

# Sheldwich Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118349
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312901
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Milham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Garrett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Lees Court Road Sheldwich Faversham ME13 0LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 532779
<b>Fax number</b>	01795 532682

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of the school's provision in contributing to improving standards and pupils' achievement; the effectiveness of systems to track and assess pupils' progress; and the impact of leadership and management in contributing to school improvement. Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of nationally published and school data, scrutiny of school documentation, pupils' work, teachers' planning and the views of parents, and discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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 the report.

## Description of the school

The school is similar in size to other primary schools. Pupils' starting points on entry to the school are varied, but taken together are average. A significantly higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is very low. The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy School, Investors in People, Leadership and Management, Platinum Travel Plan, Quality Mark and Eco School awards. There is an independently run pre-school on site. The headteacher took up post at the beginning of the academic year, following a term when the school had an acting headteacher. There has been a significant change in staffing over the last year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Sheldwich Primary School is a good school, which is valued by the overwhelming majority of parents. Many refer to the school's welcoming ethos and of the support for 'the whole child', illustrated, for example, by the way in which pupils joining the school with little English are integrated quickly. Parents commented particularly on their children's enjoyment of school, reflected in high attendance levels, and many expressed their thanks for the hard work of staff in comments such as, 'There has not been a single day my child has not wanted to go to school' and 'This school serves my children admirably'. In return, parents become involved in supporting the school, for example as parent helpers or attending activities organised by the parent-teacher association. Pupils, too, are proud of their school. They appreciate and respond well to the good quality care, support and guidance by adults and, as a result, have good attitudes to school and their learning.

Pupils' starting points when they join the school vary from year to year, but are broadly average. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that most are working securely within appropriate levels of the national early learning goals by the age of five. Whilst the proportion of pupils with additional learning difficulties has increased across the school in recent years, there is also a higher than average proportion of higher-attaining pupils. Results in the national tests are generally above national averages, although there was a significant decline in both the Year 2 and Year 6 test results last year. The school was resolute in analysing the key reasons for pupils not making enough progress, particularly in mathematics. It identified that pupils' progress was not monitored frequently enough to pick up possible underachievement promptly and that pupils with learning difficulties did not progress as quickly as they should. Firm action has been taken to address these issues. This year, pupils' achievements are checked regularly and the information used to set targets for individuals and classes, but the school realises that this requires further development in order to get the most out of the process. Staff have been trained to teach a range of new programmes for pupils experiencing difficulties and these are having a major impact on improving pupils' achievements, although not all pupils have had time to catch up from their earlier slower progress. The school's data shows that pupils are making good progress in all year groups. Pupils are on course to achieve significantly higher standards in the national tests than in recent years and exceed the challenging targets the school has set for its performance.

The induction of a large proportion of new staff this academic year has been undertaken extremely well and teaching and support staff have worked well together to make sure that practice is consistent across the school. Staff show real excitement about learning from one another how to improve further. Teaching is good. It is challenging and pupils know that they are always expected to do their best. Planning identifies clearly for pupils what they are to learn and marking frequently refers to pupils' success in reaching the learning objectives. Pupils find their targets helpful and they have a growing understanding of the level and quality of their work, as well as what they have to do to improve further. The curriculum meets pupils' needs and interests well. Teachers are developing it further to make even better use of opportunities to make learning relevant to pupils' experiences, extend links across subjects and enhance opportunities for creative development. A good range of other enrichment and extra-curricular activities complement learning in lessons and enhance pupils' personal development well. Pupils commented on how much they enjoy visits as part of their learning - especially residential visits and opportunities to use sports facilities in local secondary schools.

Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and see this as a key focus in the school.

Pupils have a clear appreciation of the impact of their actions on others, helping them to understand how to stay safe. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue, although they do recognise that sometimes friends fall out and need help to resolve problems. A very small number of parents expressed concern that staff do not tackle the behaviour of some pupils, but there was no evidence of this during the inspection. On the contrary, pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their relationships with one another and with adults are friendly and respectful. Pupils identify good relationships as a key strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and enhanced through extra-curricular activities that meet a range of interests. Pupils enjoy helping one another and the wider community, for example as 'playground buddies', school councillors or members of the eco committee, or by raising money for charity. Pupils' capacity to work co-operatively and their academic achievement prepare them well for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

Good leadership and management are reflected in the speed with which the new staff team has evaluated the school's performance and decided on the priorities that will have the greatest impact on improving pupils' achievements. The headteacher, management team and governing body have a very clear understanding of how the school is to develop and have achieved a strong consensus across the whole school. One parent summed it up accurately, 'Sheldwich is a well-oiled ship, all work hard and well together'. Another parent commented on 'an exciting and optimistic time for the school', reflecting the school's good capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children join the school from a range of pre-school settings, including from the nursery on site. A very high proportion of parents of children in the Reception class responded to the questionnaire and all were positive, with comments such as 'My children have had a brilliant start to school life, they love school and can't get enough'. Children have a good range of opportunities for their development and make good progress, particularly in the early stages of literacy and numeracy. As throughout the rest of the school, children are required to think things through for themselves, for example when deciding which computer method they prefer to paint 'Ellie the elephant'. As a result, children become confident, enthusiastic learners and most children reach the goals for their learning, and many exceed them. Children are known well by adults. They feel valued and safe, and difficulties are picked up quickly, which contributes greatly to their personal development. The school is developing further links with nurseries so that children can be welcomed and begin their learning even more quickly once in school. Their Foundation Stage experience gives them a good basis for later learning.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- use the data from assessments to identify clearly the next steps for pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics and for pupils with learning difficulties.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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	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	1
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	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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sheldwich Primary School, Faversham ME13 0LU

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently and I want to thank members of the school council particularly for giving up part of the lunch time to talk to me.

You are right to be proud of your school – Sheldwich is a good school:

- you are happy and secure in school and this helps you to enjoy school a lot
- attendance is very high and has improved even more since September
- you help each other, work and play very well together, so that everyone is included at playtimes
- your behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding
- you are lucky to have the chance to take part in a very wide range of clubs and activities and many of them help you to stay fit and healthy
- you work hard because you find lessons interesting and this helps you to do well
- you know that you are taught well
- you are good at sorting out problems for yourselves but also know that adults take good care of you and will help you if needed
- the headteacher and staff think very carefully about how the school is doing and take action quickly if they think something needs improving
- you help them to do this well by giving your own ideas, for example about how the school can plan to include pupils with physical disabilities.

Teachers are always trying to make things better. You said that your targets are helpful and I agree. However, I think that the teachers can use the information from all your assessments to make your targets clearer and to plan work that is always accurately matched to what you need to do next to improve. You can help by continuing to do your best, particularly in mathematics, and by not giving up too easily when you find work hard.

Please thank your parents for returning their questionnaires so quickly; I enjoyed reading their comments. I wish everyone at Sheldwich every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead Inspector

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