

Selling Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118650
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291200
Inspection date	5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	
School	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sid Harding
Headteacher	Ian Fidge
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2001
School address	The Street Selling Faversham ME13 9RQ
Telephone number	01227 752202
Fax number	01227 752906

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving a rural area of North Kent. There are fewer than average pupils from minority ethnic groups and none at an early stage of speaking English. The school has a lower than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Selling school is a good school with some outstanding features. Parents praise the school warmly. One reported, 'This is a well-run, happy little school that maintains a good academic record and thinks about pupil needs.'

Pupils make a sound start to their education in the well-run Foundation Stage. They leave school with above average standards and, although their writing performance lags behind that in other areas, pupils' achievement during their time at school is good. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and their behaviour and enjoyment of education are outstanding. They love coming to school, are generous with their praise and have very few criticisms. Pupils receive good care, guidance and support and rightly feel safe and well cared-for. However, the academic support they are offered is too informal to provide consistently clear and unambiguous advice and does not fully involve pupils and parents. Teaching is good and has some outstanding features. Assisted by very positive responses from pupils, teachers maintain a strong focus on promoting achievement, so that their learning is good. The school's curriculum is good and the way it combines subjects in a 'creative curriculum' provides stimulating opportunities for study. For its size, the school offers numerous, popular and well-attended enrichment activities.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The positive and cheerful influence of the headteacher extends throughout the school. Teachers and other adults share his vision and work effectively as a team in promoting change for the better. The school has made good improvements since its previous inspection. Monitoring generally provides useful information to help the school plan for the future. Governors are supportive and effective and hold the school to account where necessary.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on recent successes to promote better standards of writing across the school.
- Develop a more formal structure to provide clearer information to pupils and parents about how learners' work could be improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school with the expected level of skills and they leave Year 6 with standards that are above average. The achievement of all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, during their time at school is good.

The Foundation Stage provides the youngest children with a sound start to their education. They develop good learning habits and achieve well. By the time they start Year 1, their standards are at the expected levels.

Two significant features promote the good achievement of pupils across Years 1 to 6. First, teaching is consistently good and maintains a very clear focus on ensuring pupils learn well. Second, pupils are very well behaved and co-operative, collaborating fully in their learning.

Despite these strengths, there are some variations in achievement. In particular, the standard of pupils' writing lags behind other areas. This was particularly noticeable in 2006 test results. The school has since taken vigorous action, with some success, as preliminary results for 2007

tests show higher standards of writing across the school. However, as the school is aware, there is some distance to go before this imbalance in performance is completely eliminated. Information and communication technology (ICT) standards, which were a concern at the time of the previous inspection, have benefited from the school's thorough action and are now above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Staff value pupils highly and this contributes strongly to the pupils' enjoyment of their learning and commitment to doing well. This enjoyment is reflected in pupils' good punctuality and above average attendance. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Largely as a result of the school's Christian ethos, pupils develop a good understanding of spirituality and strong respect for other cultures and faiths. Assemblies and music make an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual understanding.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, because they are keen to please. They feel safe and know that there is always an adult to turn to if they have a problem. They have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and enjoy the regular physical education lessons and after school clubs. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, particularly as members of the school council. This organisation enables them to contribute to decisions and gives them an effective voice in helping to improve the school. For example, 'They fought for all pupils throughout the school to have free fruit,' said a Year 2 pupil. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community. This includes fund raising for charities, managing the school council's budget, participating in a wide range of local events and linking with an African school. These endeavours help pupils to develop an appreciation of skills needed in the workplace. Pupils' good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and the many opportunities the school gives to work in teams and support one another, ensures that they are prepared well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The outstanding strength of teaching is in the skilful identification of pupils' individual needs and in using this knowledge to match activities and tasks to different ages and abilities. Teaching assistants work well together with teachers and provide effective support, particularly with those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to ensure that all pupils progress at similar rates. Teachers usually check that the pupils know exactly what they need to learn by the end of the lesson. No time is wasted and the pupils respond well to tasks that are challenging and enjoyable. Because behaviour is so good, lessons flow with a minimum of interruptions. Older pupils contribute well to their learning by showing exceptional maturity and independence when participating in discussions.

Assessment is used effectively to pinpoint important areas for improvement and teachers' precise questions probe pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking. In most lessons, pupils are clear about what it is they should learn. However, they do not always have suitable opportunities to assess for themselves how well they are doing, to allow them to take greater responsibility for their work and achievement. Marking is regular but does not set clear enough targets for improvement.

Foundation Stage children benefit from a good balance between teacher-directed activities and choosing activities for themselves that encourage the children to be independent in their learning. The balance reflects their changing needs during the year and promotes their achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is balanced, creative and relevant so that pupils enjoy a wide variety of experiences that bring learning to life. It is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and delivered. Planning is detailed and covers all the subjects that it should. Links between subjects have correctly been identified by the school as an area for development. ICT is used effectively in all classes to support and extend pupils' learning across the curriculum. Interactive whiteboards are utilised well to stimulate pupils' interest and make learning fun and exciting.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education supports pupils' overall development very well. They gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, how to choose a healthy diet and how to keep fit. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the good range of clubs and activities, including many sports initiatives, provided for them at lunchtime as well as before and after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils and parents correctly regard the school as a very caring place. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Staff show a high level of commitment and competence in promoting health and safety and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. Pupils at risk or in need of extra support are quickly identified and given the help they require. All pupils speak warmly about the adults at the school and would not hesitate to ask for help or advice if they felt it was needed.

The school uses its plentiful assessment information to set targets for pupils but these are not very specific. Most older pupils know their standards and have some idea about how they could be improved. However, these areas for improvement tend to be imprecise and pupils and parents are currently not sufficiently involved in this process.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the perceptive leadership of the headteacher, all staff work with a common sense of purpose in promoting the well-being and achievement of pupils. The school listens carefully to the views of pupils and parents to ensure it has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It thoroughly analyses assessment data to provide more helpful information and all this is then used to prioritise plans for the future. For example, the school has directed extra resources into the promotion of better writing across the school after its analysis had correctly indicated weaknesses in this area. Resources are well used to promote better achievement and the school provides good value for money.

Teaching and learning are regularly monitored and staff receive regular feedback. However, much of this interaction is informal and so the indicating of areas where teachers could improve can be imprecise and follow up is irregular.

Governors provide strong support for the school. They visit classrooms regularly to gain independent evidence of how the school operates. The evidence they gather is fed back to the school and informs the governors' inputs into the school's development planning. The 'School Plan' is well focused and relevant and provides an effective template for the future. The school's capacity for improvement is good.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	2

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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Selling Church of England Primary School, Selling, Faversham, ME13 9RQ

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. The inspectors thought you were polite and very well behaved and really enjoyed chatting to you. You said how happy you are at school and how well you all get on with one another and your teachers. The inspectors agree with you that Selling is a good school.

You are well taught and learn well so that your standards are above average and your achievement is good. The way the school cares for you is good and this, combined with your very good behaviour and positive attitudes, helps ensure that your personal development is also good.

You told us that you have an interesting range of subjects to study and the inspectors agree that the curriculum is good. The headteacher leads the team of teachers very well and everyone at the school works well together to make sure that you get very good opportunities to do well. Leadership and management are good.

- Even good schools like yours can improve. The two main areas that the school should deal with are:
- Your standards of writing are still not as high as those in other subjects. You need to work hard in partnership with the school to improve them.
- You do not get enough clear information about how you can improve your work.

Once again, many thanks for your help and friendliness during the inspection.

With all good wishes for the future

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector