



Speldhurst Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118607
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280353
Inspection dates 9 June 2006 to 9 June 2006
Reporting inspector Susan Orpin AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Langton Road Speldhurst Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 ONP
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	01892 863044
Age range of pupils	4 to 11	Fax number	01892 862196
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr A C Scott
Number on roll	138	Headteacher	Mrs Andrea McGlew
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Speldhurst is a small rural Church of England primary school. Pupils are mainly White British. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the usual proportion. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. The headteacher was appointed in January 2006. Since the last inspection there has been much building work.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, where pupils behave well, work hard and enjoy learning in a safe and healthy environment. This judgement is in keeping with the school's own view. The new headteacher, well supported by the governors, has made well-focused changes in a short time, demonstrating that the school has the capacity for further improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Children receive a sound start to their education in Reception. They make satisfactory progress and maintain the above-average standards with which they joined the school. Pupils progress at a similar rate through the rest of the school so that by Years 2 and 6, standards also remain above average.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. The general pace of lessons is too slow and pupils are not always clear about what they are expected to learn. The assessment of pupils' progress is not used sufficiently well to plan activities and this results in work that is sometimes too easy. Marking is satisfactory, although there is often too limited information about what pupils need to do to get better. The curriculum is broad, although pupils who are in the same year group but in different classes do not always do the same work. The school uses other organisations effectively to provide some exciting learning opportunities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has accurately assessed what it needs to do to improve further. Teaching is now monitored regularly and subject coordinators are keen to undertake further responsibility, although they have a limited effect on raising standards because they are not yet monitoring teaching and pupils' achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils understand what the aims of the lesson are, provide more challenge and improve the quality of marking so pupils know what to do to improve.
- Amend curriculum plans to ensure all pupils in mixed-age classes cover the same areas of work as their peers.
- Give subject coordinators more training and responsibility for monitoring and improving teaching and pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with standards that are above those expected, their social skills being particularly good. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class, where they receive a secure grounding in language and mathematics, so that by the time they join Year 1, standards continue to be above average.

In Years 1 to 6, pupils' progress continues to be satisfactory and standards remain above average, although there has been some decline in writing in Year 2, and in English and science in Year 6 in the last two years. This year these trends have been successfully arrested and there are now clear signs of improvement in writing and science, often as a result of the improvements being made to the quality of teaching. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 make better progress in mathematics than their peers.

All pupils make similar progress, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The targets set for the current Year 6 pupils are unrealistic, so the school is unlikely to meet them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. In the Reception class, children share equipment, take turns and listen to each other well. Pupils are interested in lessons, enjoy learning and their attendance is above average. Pupils behave well and are considerate to others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. They know right from wrong, can work together well and value each other's contributions. Pupils readily undertake the responsibilities they are offered. However, they have not developed the skills to make decisions for themselves in lessons because teachers provide too few opportunities for them to do so.

The new school council members are enthusiastic and conscientious, already beginning to suggest improvements to daily life at school. Pupils energetically contribute to the community, for example, by contributing to the village Flower and Vegetable Show. Their developing skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are providing them with a sound preparation for life ahead. Pupils learn to keep safe and healthy and they use these skills well in school and at the busy road entrance. They feel very safe in school and use the many opportunities to be physically active. Most pupils eat healthily and drink water regularly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Teachers relate well to pupils and regularly praise pupils so they try hard. They expect pupils to behave well, and pupils respond accordingly. The use of ICT makes lessons more interesting. Too few lessons have a clear purpose and so pupils are confused. At times, the pace slows and the teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for some pupils, who then lose concentration and become easily distracted. In contrast, in a particularly successful lesson for Years 4 and 5 about buried treasure, the teacher used questions skilfully and helped pupils explore more interesting vocabulary such as scallywag, xenophobia and quibble. However, in other lessons, teachers' questions missed opportunities to

extend pupils' thinking. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory.

Although there are detailed assessments of children in the Reception class and these are used well, in other classes, teachers do not make enough use of pupils' assessments to plan their lessons. As a consequence, pupils, particularly those in mixed-age classes, are not all suitably challenged. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but they do not always give pupils a clear indication about how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The planning of literacy and numeracy is rigorous and there are good links made between subjects to help make learning more relevant. However, the current planning for mixed-age classes means that pupils of similar age in different classes may be learning dissimilar skills. Pupils' skills in ICT are soundly developed through specific lessons and through other subjects. They also benefit from the opportunity to learn French. There is a good programme of PSHE that has been recently developed and that the pupils enjoy. The curriculum is enriched well through special events, such as project weeks. These include work around the theme of the circus, visitors such as the local weather forecaster and trips to art galleries and museums. There is also a good range of well-supported lunchtime and after-school activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Teachers care for their pupils well, teaching them to consider others and behave well so the school is an orderly place. Procedures to ensure their safety, including those for child protection, are rigorous and the risks from the busy road outside the school and the potential problems arising from building work are carefully considered. Pupils feel safe and any bullying is dealt with effectively. They are confident that teachers will help them should the need arise.

Children are helped to settle into Reception well and liaison with the local secondary school is good, easing the move for pupils to their new school. The tracking of pupils' progress has improved recently but is still not fully used by all teachers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since her appointment, the new headteacher has developed strong relationships with parents and pupils and created a unified team of staff who work well together. Through accurate and improved self-evaluation processes, including good consultations with parents, pupils, staff and governors, she has helped the school to begin to analyse its strengths and weaknesses

in an effective manner. The new school council is beginning to have a positive influence on school life.

Governance is good. Governors support the school well and made good strategic decisions to ensure that an effective headteacher was appointed. Through the leadership of the headteacher, they have a good grasp of the school's data and hold the senior team to account for its performance. The new buildings have greatly improved the school and while some accommodation still needs improvement, there are well-advanced plans to complete the refurbishment.

Subject coordinators are keen but are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating achievement and teaching in their subjects. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There have been significant improvements since the arrival of the new headteacher. Her clarity of vision, combined with her accurate perception of what needs to be done, is the key to the school's capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We think that your school is a very friendly and happy place and we particularly like these things:

You like coming to school and you enjoy being with your friends.

You work hard and your work, especially your writing, is beginning to improve.

You behave well and care for each other well.

You like your teachers and know grown-ups work hard to help you learn and keep you safe and healthy.

The people in charge of the school are making it better for you and they know how to continue doing this. We have asked them to make sure that:

The work you do is not too easy or too difficult and when they mark your work you are told what you need to do to improve.

Children in the same year group, but in different classes, learn the same things.

Teachers in charge of subjects make more checks on how well everyone is doing.

We are glad you are proud of your school; the grown-ups are rightly proud of you. They work hard because they want the best for you.

Thank you again for helping us with our work.