parents indicate they are very supportive of the school. Nearly all those spoken to said that they and their children are very happy with the school.
- Staff juggle their different middle leadership roles and responsibilities effectively, following some changes to clarify roles or to ensure there is a manageable spread of responsibilities.
- Initiatives to maintain the quality of pupils' writing and tackle some past weaknesses in mathematics have ensured pupils' skills continue to develop. Mathematics activities develop pupils' essential number skills well, although the school recognises that pupils do not always have enough opportunities to apply their skills in more open-ended work.
- The headteacher has tightened arrangements to monitor what takes place in the classroom to gauge pupils' learning. Monitoring takes into account pupils' work and the views expressed by others who visit the school. Teachers are aware of the expectation that pay progression links to pupils' improved progress.
- Close links with other local primary schools provide staff with opportunities to observe others, identify effective features of teaching and to compare assessment levels.
- The coordinator for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs, appointed since the last inspection, quickly evaluated the effectiveness of the support provided to help pupils to achieve well. Links made with outside professionals help widen the expertise available to help pupils with any particular or severe needs.
- The school uses additional pupil premium funding well. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from extra support in class, small groups and one-to-one teaching to ensure that their attainment compares well with others in the school and nationally.
- The range of subjects taught is wide and makes good provision for mixed ages and abilities. In English, pupils write for a good range of different purposes. Occasionally in topics or day-to-day work, pupils do not always have enough opportunity to influence how or what they might want to learn within the activities planned by the teacher. They enjoy reading activities, aided by the opening of the new library. All pupils have the opportunity to learn a woodwind instrument during their time in the school to extend their musical range. Activities for children in the Reception class incorporate all the required areas extremely effectively.
- The school has a clear policy for developing Christian and British values, including pupils taking part in activities to explore the meaning of democracy, tolerance, and in the church-based community. For example, older pupils formed themselves into mock political groups recently. Prompted by their manifestoes, pupils voted for the group who will run the school the best for one day. Pupils know a lot about their local community. However, planned activities do not always sufficiently extend their knowledge of others in modern Britain in contrasting localities or with different beliefs.
- Good use is made of the primary sport premium to promote a wider range of sporting opportunities and involvement. These include pupils having tennis coaching and trying out alternative sports, such as orienteering, archery or curling. These initiatives successfully raise activity levels for twice the number of pupils than previously. This has boosted their health while widening the choice of different sporting activities.
- All staff, supported well by governors, ensure good standards of safeguarding routines. Procedures for checking staff appointments are recorded accurately. All staff give regular reminders to staff, pupils and parents about the potential dangers posed by inappropriate internet use and access.
- Staff, governors and pupils work together well to ensure everyone is treated the same. Staff and governors tackle any discrimination quickly. This sense of equality for all ensures pupils treat others fairly and respect others' views.
- The local authority has supported the school effectively during recent changes of leadership. The local authority's accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness has helped the new headteacher and governors gauge how well the school is progressing compared to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is effective and has supported the new headteacher well. Governors have ensured the smooth running of the school during a disruptive period between inspections. Governors are keenly aware of how pupils' results compare to those of others locally and nationally. At the

same time, they make clear their desire for the Christian aims and values of the school to remain high profile.

- Governors are regular visitors to the school, both formally and informally. However, they have recently reviewed their visiting arrangements in order to make them more systematic so they focus on priorities chosen for improvement.
- Governors know how the headteacher maintains the quality of teaching and that performance links closely with pupils' progress. They use this information effectively to assess the quality of teaching to agree or withhold pay awards.
- Governors regularly check on how well senior leaders use additional funds to improve pupils' learning. Regular training, combined with links with the local authority and diocese, helps to keep governors up to date with current requirements.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are keen to talk to visitors and say what they like best about the school. This often includes the friendly atmosphere, the fact that they know everybody well, and that staff are approachable and kind. One pupil said, 'My only problem is that my time here is too short.'
- Pupils behave well within lessons and around the school, and settle down to work quickly when asked. Pupils work well and willingly together, completing the tasks they are set. Pupils do not always get the chance to influence what or how they would like to learn. This occasionally means some pupils are not always challenged in their thinking as much as they could be.
- Pupils say they like being members of the school council and the contribution it makes, such as helping the school to decide what new equipment to provide in the playground. They also talked with enthusiasm about their efforts to write to the local parish council about trying to introduce speed restrictions on the busy road outside the school. The range of other responsibilities that pupils hold in the school is comparatively narrow.
- Morning breakfast club is enjoyed by those attending and provides a positive, healthy start to the day. The after-school club provides additional activities for those attending, ranging from cooking to film nights.
- Pupils' good behaviour is also recognised by parents, as indicated in Parent View, surveys carried out by the school and the majority of parents the inspector met with informally.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils readily say they feel safe and that the staff quickly deal with any difficulties should they arise. They say that incidences of bullying are rare and this is supported by the majority of parents who responded to Parent View.
- Pupils are clear about the pitfalls and dangers of the internet. They know that any suspicious emails or websites are treated with great caution and that they should inform staff if they are concerned about any they come across. Older pupils are also clear about the benefits and limitations of using social media.
- Staff are vigilant about ensuring that safety routines are maintained during the school day. Good levels of supervision during playtimes and lunchtimes ensure that most are typically trouble-free. Pupils with particular needs are given good support. The school is not complacent and actively seeks ways in which it can improve pupils' behaviour and safety to outstanding levels.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has been maintained at typically good levels. Despite changes in staffing, teaching continues to provide pupils with a range of activities that match their abilities and develop their basic skills to good levels.
- Pupils' early reading skills develop well, building on the excellent start they have in the Reception class. Pupils read regularly and confidently, with many enjoying the benefits of the new school library. Younger pupils are taught how to recognise unfamiliar words through a range of effective approaches to help them understand letter combinations and sounds (known as phonics).
- Teachers use a good range of approaches in their lessons to teach writing skills, particularly in developing writing for different purposes such as letters, poetry or in identifying particular verbs or adjectives to spice up their writing. Spelling mistakes sometimes creep into their work in Years 1 to 6, which affects the quality of some writing.

