



Sibertswold Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118691
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280370
Inspection dates 27 June 2006 to 28 June 2006
Reporting inspector George Logan AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Coldred Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Shepherdswell
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Dover, Kent CT15 7LF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01304 830312
Number on roll	166	Fax number	01304 831386
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Webster
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Liz Bird

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 27 June 2006 - 28 June 2006	Inspection number 280370
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sibertswold CE Primary School serves the village of Shepherdswell, near Dover, and the surrounding rural community. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. One of these, initially educated abroad, is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. Numbers in the school are growing. The school will have seven classes and an enhanced management structure in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, although the school feels that its recent performance has been good. In the period since the last inspection, there has been a significant rise in standards, particularly in the lower school, and in general, pupils achieve well as they move through the school.

Standards are above average at both Years 2 and 6. However, while there are significant strengths in Reception, where provision and standards are good, and in Years 1 and 2, there is inconsistency in achievement and standards in Years 3 and 4. Not all pupils are achieving as well as they should and expectations, particularly of the depth and quality of written work, are not always high enough. This pattern of achievement reflects the quality of teaching across the school, which is satisfactory overall, but significantly more consistent for the younger pupils than the older ones. The school has not had a clear perception of the developing disparities in pupils' learning because the analysis of available data has been superficial. In addition, monitoring of teaching and learning has not been sufficiently rigorous to challenge emerging weaknesses.

The leadership of the school is satisfactory, having taken the school forward in many respects, although several planned initiatives have yet to reach fruition. The quality of care and the provision for pupils' personal development are both good, while pupils with learning difficulties are supported well. The school is popular and attendance is good. Improvement since the last inspection and value for money are both satisfactory. However, not all of the areas for development identified in the school self-evaluation, or in the current inspection, are explicitly identified in the new School Improvement Plan. The steady growth in numbers has created pressures for the very small management team. The governors have sensibly implemented a new management structure from September 2006, with the introduction of an additional class and the appointment of a deputy headteacher. As a result, the school will have the capacity for further improvement and to deal with the weaknesses which have emerged recently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse data more effectively to ensure that prompt action is taken to deal with inconsistencies in pupils' achievements.
- Ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning is more rigorous.
- Ensure that the areas for development identified in the school's self-evaluation are reflected in the school improvement plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average. However, while achievement is satisfactory overall, it is inconsistent across the school. Children enter school with skills similar to most children of their age. In Reception they make good progress across all areas and almost all achieve well, with many exceeding the expected goals on entry to Year 1.

As a result of consistently good teaching, pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. At the end of Year 2, standards in writing and mathematics have been significantly above average for the last three years. At present, standards in Year 2, although not as good as in 2005, are slightly above average, though standards in writing have declined, because fewer pupils have been achieving at the higher levels. The attainment of pupils entering Year 3 has been steadily increasing in recent years.

National test results in Year 6 in 2005 were broadly average. Standards in the current Year 6, in spite of recent disruption in teaching, show some improvement and are likely to be above average. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve their challenging targets in English and mathematics.

The progress made by pupils between the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been at least satisfactory in recent years. However, the positive trend in performance by the end of Year 6 masks other weaknesses. Analysis of pupils' current achievement shows some underachievement in Years 3 and 4. As a result, standards are lower than they should be in those years. These deficits can be directly linked to issues with the teaching. Inadequate analysis of data means that these discrepancies, which are particularly apparent in writing, have only recently been identified.

Pupils with learning difficulties are effectively supported and make satisfactory progress. The very few pupils with English as an additional language make steady progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Standards are above average. However, while achievement is satisfactory overall, it is inconsistent across the school. Children enter school with skills similar to most children of their age. In Reception they make good progress across all areas and almost all achieve well, with many exceeding the expected goals on entry to Year 1.

As a result of consistently good teaching, pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. At the end of Year 2, standards in writing and mathematics have been significantly above average for the last three years. At present, standards in Year 2, although not as good as in 2005, are slightly above average, though standards in writing have declined, because fewer pupils have been achieving at the higher levels. The attainment of pupils entering Year 3 has been steadily increasing in recent years.

National test results in Year 6 in 2005 were broadly average. Standards in the current Year 6, in spite of recent disruption in teaching, show some improvement and are likely to be above average. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve their challenging targets in English and mathematics.

