



# Sutton Valence Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118314  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 285346  
**Inspection dates** 6 July 2006 to 6 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Linda Kelsey HMI

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	North Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		Sutton Valence
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Maidstone, Kent ME17 3HT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01622 842188
<b>Number on roll</b>	210	<b>Fax number</b>	01622 844549
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 May 2006	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Norman Moore

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, who observed teaching in five of the seven classes, studied data, received over 100 parent questionnaires and spoke to children and staff.

## **Description of the school**

Sutton Valence is an average-sized primary school where the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is more than in most schools. A small number of pupils have free school meals, and mobility of pupils is high because of the availability of local seasonal work for adults. A small proportion of pupils have English as an additional language. During the inspection, the school was undergoing a major building programme to add a new library, small work area for specific groups of pupils, an information and communication technology (ICT) suite and a better reception area for the school to welcome parents and visitors.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school because pupils' achievement, teaching, leadership and management are all good. This agrees with the school's self-evaluation. The key areas for improvement are identified in a well focused school improvement plan and capacity for more improvement is good. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its resources for ICT and these are better used in lessons. Standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1 have improved following a fall from the high results in 2003.

Overall achievement of pupils is above the national average. Children enter the school with just below average attainment coming from a varied range of backgrounds and pre-school education. There is an above average number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities through the school and this is particularly high in some year groups.

Pupils' attainment is just below average as they leave the Reception class, although over two thirds are working at the level expected of them. The Foundation Stage profile indicates that a few pupils are working at well below the expected level of a five year old. Pupils progress satisfactorily through Key Stage 1, although results in 2005 fell significantly to below average. As a result, the school has focused on improving writing skills and standards have gone up this year. In Year 2, pupils were writing well, forming well structured sentences and using capital letters and full stops correctly. The current results for Key Stage 1 are likely to be closer to the national averages.

Pupils make good progress between Key Stage 1 and 2. Standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school; over a third gain places at the local grammar schools. The choice of secondary school is a priority for parents. As the self-evaluation states, the 'selection process is of greater importance than National Curriculum test scores'. The school evaluates that this affects the motivation of pupils during the final terms at school.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent: they are polite, play well together, are well behaved and ready to work hard in class. Attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy school and like the headteacher because he listens to their views, takes them seriously and acts upon them. As one pupil said, 'The school council has been good at getting us play equipment for the outside area; we now want to make the sports equipment better.' They believe that they can achieve this.

Pupils know what a healthy diet is and most bring well planned packed lunches to school each day, avoiding chocolate and fizzy drinks. Very few choose to eat a hot meal because the quality of these is not good; the headteacher is currently keeping a log in order to monitor the quality and hopefully improve them. Children feel safe at the school and are well looked after by all the adults. Child protection procedures are fully in place and all adult workers in the school have been Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked. The governors are very proactive in ensuring that this is done regularly.

Teaching is good, a fact confirmed by the school's own monitoring. Lessons are well planned and there is a good curriculum. Learning support assistants work closely with groups of pupils who have been targeted for extra support. The monitoring of pupils' progress through the school is good. Individual pupil tracking data is used to monitor performance of children and to ensure that they achieve their full potential by the time they leave school. Information learnt is used to set targets and provide support to those that need it most.

Leadership and management are good and the school has the capacity to improve further. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed from September and some teaching arrangements have been changed to improve teaching further and share expertise more efficiently. All staff, including learning support assistants, are encouraged to go on courses to improve their own knowledge and understanding. Governors are active and fully support the school.

The self-evaluation is accurate and the headteacher knows what needs to be done to bring about further improvement. Monitoring has been focused on improving teachers' skills. Good feedback is given to teachers about how they can improve. Some paired observational work has been done with senior staff, outside consultants from the primary excellence project, and the school improvement partner. This has enabled the school to focus on enhancing the quality of teaching through the school.

The majority of parents are positive about the school but a small minority have expressed the view that they believe their concerns are not taken seriously enough. The accommodation is in a poor state of repair and decoration. Parents have also complained about unsafe steps and hazardous walkways. The building project currently underway, to improve access to the school and make a large reception area for parents, should go some way to improving the learning space and make the place a safer environment.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement and standards are good. Children enter the school with just below average attainment and make good progress through the school. Although standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been generally average, they fell below average in 2005. However, by the time pupils leave at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above the national average. 2006 test results indicate that standards are likely to be average again this year.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development and well-being are excellent. Pupils enjoy school, attend well and are proud to be part of its success. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all excellent.

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## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school because teachers know the pupils well, use good assessment data and plan the lessons to suit pupils' needs.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, interesting and relevant. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and make good progress.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good as set out in the self evaluation. The accommodation is in a poor state of repair but the new building project should go some way to improving the overall facilities and make the building a safer place to be. Pupils are well cared for and learning support assistants work effectively alongside pupils in class.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Monitoring and evaluation correctly identify where areas can be improved; these are developed through the school improvement plan which is coordinated by the senior management team. Members of staff are well supported through training and their roles are currently being developed through the Primary Leadership Programme.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	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	2	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

You will remember that I visited your school recently and joined some of you for a picnic lunch on the field. I would like to thank you for your excellent and courteous behaviour around the school.

In talking to you, I realised how much you enjoy coming to school, and are excited about how you are consulted by your headteacher, so that you can give your viewpoints and make changes for the better. Your school is skilled at ensuring that you reach good standards in English, mathematics and science. You also do a good range of interesting and varied work in other subjects. Your teachers and helpers work hard to make sure that you behave well, look after each other and contribute to making the school better. Some of your ideas, such as getting the playground equipment, have been really good.

I have asked your headteacher to make sure that you all continue to work hard at improving your writing, especially the younger children, and that all of your teaching is of the highest quality. Your school has been in the middle of a big building project and I am sure that you will find that, when completed, this will make your environment an even better and safer place to be.

I wish you all the best of luck, health and happiness for your future.