

Sparsholt Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116317
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290498
Inspection date	4 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	110
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Lucy White
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Young
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2002
School address	Woodman Lane Sparsholt Winchester SO21 2NR
Telephone number	01962 776264
Fax number	01962 776033

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is much smaller than average and serves a relatively advantaged community. It draws pupils from quite a wide area and numbers have increased significantly over the past four years. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and none speak English as an additional language. There are a few traveller pupils of Irish heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is much lower than average but increasing.

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 with a number of outstanding aspects. At Sparsholt every child really does matter and at the heart of its work are the excellent care and support of every individual. This is widely recognised by parents, who hold the school in high regard. One, representing the views of many, commented 'The school has a wonderful atmosphere where pupils are constantly encouraged to look after and value each other.' Consequently, pupils' personal development is outstanding. They feel extremely safe and secure, behave well and are very proud of their school. They enjoy everything that it has to offer, become enthusiastic learners and achieve well.

Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage because of a stimulating and lively learning environment. They become confident learners and achieve well. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school because of good teaching and a curriculum designed to meet their needs. Very good systems have been introduced to track pupils' progress and to provide additional support for those who are in danger of falling behind. Consequently, pupils make generally good progress and reach standards that are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading but some do not do quite as well in writing. The school is aware that pupils do not currently have sufficient opportunities to use their writing skills in different subjects. Pupils' good achievement, together with their positive attitudes to learning, prepares them well for secondary education and the world beyond.

The curriculum is enriched through many visits and visitors and a range of additional activities in sport, music and creative activities. The many sporting activities, in particular, enhance pupils' outstanding understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is a strength of the school and is used very effectively to support pupils' learning in other subjects. The carefully organised setting arrangements in Key Stage 2 contribute well to pupils' good basic skills. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and present activities in lively and innovative ways which engage and motivate learners. Marking is encouraging and supportive but does not often give pupils a clear idea of how to improve their work.

The headteacher leads the school very successfully and he is very well supported by an enthusiastic staff team and a highly effective governing body. They have ensured that the school welcomes everybody and provides high quality pastoral care for pupils and their families. This is illustrated by the very good support for vulnerable pupils including those with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities. The school works in very close partnership with a range of agencies to meet their needs. School leaders are well aware of its strengths and are committed to raising achievement and improving teaching and learning still further. Issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed and the school has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to write in different subjects in order to improve their achievement in writing.
- Ensure that teachers' marking and feedback consistently gives pupils a clear idea of how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities generally achieve well. Although children's skills and understanding vary from year to year they are generally above average when they begin school. Their good start in the Foundation Stage ensures that most reach, and many exceed, the goals set for children of that age by the time they enter Year 1. Standards fluctuate because of the small numbers involved. For example, at the age of seven they dipped in 2006 because this was a small group containing a significant number of pupils with learning difficulties. At the age of eleven standards in English, mathematics and science have risen over the past few years and were exceptionally high in 2006. The majority of pupils reached the higher level in all three subjects which is much better than in most schools. The current Year 6 are not working at quite the same high level in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading. A number do not achieve as well in writing by the end of both key stages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including the social, moral, spiritual and cultural dimensions, are outstanding. One parent remarked, 'The community spirit across the year groups is noteworthy' and this is evident in the way pupils relate to each other in their 'family groupings' in assembly, for example. Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in the good attendance of most and in their positive attitudes to learning. They talk enthusiastically and thoughtfully about school life and one older pupil expressed the view that it was 'a real privilege' to be at Sparsholt because of the beautiful environment. Behaviour is good. A few older pupils present challenging behaviour from time to time but this is dealt with well by staff. Pupils talk extremely knowledgeably about the importance of diet and exercise and conduct themselves extremely safely around the site. They play a prominent role in the village and church communities and raise money for a variety of charities. The school council take a pride in their work and feel that they make a real contribution to school life, for example in making recommendations for the improvement of the toilets and outside areas.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because of the consistently good quality of teaching and learning. Some lessons are outstanding. Teachers plan work effectively to challenge pupils of all abilities. They are supported very well by teaching assistants, who make an important contribution to the quality of education, particularly for pupils who find aspects of learning more difficult. Teachers present activities in interesting ways which motivate pupils. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils were asked to order photographs into a sequence as a basis for their writing. This created great enthusiasm and lively discussion. Teachers ensure that pupils have many opportunities to reflect on their learning and discuss their ideas. In a mathematics lesson in lower Key Stage 2, pupils were sorting shapes according to a range of properties. Skilful questioning from the teacher and lively discussion consolidated their already good understanding of this aspect of mathematics. In pupils' books there are some examples of feedback which

