

Sheet Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115946
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312118
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Grove

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Harvey
Headteacher	Mrs Kathy Iles
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	School Lane Sheet Petersfield GU32 2AS
Telephone number	01730 263310
Fax number	01730 269738

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated a village near Petersfield, and is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, principally speech, language and communication difficulties, has grown considerably, and is now above average. The school is currently experiencing medium-term staffing turbulence. In recognition of its work, the school has been awarded Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sheet Primary is a satisfactory school. Its very positive ethos for learning rests on strongly held principles about the value of each individual pupil. As a result, the teaching and support staff treat pupils with great respect and care. Pupils are accordingly very happy and confident, and show outstanding enjoyment of school. There is a good partnership with parents, who express confidence in the school. Respondents to the parental questionnaire unanimously agreed that their children enjoy school. Many showed strong appreciation of what the school offers. One parent, for instance, wrote that the headteacher 'produces a clear vision for the school to produce happy, independent, lifelong learners'.

The inclusive ethos and the high quality of pastoral care result in the good personal development of pupils, including their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships between staff and pupils, and also between pupils, are excellent. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and elsewhere in the school is outstanding. The very positive atmosphere is set from the Foundation Stage, and permeates the whole school.

Pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory. The increasing number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities means that attainment on entry is now around the level expected for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, and reach national expectations. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because of good teaching. This results from good assessment, and work that meets their needs well. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been above average in some past years, although they fall to average when the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is particularly high.

After Year 2, pupils' rate of progress is uneven, because teaching has not been consistently good. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make good progress, because of good assessment and good match of tasks to pupils' needs. Standards improved a little in 2007, but remain broadly average. Good progress in Years 5 and 6 has not fully compensated for the slower rate of progress after Year 2.

The curriculum is good. Personal and social education contributes well to pupils' personal development. There is a particular strength in enrichment, including extra-curricular provision. Staff provide very good pastoral care and guidance for pupils. Improvements have been made to target-setting for pupils in Year 2 in writing and mathematics, and in Year 6 in writing. These are having a positive impact because pupils understand what they need to do next in their learning. These new target-setting arrangements are not yet applied consistently across the school, although their impact to date has been good.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership team, and the governors, provide a clear sense of direction. The leadership team is fully aware that the quality of teaching has not been consistent, and has provided good support by associating less experienced staff with the good practice within the school. Despite staffing turbulence, which has been outside the school's control, the team has thus ensured that good organisation has continued. Thanks to this good management, satisfactory progress and broadly average standards have been sustained. This illustrates the accuracy and effectiveness of self-evaluation processes. Given the good support provided for less experienced colleagues, the school now has a good capacity to improve. There are good partnerships with other small primary schools, and with the feeder secondary school. Close links have also been established with external agencies, for instance to provide support for pupils with learning needs.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's personal development is good because the close-knit team provides care of high quality. Daily work in personal and social education enables children to settle in well, and offers a good start to school. Children learn to initiate activities, and experience learning with adults. Innovations such as 'Writedance' interest the children, and develop their fine control for handwriting. Planning provides a clear structure for learning. The learning assistant is closely involved, and provides good support. Children are assessed on entry, and time for observation and recording is built into the daily routines. The tracking of children's progress is good. Progress is satisfactory, but is not as good in some aspects of early numeracy and literacy as it is in others. For example, pupils make good progress in linking sounds and letters and in acquiring early reading skills. However, their progress in developing language for communication and thinking is more limited, because this aspect has not received a strong enough focus. The outdoor area provides a satisfactory learning environment. Improvements have been made to this area, and the school has rightly identified the need to enhance provision, and this has already been planned.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science, and enable all pupils to make good progress, by ensuring that all teaching is consistently good, and provides tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs.
- Apply more consistently across the school the good target-setting arrangements that have been developed.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. The increasing proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is the main factor in the variable standards at Year 2. In 2007, teacher assessments showed an improvement on 2006 in reading standards, and a smaller improvement in writing and mathematics, but few pupils reached the high Level 3 standard in these subjects. At Year 6, pupils' results showed some improvement in mathematics and science because of improvements to the curriculum and resources in both subjects. For instance, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is supporting learning in mathematics well. Pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties make the same satisfactory progress as others because of the effective support provided by learning assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

