

# Senacre Wood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118526
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312976
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacqueline Marshall

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	191
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	27
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Henry Clough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Hellman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 April 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Graveney Road Maidstone ME15 8QQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01622 759864
<b>Fax number</b>	01622 688243

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. A significant number of pupils join and leave the school during the academic year. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of one class of Reception children. The school has gained a number of external awards recognising its commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles and the arts.

## 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. It provides an effective education. The vast majority of parents agree. Pupils enjoy good relationships with all staff and they develop well as individuals. They view their school as a place where everyone gets along. They greatly appreciate the fact that this is a school where every child really does matter. They themselves are good at welcoming new friends. Pastoral care is strong because everyone in the school works hard to make sure each child feels valued, secure, confident and ready to learn. This is a key feature in the pupils' positive attitudes to learning that, together with their high standard of behaviour, is reflected in their good personal development. The good curriculum is particularly strong in English and is enriched well. Teachers provide exciting and interesting activities that successfully motivate all pupils. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and leave visitors in no doubt about how much they enjoy being at school.

In the EYFS, children get off to a satisfactory start from their low starting points, developing well in their personal and social skills. The learning environment has improved since the last inspection. However, opportunities for children to learn through play are still missed and adult intervention sometimes lacks focus. When this happens, learning slows. Because of effective teaching and a good curriculum, all groups of pupils from Years 1 to 6 achieve well. Standards in Year 6 are currently broadly average. This reflects the considerable work the school has done in improving teaching and learning in English and, more recently, the focus on scientific investigation. However, the good improvements seen in pupils' literacy skills have yet to be matched in the development of numeracy. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing. They use this information increasingly well to give additional support when needed and to plan lessons. This is particularly the case in English, where staff have good subject knowledge and are confident when judging pupils' levels and progress. However, its use to set appropriately challenging activities and extend pupils in mathematics is less effective, particularly for the more able. The school recognises this and it is working hard to raise the quality of all teaching, and in mathematics in particular, to the level of the best.

Standards have risen steadily across the school over recent years. Improvement has been largely due to the focused and clear vision of senior leaders, including governors. They have successfully driven forward the good developments seen since the last inspection, such as improved provision for ICT and the recent rise in English standards. This steady and sustained improvement demonstrates clearly that the school has a good capacity to make further progress. Increasingly, subject leaders are developing their skills in checking teaching and learning to ensure the same high quality of provision across the school. Senior leaders use data effectively to check carefully how well the school is doing and to determine just what needs to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children enter the EYFS with skills, knowledge and understanding below those expected. Children achieve satisfactorily so that by the end of the Reception Year, most are still working at below average levels. Children's behaviour is good due to the strong focus on personal development. Children learn to sort out their differences and soon play well together. They settle very quickly because the early years team has good links with other providers and communicates well with parents. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Children make most progress when the teacher is leading the learning in whole-class or group sessions. Here, effective

questioning and subject knowledge are used well and extend their understanding effectively. Other staff sometimes miss opportunities to allow children to talk about and share their own ideas and thus extend their learning. There is an appropriate balance struck between teacher-led and child-initiated activities in and out of doors. However, the quality of these activities varies considerably and they are not always planned with a clear focus on what children will learn through play. The EYFS is managed satisfactorily. Staff are beginning to evaluate the effect on teaching and learning of initiatives, such as the changes made in gathering information to support judgements for the EYFS profile. Each child's progress is checked regularly so the school can gauge how well children are doing and pass on accurate information to the Year 1 teacher. Children are safe and secure because staff look after each individual child's needs well.

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

- Ensure assessment information is used effectively to provide sufficient challenge, in mathematics, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Improve the quality of adult intervention and ensure that planned activities are clearly focused on what children will learn in the EYFS.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Across the school, pupils achieve well from below average starting points to reach average standards overall in Year 6. Children get off to a satisfactory start in the EYFS. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In recent years, standards by the end of Year 2 have been below average. However, for the current year group, standards are broadly average, though weaker in mathematics than in reading and writing. Pupils' good progress continues throughout Years 3 to 6. In national tests in 2008, above average standards were maintained in English and standards raised in science. Mathematics remains the one subject where pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good and consequently is the school's current priority. The school sets challenging and demanding targets for pupils of all abilities. Good teaching, combined with effective assessment and tracking procedures, are key factors in why these targets are increasingly being met and, in English in particular, exceeded.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

