

Seabrook Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118678
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313043
Inspection date	12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	John Laver

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Jones
Headteacher	Elizabeth Carter
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Seabrook Road Hythe CT21 5RL
Telephone number	01303 238429
Fax number	01303 238195

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, whilst the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, which encompass a wide range of difficulties in literacy and numeracy and behavioural and emotional issues, is above average. The great majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part way through their education is well above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Seabrook Primary provides a good education for its pupils. Parents are almost unanimously positive about the school. In particular, they are full of praise for its inclusive 'family' atmosphere. Inspectors agree with the following comments, typical of many: 'Seabrook is a special place with a caring and supportive ethos, creating the feeling of belonging to one big family' and 'Our children are blossoming in every way, and we could not ask for a better school, except to put it in new buildings.' The school has been very successful in improving its provision in recent years, despite limitations to the learning environment caused by old and cramped accommodation. Success is evident in the improved standards and achievement, building on the good, and in some aspects outstanding, qualities of pupils, who are a credit to the school.

Children in the Foundation Stage have a good start to their education, making rapid progress in acquiring skills and knowledge before they join Year 1. This good progress continues throughout the school. Pupils' standards on leaving school vary from year-to-year but are above average overall. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress and achieve well. The below average standards of younger pupils at the time of the previous inspection, and the inconsistent progress of older pupils which was evident in the 2007 national test results, have been rectified. This is due to the hard work of all staff and, not least, to the strong leadership of the headteacher, supported by an improved governing body. Through the introduction of a much more sophisticated assessment and pupil tracking system, the headteacher identified areas of weakness, principally in provision in mathematics and the quality of writing. This resulted in a more rigorous programme of monitoring and professional development. Staff are now more expert in teaching aspects such as the application of mathematics in which they were previously less confident. They now skilfully utilise pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes. Pupils are keen to learn and particularly enjoy the school's drive towards developing a more creative curriculum, which encourages active opportunities for collaborative and independent learning as well as giving them a good grounding in core skills such as numeracy and literacy. New strategies are beginning to improve boys' writing and reduce differences in progress between groups of pupils. Good provision for pupils who find work in reading, writing, and mathematics difficult enables them to make progress in line with their classmates. The school is also now catering better for the most able pupils. For example, able mathematicians have the opportunity for specialist teaching provided by a local secondary school. The overall quality of teaching has improved. In particular, teachers now make better use of assessment and pupils' targets to ensure a better match of work for all pupils. Some of these initiatives are not yet fully embedded. In particular, a small minority of more able pupils are occasionally not sufficiently challenged by the targets and marking is not consistent in giving constructive feedback to pupils on how to improve. However, the school's leadership recognises these areas for further development: the headteacher has high expectations, evaluates the school well and, particularly importantly, has enthused the rest of the staff to share her vision of sustained improvement.

The quality of personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils blossom as mature, confident individuals who take pride in their achievements and enjoy most aspects of school, including the very good range of after-school activities. These have a very high take-up. Behaviour is excellent, whilst attendance has improved significantly as a result of the school's efforts, and is now above average. Pupils talk eagerly about the work of the school council and opportunities to help younger pupils at work and at play. The school's Christian ethos is very evident. Care, guidance and support are good; pupils feel safe in school and, like their parents,

talk about the 'family atmosphere'. They value both the personal support from adults and the boost they get in improving their work through regularly reviewed targets and initiatives such as merit assemblies.