In lessons, pupils are very attentive, and focus very well on their work. In the playground and around the school, they are consistently friendly and considerate towards others. Their spiritual development has improved, as was evident in a moving assembly. Pupils eat healthily and are physically active through 'Activate' in the early years, physical education sessions, and extra-curricular sports. There is very little bullying. When occasional difficulties arise, pupils

are confident to involve adults, because 'they are people you can trust', as one school councillor explained. The school council contributes well to the school. Pupils also support the community; for instance, the gardening club won a class in the Petersfield in Bloom Competition. Although pupils' social skills, and their progress in ICT, support their future economic well-being well, this is limited by their current achievements in literacy and numeracy. Very high levels of enjoyment of school are reflected in pupils' attendance, which is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good relationships, and a good pace to lessons, provide consistently strong starting points for learning. The small school context means that the four classes each contain pupils of mixed ages, with a wide span of prior attainment. Learning is good when lesson planning and strong classroom organisation make good provision for this broad range of pupils' abilities. Where the match to pupils' different abilities is weaker, progress is only satisfactory. A range of good practical activities is provided for younger pupils, and this supports their learning well. The interactive whiteboards in classrooms, and the use of laptop computers, enliven teaching and arouse pupils' interest. Learning assistants regularly give pupils effective support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school gives intensive attention to the teaching of reading, including phonics. There are good initiatives to develop pupils' motivation for writing, and to understand the next steps in improving their writing. A whole-school approach supports well the development of pupils' problem-solving skills, which are also helping to improve investigative work in science. One member of staff is a lead teacher for ICT. She supports other staff well so that pupils develop good skills in this subject. As a result, pupils use their skills independently elsewhere in the curriculum. For instance, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good use of a graphics program to plot co-ordinates. French is taught from Year 3, supported by topic work in earlier years. Curriculum enrichment, for example through excursions, is good. The very good extra-curricular programme includes various sports, and instrumental music tuition, in which more than three quarters of the pupils participate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good emotional support and counselling, and good spiritual guidance, for instance in assembly, are noteworthy elements in the strong pastoral provision. Vulnerable pupils are monitored particularly carefully, and staff provide them with sensitive support. Robust arrangements are made to provide child protection and safeguarding. Risk assessments, for example for school excursions, are rigorous. Arrangements to induct pupils into the school and into Key Stage 2 are good, as are the transition arrangements to secondary education. The school is good at tracking pupils' progress closely. The new arrangements to set targets for pupils have already borne fruit where they have been applied, and capitalise well on pupils' expressed interest in having personal targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The clear vision which underpins the leadership is reflected in the high quality of the school's documentation, notably in the improvement plan, the learning policy and the annual self-evaluation cycle. There is a detailed programme by which school leaders check the quality of planning and teaching. The leadership team has planned well to mitigate the impact of medium-term discontinuities in staffing. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion and to equality of opportunity, but at present this is limited by pupils' uneven progress through the school. Senior staff are working successfully to improve this. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and demonstrate the capacity to offer challenge for improvement.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

02 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sheet Primary School, Petersfield, GU32 2AS

I would like to thank all of you, and your teachers, for your help during the inspection. I enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. Sheet Primary is a satisfactory school, and a very happy place for children. One school council member said he was happy at school, because the adults 'are people you can trust', which showed good insight. There are plenty of positive things about your school. These are the most important ones:

- You greatly enjoy school, and your behaviour is outstanding.
- You have very good relationships with each other, and with the teachers and other adults. They take very good care of you, and this helps you to learn.
- Your personal development is good.
- Your whole school has a very positive atmosphere about it.
- Overall, your progress in your learning is satisfactory, and some is good.
- The teaching in your school is always at least satisfactory; when it is good, teachers give you tasks that are well matched to your previous learning.
- The teachers have planned the curriculum to make it interesting for you.
- Your headteacher and other leaders know what is good about your school and they also know how to make it even better.
- Your mums and dads are pleased with the school.
- Your school has good relationships with your parents, other schools and the people they ask to come in to help you.

I have asked your teachers to help all of you to go on getting better at literacy, numeracy and science. They will:

- Improve your progress by making sure that lessons are consistently good and that your work is well matched to what you have already learned.
- Use the good target-setting in literacy and numeracy in Year 2, and in writing in Year 6, right across the school.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and taking advantage of the improvements which your teachers will be making. I really enjoyed my time in your school. I wish you every success in the future.

Chris Grove

Lead Inspector