- A range of mathematical activities make sure that pupils know their basic calculation and number facts, as well as the properties of shapes or the best way to present information in graphical form. They regularly tackle word-based mathematical problems but do not always use these skills in different investigative ways to extend their skills.
- Frequent and wide-ranging opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills are successful in helping pupils to express their views clearly and confidently.
- Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are catered for well. A number of different approaches support them both in class-based activities and with more individual help. This enables them to keep pace with others in the class.
- Teachers plan a variety of topics during the year to broaden pupils' skills. They enjoy work based on the Ancient Greeks or the Egyptians. These also provide ways that they can use their writing skills to good effect. However, pupils often complete similar activities in similar ways. This is because they are not always given the opportunities to develop their own areas of interest in the topics they study.
- The teaching of physical education is enhanced by staff learning to teach different sports such as tennis, boccia and curling.
- Pupils' work is marked effectively and regularly. Guidance given to improve pupils' work is clear and successful in helping pupils to see what they can do to help improve their work over time.
- The school's checks on pupils' work over time indicate that presentation has improved, although there are times when some pupils' work falls short of the higher standards set by the staff.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils continue to achieve well from their starting points, which are often typical for their age when they join the Reception class. Results in national tests continue to improve from the levels seen at the last inspection and are now typically above average when pupils leave the school.
- Apart from some inconsistent spelling in Years 1 to 6, pupils generally achieve well in their English work. They speak confidently, clearly and enthusiastically. They listen carefully to adults and when in discussions with fellow pupils. They write for a range of purposes, often using correct punctuation and interesting vocabulary.
- In mathematics, pupils are accurate and confident in their basic number work, knowledge of shape and space, and in presenting work in graphical form. They have regular opportunities to show how well they can solve word-based problems, but are not always as confident to use their skills in different mathematical activities.
- Year 1 pupils taking the national phonics check achieved above average levels last year and this year. Pupils read well through the school, often tackling unfamiliar words confidently. Pupils know a range of popular authors. Pupils spoken with said, without exception, that they enjoyed reading both in school and regularly at home.
- The range of work on display shows that pupils typically achieve well in different subjects such as history, geography and science. There are also attractive displays, such as highlighting pupils' work in knowing how to write a particular style of poetry called 'slamming'.
- A greater number of pupils now take part in a range of sports, often at a local leisure centre, to increase the resources available on offer. A whole-school sports-based week has enabled pupils to experience sports, such as orienteering and archery, in order to develop a more active and healthy lifestyle.
- Reception class children achieve exceptionally well from their individual starting points, particularly in their number, reading, early writing and social skills.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. The proportions reaching higher levels in national tests both at Year 2 and in Year 6 consistently match or exceed the levels reached by pupils in other schools. Within lessons, pupils have more challenging work, although sometimes pupils complete their work quite quickly.
- As there were fewer than five pupils eligible for additional pupil premium funding last year in Year 6, their particular attainment levels and rates of progress are not reported. Overall, disadvantaged pupils across the school achieve well compared with others in the school and nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve particularly well as the support they get is matched closely to their needs, be it academic, social or physical.

**The early years provision****is outstanding**

- Children in the early years provision continue to achieve outstandingly well from starting points which are broadly typical for their age. More recently, children have started at the school with weaker skills in their language and number areas of learning. Children are prepared extremely well for their start in Year 1.
- Children are confident to communicate with adults and each other. They speak clearly and listen intently to their teacher and others. This results in children learning very effectively through the activities planned for them.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught extremely effectively. Children read simple words quickly and accurately, and recognise sounds and letter patterns in words shown to them by their teacher. They also like to make the early attempts at writing their own name or, for example, writing invitations to Cinderella's ball. Attractive classroom displays illustrate children's very good early writing and number abilities.
- Teaching is typically outstanding, continuing the quality recognised in the previous inspection. A variety of activities help children to develop a very wide range of skills in all areas of learning. Children have many opportunities to influence their own learning, such as devising the sorts of things they would like to find out related to their class theme of Cinderella. This included activities such as counting the number of horses needed to pull her carriage, how a programmable toy could be guided to where the wicked stepmother lived, or where Cinderella's shoe has been hidden.
- Outside activities complement the wide range found within the classroom. Children were particularly enthusiastic to measure the width and height of Cinderella's Castle, while some thought of ways it could be constructed. Others also took delight in using some washing-up water to wash Cinderella's dirty clothes.
- Children behave extremely well. They work together with minimal supervision, often helping each other in the activities that they choose to follow. Teachers are extremely skilful at knowing when to allow children to complete their activities or helping them to decide what other activities they would like to investigate.
- The early years is managed outstandingly well. This results in excellent planning, and extremely relevant and engaging activities which promote high levels of achievement. Parents are rightly very pleased with the start that their children make to school. This is aided by a number of events held during the year to help new children settle in and help children move to their next classes. Welfare, health and safety arrangements are given a high profile and are very effective.

## 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>	118749
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	448816

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>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jim Dawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Owen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–25 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 374852
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@sholdenprimary.org.uk

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