From their first days in school, children quickly form valuable relationships with friends and grown-ups. They develop a good understanding of right and wrong and what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Such values and attitudes fostered in the early years set the pattern for the rest of their time at Senacre Wood and beyond. Pupils respond increasingly well to their responsibilities and are very good at welcoming new friends and helping one another. Pupils make an effective contribution to school life, for example through the school council. They raise important questions and put forward ideas for improvement, such as improving the playground equipment and environment. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good and is a key factor in their good behaviour and positive relationships. However, pupils' understanding of Britain as a multicultural society is less strong. They have a good understanding of the importance of leading and maintaining a healthy and safe lifestyle. A good foundation for pupils' future economic well-being is provided by ensuring good achievement in basic skills and their abilities to work well together. Attendance and punctuality have improved because pupils are increasingly keen to come to school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

A feature of good teaching is the interest it generates, which means pupils find learning fun and develop positive attitudes to their work. Throughout the school, pupils work well and classroom chatter is all about what they are learning. Teachers expect their pupils to work hard and they explain tasks clearly to them. Pupils' behaviour is good because it is well managed, ensuring classrooms are places for learning. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils effectively, whether individually or in small groups, therefore ensuring they make the same good progress as their peers. Overall, teachers plan work effectively to meet a range of pupils' needs. This is because they use assessment and pupils' targets increasingly well to plan activities for different groups. However, there are times when meaningful challenge is missing for the more able and these pupils are not extended further in their learning. The quality of marking in literacy is good. The school is aware of the need to extend this good practice to mathematics to enable pupils to see just how they can improve further.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is adapted well to provide for the needs of different groups of pupils, including those who find learning difficult and the gifted and talented. Information gained from checking and evaluating pupils' progress is aiding the development of the curriculum in tackling areas of relative weakness. For instance, over the last year, the school has reviewed the provision for science and improved the quality of the investigative work pupils are doing. The school is now focusing on raising the quality of the mathematics curriculum. A well-planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education helps to promote pupils' good personal development. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended, add to pupils' enjoyment of school. There is a good focus on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and ICT.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

This is a school in which pupils' individual needs are fully recognised and where their pastoral care is given a high priority. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are all secure. Pupils feel very safe at school and explain that bullying is not a problem. Strong links with outside agencies and parents add to the effectiveness of the school's good systems to support pupils' social, emotional and academic needs. Academic guidance is focused on how pupils can make good progress. All pupils have individual targets. In lessons, these are used effectively in English in particular, to ensure pupils know exactly what they need to do next to improve. The school is working to implement similar good assessment procedures in other subjects.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leaders, including governors, regularly analyse the school's results and monitor teaching to see where it is most effective and what needs to be improved. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses. Priorities are accurately identified, including the need to develop pupils' learning in mathematics and improve the quality of provision in the EYFS. Pupils' good personal development and well-being are strengths because leaders have made these a priority. Whilst pupils are encouraged effectively to play their part in the life of the school and local area, leaders are aware of the need to develop community cohesion further to include other cultures and the wider world.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

21 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Senacre Wood Primary School, Maidstone ME15 8QQ

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear that you really like school and that all the adults are kind and look after you well so that you feel very safe and ready to learn every day. You all get on well with each other and are getting good at sorting out any problems you have by following the school's rules and guidance. We think you are good at welcoming new friends to your school, are polite to adults and try hard to behave as your teachers expect.

We think your school is good. Because of all the hard work that you and your teachers have been doing, standards in the school are now average. The curriculum planned for you is good at meeting your needs. Your teachers are good at doing what is expected to help you make good progress in your work. We agree that you are helped to enjoy your learning because there are many interesting things for you to do and get involved in. Together with senior staff and governors, your headteacher does a good job of running your school. They know what needs to be done to make it even better. In order to help you learn faster, we have asked the adults at your school to do two things:

- Make sure your work is always challenging enough, especially in mathematics.
- Provide lots of exciting opportunities for children to learn as they play in the Reception class.

You can help by always trying to work hard in school. Thank you again for helping us to find out about your school, and we wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall Lead Inspector