The record of improvement in recent years is due in no small part to the leadership's lack of complacency and its commitment to both high academic standards and providing the best for pupils' all-round development. These qualities ensure that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Good leadership ensures a healthy balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Children make good progress, so that by the time they join Year 1, their attainment is above average and they exceed expectations for their age group in personal, social and emotional development. The school monitors most aspects of progress well, although there is no formal assessment of knowledge, understanding and creative development. The staff assess key areas for improvement, such as writing, and give them due priority. There are very good links with the home to support the children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency and quality of marking to provide more constructive feedback to pupils on how to improve their written work.
- Set more consistently challenging targets for the most able pupils in order to help them achieve even better in their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with skills that are similar to those expected for their age. By the age of seven, they progress well to reach above average standards, in line with a recent trend which has seen a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Many older pupils also demonstrate above average standards. There are several pupils in Year 6 who perform only in line with expectations for their age group, but these pupils have learning difficulties and attained below average standards when they were lower down the school. Also, several pupils have joined the school part way through their education. Most of these pupils, just like the others in the year group, achieve well by the age of 11, mainly the result of the school addressing weaknesses in the learning of mathematics and improving aspects of teaching such as the use of targets and assessment, so as to promote good learning. The great majority of pupils, including those with a range of specific learning difficulties, are on track to meet appropriately challenging targets, although a small minority of the most able pupils could make even more progress if teachers' expectations of them were consistently challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' overall spiritual and cultural development is good, although pupils' awareness of the implications of living in a multi-cultural society is less developed than other aspects. Behaviour and social development are outstanding. Pupils are polite, caring, and work very well, both individually and collaboratively. Their enthusiasm is reflected in above average attendance, a

considerable improvement on recent years. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of education, showing a good level of skills and knowledge in core subjects such as literacy and numeracy and also having the confidence to articulate their views in a mature manner. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and appreciate the school's emphasis on promoting this through awareness of different foods and the provision of a good range of sport and exercise opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Much of the teaching and learning is good or better, and is characterised by excellent relationships and regular use of targets and lesson objectives to show pupils how to improve further. There is also a strong emphasis on pupils working independently or with each other, and being involved in their own assessment. This was observed in a very successful lesson when older pupils worked very well together on putting together imaginative stories to present to younger children. Teachers are conscientiously working on a range of creative strategies to develop individual learning further. These are not yet fully embedded, and the written feedback on pupils' work is often less constructive than verbal feedback in lessons. Teachers use learning support assistants very effectively to help the wide range of vulnerable pupils make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A strength of the curriculum is the wide range of out-of-class activities such as sport and music, which have a very high take-up, and the range of visits and involvement in activities such as local festivals. Pupils value these opportunities highly. There are good opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to enhance their learning across all subjects, and also the chance to learn two modern foreign languages. Provision for personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and keep fit through activities such as swimming.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel very safe in school. The school has secure safety and protection procedures. Vulnerable pupils in particular get very good support, and make good progress as a result. The school has worked successfully to involve parents in learning and issues such as improving attendance, for example through the services of a family liaison officer. The school has recently adopted improved tracking and assessment systems, which teachers are using to set meaningful targets to improve learning in the classroom. Most pupils, including younger ones, have a good awareness of their targets. Parents are very complimentary about all aspects of the school's care for their children and rightly recognise that it is a very inclusive, happy school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has been very successful in enthusing other staff with her vision of sustained improvement, a vision also supported well by governors. There is rigorous monitoring of all aspects of the school's performance. Not only the headteacher but leaders of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science regularly monitor teaching and all aspects of learning, and share good practice. The school knows its strengths and areas for development well, and this is reflected in appropriately focused planning. There are excellent links with other local schools, the church and outside agencies, with considerable benefits for pupils. For example, pupils with particular abilities in mathematics and music get additional specialist help from other local schools.

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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?	1
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	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	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

13 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seabrook Church of England Primary School, Hythe CT21 5RL.

Thank you for your polite and warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work in lessons. We know that you are very proud of your school, and that both you and your parents are very enthusiastic about the opportunities you get both inside and outside the classroom. We agree with you that the school looks after you well, and we believe that the school gives you a good standard of education. Your teachers work hard to make sure that you make good progress and learn well, and the standard of your work has risen in recent years. We were impressed by your knowledge of your targets, your confidence in talking in class, and the excellent way you cooperate with each other when working in class or assessing your work. Your headteacher, Mrs Carter, also deserves a lot of credit for giving the school a happy family atmosphere and providing lots of opportunities such as the wide range of after-school clubs which we know you enjoy.

We have asked the school to do two things to help you learn even better. One is for your teachers to give you a bit more information when marking your work, so you can improve still further. Secondly, we believe that those pupils who find work a little easy would sometimes benefit from even more challenging activities which would make you think even more than you do already.

Your behaviour is outstanding and you have an excellent attitude towards your work, so we are confident that if you continue to work hard, the school can do even better.

Once again, thank you for your welcome and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Laver Lead Inspector

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Lead Inspector