gives a clear idea of what they need to do take the next steps in their learning. This is not consistent, however, and marking is often confined to general comments and praise.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and outstanding in some respects. Many parents rightly commend the range of enrichment activities for such a small school. As well as the many clubs and visits, themed weeks and whole-school productions greatly enhance pupils' enjoyment of their education. Pupils' personal development has a high priority and results in caring and reflective learners. Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the last inspection. Learning is presented in exciting ways and children have many opportunities to explore the world around them. The varying needs of the Reception and Year 1 are met very successfully in the mixed class. The school has identified a number of 'able' pupils and provides for these pupils through additional challenges, for example in setting up a 'business' designed to make a profit. ICT is being used to support pupils' learning in increasingly innovative ways. The school has begun to plan links between subjects in order to help pupils see the connections in their learning, but recognises that this is at an early stage of development. In particular, this restricts opportunities for pupils to write for different audiences in a variety of contexts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

'The school has a fantastic caring ethos' was the typical comment of one parent. Indeed, the care, guidance and support of pupils is outstanding and underpinned by strong Christian values. Staff look after pupils extremely well. As one pupil put it 'Staff are very kind and trustworthy. You can go to anyone if you have a problem.' Several parents comment on the quality of the support for pupils with learning and emotional difficulties. Traveller learners are fully integrated into the life of the school and are well supported. Academic guidance is very good. Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully in order to set challenging targets for improvements. Pupils know their targets and are clear that they help them to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has brought many improvements to the building and grounds and has been successful in increasing the school roll significantly. He has introduced a very effective system to track pupils' progress in order to raise their achievement still further. Teaching and learning and performance data are monitored rigorously in order to confirm strengths and identify weaknesses. This information is used effectively to plan for improvement. For example, the school has been working on improving writing for some time. Whilst this has led to some improvements in pupils' achievement, school leaders recognise that more work remains to be done. Staff work very effectively as a team and assume a number of roles as the school is small. However, their responsibilities for raising achievement and improving teaching and learning are underdeveloped. Governors are very effective and their 'fact finding' strategy enables them to have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sparsholt Church of England Primary School, Winchester, SO21 2NR

You may remember that I visited your school recently with another inspector. We really enjoyed our day at Sparsholt and you all helped by being so friendly and helpful. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

You and your parents are right to be proud of your school because it is a good school which is outstanding in some respects. You told us how well the staff look after you and how this makes you feel extremely safe and secure. The school has a real family atmosphere and we were impressed with how well you look after one another. We also thought you behaved well and were extremely enthusiastic about the school. Well done!

The teachers make sure that you do well in English, mathematics and science. Those of you who find things a bit more difficult are given lots of extra help. Year 6 pupils who will be going to secondary school shortly are very well prepared. You are very lucky to have such a lot of visits and extra activities to do. You told us how much you enjoy these and staff work very hard to provide them.

Your headteacher has worked hard and successfully to make the school the place it is today. Many of your parents told us how much they appreciate his efforts. He gets lots of help from all the staff and the governing body. They are determined to make things even better for you. We have asked them to do a couple of things that we think might help.

- You all read extremely well but some of you are not doing quite as well in writing. We have asked teachers to give you more chances to write about different things to help some of you improve your writing.
- Teachers mark your work regularly and give you lots of praise. We want them to make it even better so that you always have a clear idea of what you need to do to improve.

Yours truly

Graham Lee

Lead inspector