

Slade Primary School and Attached Unit for Children with Hearing Impairment

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118285
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312868
Inspection date	1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Liz Kounnou

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	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Bellord
Headteacher	Vivienne Resch
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	The Slade Tonbridge TN9 1HR
Telephone number	01732 350354
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

Why standards vary so widely in Key Stage 1 from year to year, and what standards pupils are currently achieving throughout the school.

Whether pupils with hearing impairment make similar progress to other pupils.

The impact of improvements secured since the last inspection and how the school plans to move forward even further.

The evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of information about children's progress and attainment, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display, discussions with staff, children and governors, and analysis of the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This large school includes a specially-built unit to support a small group of children with hearing impairment. Fewer pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds than is usual and a very small minority are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average, but about twice the usual proportion have a statement of special educational needs. The school holds a range of national awards: Basic Skills Quality Mark 2007, ECO Green Flag, Basket Ball Mark, Active Mark 2006, Platinum Standard Travel Action Plan, and Award for Outstanding Achievement from the NAACE Weather Project, in addition to other local awards.

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 that ensures pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. Unusually, the abilities of children entering the school vary considerably from year to year. In some years, children start school with above average levels of attainment, but more often their attainment is below average. As a result, the standards they reach at the end of Year 2 vary to a degree, but they have been consistently average or above for some time, because provision in the Foundation Stage is good and pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2. In Year 6, there has been a general trend of improvement in recent years. Early indications are that this will continue, and standards will be above average again this year. The few pupils who have a hearing impairment make good progress because the school carefully tailors the curriculum to ensure they can succeed. As a result, the pupils say they like being in school.

The good curriculum is enriched well by a lot of exciting trips. For example, Year 2 pupils were bursting full of ideas for the postcards they were writing following their trip to the seaside. Throughout the school, pupils work hard in their lessons and behave well. Year 6 pupils were enthusiastically preparing for their end of year production; the laughter and smiles seen were typical of the good relationships in all year groups. The school makes the most of the splendid grounds. The Trim Trail and adventure playground add to the after-school sports clubs and help pupils take plenty of exercise to keep fit and healthy. Pupils would like even more of these clubs. One area has been turned into an allotment growing healthy-looking vegetables, and this has drawn in the support of a band of parent volunteers and local businesses. All around the school grounds, pumpkin plants are growing for the school competition, clearly labelled so that pupils can keep an eye on whose is doing best. Several scarecrows are dotted around, left over from the school's involvement in the local community 'Scarecrow Trail'.

The school council are proud that staff listen to their ideas, and pupils enthusiastically talk about the school hamster that was acquired at their suggestion. Most parents express positive views of the school, but a few feel that communication could be improved. Pupils' outstanding attendance levels clearly show that they are happy to come to school each day. The skills they gain in lessons prepare them well for the next stage of their education and later life.

Leadership and management are effective because senior staff and governors share responsibility for checking how well the school is doing. They collect a great deal of information to compare pupils' progress and plan activities together to bring about improvement. This has been successful in ensuring that pupils continue to achieve well. Despite this, some checks do not focus sharply enough on the impact of the school's work for different groups of children, and this is hampering the school's ambition to provide an outstanding standard of education.

High expectations are evident all around the school. During the inspection, the school hall was filled with a beautifully presented exhibition of framed high quality artwork from pupils of all ages. Many vibrant displays enliven the learning environment and show pupils how much the school values their work. Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe. Good assessment systems underpin staff knowledge of how well pupils are doing, and staff are beginning to involve pupils in assessing their own development in the key subjects of English and mathematics. This is at an early stage and pupils are not always sure what they need to do to reach the next step in their learning. Teaching and learning are good and teachers take great care to provide positive feedback to their pupils whenever they can. Pupils really appreciate

the comments that teachers make in their books, and some of the marking sets out how pupils could make their work even better. Good support by qualified staff ensures that pupils who have a hearing impairment do well when they work in the mainstream classrooms. The school's inclusive approach is very much appreciated by parents. One was moved to write, 'My child, a profoundly deaf boy, has made fantastic progress. He has received exceptionally caring, inclusive teaching and we have always been fully consulted about his welfare.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Reception classes because they have a lot of fun and like coming to school. They have a lot of choice in the activities throughout the day. This results in tremendous enthusiasm. For example, one small group of boys and girls, dressed in whatever uniforms and hats they could find, were energetically engaged in building a 'fire' and sending for the firemen to put it out. This involved quite a lot of water. A few 'casualties' were being cared for in a makeshift hospital. There are missed opportunities for adults to improve children's progress even further, as there are few carefully targeted interventions to encourage children to develop early literacy and numeracy skills as they play together. For example, children were not encouraged to make 'notes' about the casualties in the hospital, or to keep a record of the number of fire engines attending the fire. Nonetheless, rigorous assessments show that children are making good progress in all areas of learning, and that there has been a significant improvement this year in children's ability to read, write and sound out letters of the alphabet. Children's attainment at the end of Reception varies widely from year to year, in tandem with the variations in their attainment when they start school. This year, their attainment is broadly average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils know the next steps for learning in English and mathematics.
- Focus monitoring activities much more sharply on the impact on learning in order to accelerate pupils' progress further.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Slade Primary School and Attached Unit for Children with Hearing Impairment,
Tonbridge TN9 1HR

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. Slade is a good school. Teaching and learning are good so that you make good progress, and standards are above average for those of you in Year 6. The staff and governors work well together to help you to succeed at school.

Here are the things that are best about your school:

- Your attendance is among the best in the country. You like coming to school, and especially enjoy the exciting trips.
- The school has splendid grounds for you to play and run about in, including a fantastic allotment where you are growing healthy vegetables.
- You enjoy the sports clubs and extra equipment that helps you to keep healthy by taking lots of exercise, and you would like even more clubs.
- You behave well all through the day and help one another.
- The school looks bright and cheerful because of your beautiful artwork.
- Children in the Reception class really enjoy choosing their activities.
- Children who have a hearing impairment get plenty of help in classrooms.

There are a few things that could be even better. We have asked the school to make sure that you know the next steps for your learning, and you could help by trying hard to remember your learning targets. We have also asked all the staff and governors to check very carefully all the things they do to improve the school to make sure that the changes help you to learn even more quickly.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours faithfully

Liz Kounnou Lead Inspector