



Southborough Church of England Primary School and Tunbridge Wells Language Unit

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118712
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280379
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector David Curtis AI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Broomhill Park Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Southborough
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 OJY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01892 529682
Number on roll	393	Fax number	01892 512619
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr RJ Fitz-Gerald
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2006	Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Harniman

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Introduction

All classes were visited during the inspection and two joint lesson observations were carried out with the headteacher in Year 2 and Year 6. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors, key staff and the school improvement partner from the local authority. The inspector met with the school council and met other pupils informally. The results of 209 questionnaires were analysed.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average sized primary school. It has a specialist speech and language unit for Kent for up to 18 pupils. Including those pupils in the Unit, the school has a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities than found nationally. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a small proportion from minority-ethnic families. Six pupils are at the early stage of learning English. Children start school with standards which are below expectations in the key area of communication, language and literacy. The school has Activemark Gold from Sports England and Artsmark Gold from the Arts Council.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives outstanding value for money. At the heart of the school's success are the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher. Together with her deputy headteacher, senior management team and governors, she has established a school where every single member of staff is committed to providing each child with the best possible education. The school is constantly analysing its own performance and seeking ways to improve. The excellent progress made since the last inspection is a tribute to the school's success and capacity for ongoing improvement. The recent initiative to raise standards in mathematics is a shining example of a school not resting on its laurels.

This is a school where pupils want to learn. They arrive excitedly each morning ready and willing for the new day. Their good attendance reflects their very positive attitudes to school. Pupils really value their teachers. As one said, 'Teachers listen to our views and seek our opinions'. Behaviour is very good. Relationships are excellent and this is exemplified in the way pupils from the Unit are welcomed and supported by their peers. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils reflect sensitively on issues such as how it would feel to be an Apache Indian taking part in a buffalo hunt. Pupils have a very strong sense of right and wrong. Many enjoy and value the chance to work in pairs and groups. Their cultural and multicultural awareness is excellent. They gain a genuine appreciation of the lives of others through art, music and the many international links with other schools.

Because pupils enjoy learning and want to be at school, they make good progress from the day they start. Progress is outstanding, particularly in Years 5 and 6, although in Years 3 and 4, when pupils work without direct support from an adult, their work rate and their progress slows. In the last few years, standards in Year 6 have risen from below average to above average in English, mathematics and science. The improvement continues in the current Year 6. A far greater proportion of pupils now achieve the higher Level 5 in national tests. In the current Year 2, standards are much better than in previous years with the most noticeable improvement in mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are exceptionally high, as was shown in the video presentation made by pupils in Year 6 of their recent visit to France. Singing in the lower school assembly was of a high standard.

Pupils are very aware of the importance of eating a healthy diet and in keeping fit. Many talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of PE lessons and after-school sporting clubs. Through the school council, pupils have a very strong voice in the running of the school. Pupils value the many other ways they can express their views on the school. They show great enthusiasm in taking part in community events, including a pentathlon involving 14 other local schools. Pupils really know the importance of keeping safe in and out of school. They are prepared exceptionally well, socially, emotionally and academically, for their future roles in society.

A key factor in pupils' excellent all-round development is the very high quality of teaching. Teachers' planning is excellent, especially in meeting the needs of all pupils

in lessons. A significant strength is the way in which teachers assess learning in previous lessons and amend planning accordingly. For example, a mathematics lesson in Year 6 was revised in order to give pupils more experience of solving problems when calculating missing angles. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, although there are aspects of mathematics where it could be improved further. Assessment is very good and used most effectively to identify and support pupils who require additional help. Occasionally teachers do not make full use of teaching assistants to help them assess pupils' day-to-day progress in lessons.