The progress made by pupils between the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been at least satisfactory in recent years. However, the positive trend in performance by the end of Year 6 masks other weaknesses. Analysis of pupils' current achievement shows some underachievement in Years 3 and 4. As a result, standards are lower than they should be in those years. These deficits can be directly linked to issues with the teaching.

Inadequate analysis of data means that these discrepancies, which are particularly apparent in writing, have only recently been identified.

Pupils with learning difficulties are effectively supported and make satisfactory progress. The very few pupils with English as an additional language make steady progress.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, a similar picture to that found by the last inspection. However, teaching in Reception is now good because current staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and provide many challenging and motivating activities.

Teaching is also good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers' expectations have risen and this has been reflected in steadily improving standards. Good working relationships, together with good opportunities for practical work and co-operative working with partners, have improved pupils' learning.

Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, with areas for development. Teachers' expectations are not always sufficiently high and this is reflected in their planning and in pupils' written work. While teachers' understanding and use of assessment information have improved, insufficient analysis of available data means that there is not enough awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' achievement and standards.

Pupils are increasingly aware of how well they are doing and most have clear targets for improvement which they generally understand. However, teachers' marking varies in quality and there is seldom any explicit link to identified targets. Effective support from competent learning support assistants enables pupils with learning difficulties to make similar progress to the others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, providing a broad and interesting range of work. The curriculum for Reception children is good. All areas of learning are covered well.

Although the school is still in the early stages of developing a more thematic approach to organising the curriculum, it has already implemented a series of focus weeks, where subjects such as music, local area studies and multicultural awareness are explored in depth. This is beginning to strengthen provision for pupils identified as gifted or talented. Pupils' confidence in the use of ICT is improving, supported by new high quality resources, with increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills in other subjects. The use of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. French is taught across the school.

The curriculum is enriched by an extensive programme of visits and visitors and a wide range of well-supported extra-curricular opportunities, together with an annual residential visit to France. The programme for personal, social and health education is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support are good. The school places a high value on the welfare of pupils but the quality of guidance for their learning is not consistent and, as a consequence, not all pupils are achieving to their full potential. Class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and are sensitive to their personal needs.

There are well-established procedures for caring for pupils' health and safety and for dealing with child protection issues. The measures taken against the rare cases of bullying are effective. The school conducts regular surveys of the opinions of parents and pupils and uses the information to inform future plans and policies. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by the governing body and staff.

The role of subject leaders is not fully developed and the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that standards are consistent across the school. That said, the recent management focus on ensuring that standards have been maintained during a period of turbulence in Year 6 has proved effective. However, there are also weaknesses in the use of data to identify areas of underperformance. The sum of these weaknesses means that the school's self-evaluation is not fully accurate. The effectiveness of self-evaluation is limited further by the fact that not all identified areas for development are clearly prioritised in the school's improvement plan, although the views of parents, pupils and staff are taken into account.

Governors provide satisfactory support but do not sufficiently hold the headteacher to account in relation to the monitoring of the school's performance. Governors bring a wealth of senior management experience to the school. They largely meet their responsibilities and all statutory requirements are in place. Leadership and management have made only a satisfactory contribution to the school's improvement to date but steps have been taken to strengthen the senior management team by the appointment of a deputy headteacher for the autumn term. The school will then have a greater capacity to raise standards further and improve overall performance.

Effective use is made of resources and the weakness in the ICT provision at the last inspection has been redressed. The school now makes good provision in this area.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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	2	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?	2	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	3	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 recently. We enjoyed spending time with you and meeting some of you – especially the members of the school council, who talked to us so readily. It was really helpful to hear what you had to say.

We feel that your school does several things well, but can improve some others to help you to learn better. We feel that most of you are really motivated in lessons and are keen to learn. Your attendance is good. You work hard and the youngest pupils in particular achieve well. Across the school, most of you reach high standards in English and mathematics. You particularly enjoy the focus weeks of special activities. You look after each other well and feel safe. The care that staff give you is good. The activities available to you after school, like the Messy Art club, are good. You have the opportunity to discuss things that affect you in school and your decisions are acted upon.

We have asked the headteacher to work with the teachers to make sure that they use all the information they have to set you the most challenging work they can. We have asked the headteacher to look at lessons and at the work you do as often as possible, just to make sure that everything is at the best standard it can be. Also, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to make sure that their plan for how the school will develop in the future is really clear, with the right priorities. Lastly, some of you, especially in the middle of the school, could be making more effort with your writing and the way you present your written work.

We hope that you will all work together to make sure that the school builds on the progress it has made and improves further.