

Swalecliffe Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118558
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312989
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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	644
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maisie Blight
Headteacher	David Hares
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2003
School address	Bridgefield Road Swalecliffe Whitstable CT5 2PH
Telephone number	01227 272101
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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: current achievement and standards in the school, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lessons, pupils' books, an assembly and discussions with headteacher, staff and governors. In addition, a group of children discussed their views of the school and all parent questionnaires returned were examined. 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 were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools and draws most of its pupils from its immediate neighbourhood. There are 21 classes accommodated in three adjacent buildings. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. When starting school in the Foundation Stage, children's attainment is broadly as expected for their age. The school has been awarded an Activemark for physical education and sports, a national ICT Mark and is working towards a Healthy School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Under the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, this is a good school with several outstanding features. He is the driving force behind the many initiatives that have successfully brought about improvements to the quality of education and learning since the last inspection. He provides very clear directions to develop the work of the school and is developing the quality of leadership and management very effectively. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and of a high quality, ensuring a good capacity to improve further.

The focus of all initiatives is to develop teaching and learning. Challenging targets are set and these are raising standards and achievement effectively. Consequently, teaching is good overall and outstanding in several classes. The staff, including the teaching assistants, are enthusiastic and highly motivated and because of this, pupils sustain concentration and show a determination to do as well as they can. Detailed planning ensures that tasks are stimulating and build successfully upon pupils' previous learning, resulting in pupils making good progress from the time they enter the school. Pupils say, 'our lessons are exciting'. The level of challenge is demanding and matched effectively to the needs of most pupils. Occasionally, some more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to enable them to exceed the standards expected of children of their age. However, teachers' written comments are constructive and help pupils to improve.

Because of good overall teaching, standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards broadly as expected for their age. Because of the good provision, they make a good start and develop their skills and understanding well. By the time they enter Year 1, they are working securely within the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning. This good progress continues effectively, so that by the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and have improved over the past few years. Likewise, standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are currently above average. However, because of a higher than usual number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who joined the school during Years 5 and 6, standards last year were broadly average, and the more able pupils did not do as well as they should, particularly in mathematics and science. Leadership and management quickly identified the reasons for this and standards in Year 6 have now recovered and are above average.

The school plans a good curriculum. It is effectively enhanced through the wide range of out-of-lessons activities. Meaningful links across subjects are developing well and are already well established in some year groups. The uses of information and communication technology are especially strong. Many pupils enjoy activities, such as the orchestra, choir, fundraising and various visits, and these add effectively to the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and economic well-being. They make a strong contribution to the school community and also to the wider local community. Good links with a school in France support their personal development well. Pupils have a good appreciation of different religious festivals around the world but many are still uncertain about how people in other countries live and know little about the customs and traditions of other people living in our multi-cultural society.

Care, support and guidance given to all pupils are good overall and outstanding for their pastoral care and support. All statutory requirements and procedures to ensure their safety are in place. Academic guidance is good but it is rightly recognised by the school that this is an area for

further development. The newly instigated computer-based assessment records are in the early stages of development. Installation of data is nearing completion, which is making analysis of each pupil's progress and attainment simpler. Teachers are more aware of what each pupil should achieve by the end of each year and, consequently, pupils are set more precise targets to help them understand what they need to do to improve.

Good support ensures that all pupils are involved in all that the school does and pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they respect each other's efforts and successes. They have very positive attitudes to their work, cooperate well together and enjoy their lessons. This was most obvious in a Year 5 science lesson where pupils willingly shared investigations about high and low sounds. Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of healthy lifestyles, regularly taking exercise and understanding the benefits of eating healthy food. They are very aware of how to stay safe and how to avoid taking unnecessary risks.

Leadership and management of the school are good, with the governing body making a good contribution to developments. A significant change in the re-structuring of leadership and management, enabling senior teachers (known as the Directorate) to fulfil responsibilities for developing teaching and learning in their particular year groups, is proving most influential in raising standards and improving pupils' personal development and well-being. However, where areas of responsibility are not defined sufficiently well and subject leaders are not kept fully in the picture by senior colleagues, the impetus of change and improvement slows.

The links with parents are good and many express very positive comments about the good management of the school, how well their children progress and that their children are very happy. One parent summarised the thoughts of many others and wrote to explain: 'This is a wonderful school'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Staff give good care, support and guidance to all children who settle into the routines quickly. Children develop good personal, social and emotional skills, cooperating well together in directed tasks and in their independent choice of activities. The teaching and curriculum planning are good, resulting in most children progressing well towards the expected standards in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Comprehensive records are kept on each child, which enable staff to track individual progress very carefully.

What the school should do to improve further

- further stimulate progress, particularly for the more able, by improving the quality and use of data about each pupil's progress
- improve the impact of management by minimising overlapping responsibilities amongst senior leaders
- improve pupils' social awareness by deepening their appreciation of cultural diversity.

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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?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swalecliffe Community Primary School, Whitstable, CT5 2PH

- Thank you for helping me when I recently visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. I found that your school provides you with a good education and that you do some very exciting things. These are the things that are particularly strong in your school:
- those who lead and manage your school have very clear ideas of how to bring about improvements and as a result, it is a good school with outstanding features
- your headteacher provides excellent leadership and management to the school
- there is a good team spirit in your school and it is a happy place
- in Year 6, and throughout the rest of the school, you make good progress and your work is above average
- you are all developing good attitudes towards your work and towards each other; you have an excellent understanding about how to keep safe and how to remain healthy
- you are very polite and your behaviour is outstanding
- staff look after you and care for you very well
- the teaching is good overall and often excellent in some classes
- the teachers are improving how they link subjects together to make your learning more interesting and meaningful.

There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- develop better records about your progress in order to plan tasks that help all of you do as well as you can, especially those who find some work too easy
- ensure that your senior teachers are even clearer about what their responsibilities are so that jobs are not repeated unnecessarily
- help you to grow as better citizens by improving your knowledge of how people who are different to you lead their lives. Once again, thank you for your cooperation. You can help by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Graeme Bassett Lead Inspector