The school's curriculum is outstanding. In the Foundation Stage, it is planned carefully against the 'stepping stones' for each of the early learning goals. The provision for outdoor play is very good. In Years 1 to 6, pupils receive their full entitlement to the national curriculum. Planning for pupils to use ICT skills in other subjects is exceptionally good. The use of ICT is particularly appealing to boys and is a key reason why they achieve as well as girls. Curriculum enrichment is outstanding. The school is constantly looking for every opportunity to give pupils rich experiences in art, music, sport and foreign languages. The school's international links make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. There is an excellent range of after-school clubs which are very well attended. The two libraries motivate pupils to want to read. One boy said that his favourite thing was, 'All the books because I love reading, but can we still have more?'

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is exceptional. Vulnerable pupils are supported particularly well. Child protection procedures are rigorous. Governors carry out regular checks to ensure the school is a safe environment for pupils.

The great majority of parents are very supportive of the school. Only 5% of those who completed the questionnaire disagree that the school seeks the views of parents/carers and takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Many parents wrote very positive comments about the school, including parents of pupils in the Unit. As one wrote, 'I cannot praise the school highly enough'. The school's success is succinctly expressed by another parent: 'So much more than just the ordinary curriculum is offered to the children which makes the school exciting and helps to turn the children into well rounded young people'.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

In Reception, children make very good progress in 'Jolly Phonics' as a preparation for reading. Across the school, pupils are very confident in speaking and listening. In Year 6, the mathematical reasoning of more able pupils is exceptionally good. In all classes, there are very good examples of pupils using literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively in other subjects. The 'Tie Project' in Year 6 is an excellent example of pupils being involved in a real-life business venture from design to marketing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school environmental council plays a significant role in raising pupils' awareness of important issues. Posters such as 'Turn off the taps' show an understanding of the importance of saving water. Pupils know that their views are taken into consideration, for example through questionnaires on homework and when they leave the school. Pupils in Year 5 are concerned about the transfer to Year 6 so are teamed with a Year 6 'buddy' to calm their nerves.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

In most lessons, teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties. In lessons, pupils are particularly good at working independently because they know what is expected of them. 'Work is interesting' and 'I like writing my news' were the views of two pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has forged very strong links with other schools to enrich the curriculum, particularly in languages and sport. Pupils from Reception upwards learn French. In Year 5, pupils learn Latin. The current initiative to improve music through building a dedicated music room and providing a specialist music teacher is having a positive impact on raising standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is very strong support for pupils with learning difficulties, including those in the Unit. All pupils have targets to improve their learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils have individual targets based on regular assessments of their work. The pupils value and enjoy homework most when it helps them work towards their personal targets in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Governors are extremely hard working and very supportive of the school. They have a detailed understanding of the work of the school through their effective programme of monitoring. The enthusiasm and dedication of subject leaders in raising standards is excellent. The subject manager for ICT has made a significant contribution to the quality of the ICT provision in the school and to the high standards that pupils achieve.

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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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 making me feel so welcome when I came to your school. In particular I would like to say a big thank-you to the school council who gave up part of their lunch break to talk to me.

You are very lucky that you go to such an outstanding school. Your headteacher and teachers really care for you and they want all of you to succeed. I know that many of you really appreciate the help and support that teachers give you in lessons. I was impressed with your politeness and how sensibly you answered my questions and told me about the work you were doing. You work hard in lessons and I enjoyed seeing how well you work in pairs and/or groups. Many of you told me how much you enjoy sport and that you appreciate all of the clubs that you can attend at lunch time or after school.

I saw lots of really good work in your classrooms and around the school. I liked the ties that Year 6 designed and made so much that I bought one to wear on my next inspection. I thought that the way you ask and answer questions was very good. It is very noticeable that you really appreciate the fact that you can tell your headteacher and teachers what you like and dislike about your school. I have said to Mrs Harniman and the governors that you want the toilets improved for those of you not in Year 6.

There are a few small things that I think need to be done to make your school even better. There are times when some of you in Years 3 and 4 could work harder. Teachers need to make sure they give you the right help in mathematics. Whilst teaching assistants provide you with excellent support most of the time, there are just a few lessons where they could help teachers more by checking on how well you take part in question and answer sessions. I wish you all continued success.