

Snodland CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118846
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313116
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Dean
Headteacher	Pauline Hobson
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	Roberts Road Snodland ME6 5HL
Telephone number	01634 241251
Fax number	01634 245954

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin and consequently the number of pupils who have English as an additional language is well below the national average. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and the number who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are both close to the national average. There have been significant changes in both the teaching and the leadership teams since the last inspection. A local pre-school provider, based on the school premises, offers extended provision before and after school as well as nursery provision during the day. The school provides additional support through its lunchtime club. It has achieved Healthy School status and been awarded the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good education for its pupils. There has been a rapid improvement in pupils' achievement during the last two years. The leadership team have a clear vision about raising standards and work as a purposeful team. The quality of the current leadership team is outstanding and their impact on raising standards demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve. The governing body, which is currently under complement, provides appropriate support and challenge.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are generally close to the expected levels for their age. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. There are no significant differences between the progress made over time by any group of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who make good progress because of the extra support they receive to address their specific needs.

Teaching is good, which matches the school's evaluation. In most lessons, teachers ensure that there is a good pace to learning within a supportive and challenging learning environment. In the good lessons, assessment data is used well to set work appropriate to the need of each pupil. Behaviour is generally at least good in lessons, but, in a small minority of lessons seen, work was not sufficiently challenging for all pupils and some became restless. Leaders are aware that ensuring the consistency of the quality of teaching across the school will have a significant impact on standards. Pupils know their targets and the marking is generally good in helping pupils understand how to move to the next stage of their learning. Academic guidance overall is good. The current curriculum is sufficiently broad and meets requirements. A good range of well-supported extra-curricular activities enriches it.

Good systems are in place to ensure the safety and care of pupils. There are outstanding links with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported well. Pupils benefit from good links with other schools, and the transfer of pupils into the Reception class is improving further now that a nursery provision is located within the school premises. Adults provide good support for pupils' personal development, which is good throughout the school. Relationships are outstanding. Pupils develop good personal qualities and feel safe and well cared for. Pupils are happy at school, and they especially like the good range of clubs, visits and visitors. Pupils have a caring attitude to each other and the enjoyment they show about being part of the school is outstanding.

Pupils willingly take on responsibilities within school and are very proud of everything they do. Their contribution to the community is good, with good involvement in community sport events, local charities and the school choir. They have insufficient experiences to prepare them fully for life in a multi-cultural society. Pupils have a good understanding of what they have to do to adopt healthy lifestyles and they make sensible choices of food and sport. Rates of attendance are above average and the school has good measures in place to improve it even further. Pupils acquire good personal and academic skills which prepare them well for their next stage of education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Staff in the Reception classes give good support to children and ensure that they have a positive and nurturing start in school. There are warm and positive relationships between adults and children. Children come from a range of pre-school providers and although most pupils who join the Reception class have skills close to the expected levels, some do not. Children make good progress in the Reception class, where teaching is good, and they are all close to expected levels by the time they move to Year 1. Behaviour is good and children get on well together while enjoying each other's company. The curriculum is well planned for both indoor and outdoor learning. During role-play activities, they make imaginative use of language and develop knowledge of sounds which prepare them well for the acquisition of early reading skills. Writing skills are not as well developed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and have equal access to activities. Leadership and management are good. Systems have been developed during the last 18 months, ensuring that teachers have a secure knowledge of the abilities of the children when they start school and of the progress they make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the best practices evident in the school to improve the consistency of the quality of teaching.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to understand life in a multi-cultural society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Following a period of several years when standards were below average, the school introduced a rigorous assessment and tracking system and moved to teaching all subjects in mixed ability classes. This has resulted in a rapid rise in standards in 2007 which has been sustained in 2008. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in lessons and have achieved standards similar to last year, which were broadly average. The progress made by pupils between Year 2 and Year 6 was good in 2007 and data provided by the school suggests it will be even better this year. Pupils in Year 6 are expected to meet their challenging targets and achieve standards similar to last year's class. Following the move to mixed ability classes, there are no significant differences in performance between different subjects. All groups of pupils make similar progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and relationships are a strength of the school. There is clear mutual respect between adults and children as well as between pupils. The limited cultural mix within the school means pupils are not learning about what life is like in a multi-cultural society and so their cultural development is more limited. Behaviour in lessons is good, ensuring that all pupils can learn in a safe and happy environment. Around the school, movement and play are orderly and pupils say bullying is rare but dealt with well. Pupils' enjoyment at being part of the school community is outstanding. They have a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others and this is reflected in all aspects of school life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have very good subject knowledge and the majority of lessons are lively and interesting. Teachers have outstanding relationships with the pupils, developing their confidence to participate fully. Most teachers are fully committed to the use of comprehensive assessment data to set each pupil challenging targets based on what they should achieve at the end of the year. In the good lessons, planning generally ensures that work is pitched at the right level for pupils to achieve well, with teachers providing challenge through carefully posed questions. In the few classes where teaching is less effective, it is because this process is not sufficiently rigorous. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by teaching assistants who also make a significant contribution to supporting the whole class. Marking reflects pupils' targets and is generally good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum fully meets requirements and has been adapted to meet the range of pupils needs. This is evident by the way pupils enjoy the lessons and are making good progress. It is currently being revised further to meet fully the range of needs in the mixed age group classes. Pupils who need extra help, including those with specific learning difficulties or disabilities, are given extra support tailored to their need. Information and communication technology is a key focus within the school and good resources ensure that it is well used across the curriculum. The personal, social and health education provision, as well as the religious education provision, helps pupils develop well in their personal skills. The school has a good range of extra-curricular activities which are very well supported by pupils. The curriculum is further enhanced by educational trips such as visits to Rochester Cathedral and Hampton Court.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is strong pastoral support, ensuring that pupils can develop their academic and personal skills whilst feeling safe and secure. The needs of individual pupils are the centre of the school's work. Pupils appreciate that staff are caring and they know support is available. Careful attention is paid to health and safety, including minimising possible risks. Child protection procedures are clear. The needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are assessed and regularly reviewed to ensure appropriate support is provided. Pupils' achievements are assessed regularly and impressive systems to track their progress are detailed and thorough. This enables teachers and pupils to know what the next stages of learning are through the setting of individual targets. These targets are used regularly by pupils as a self-evaluation tool. With the exception of a few occasions when teachers' comments are not specific, pupils receive helpful comments on how to improve the quality of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and governors have developed an enthusiastic and able team of leaders and staff who have made an outstanding impact on helping pupils make good progress in both their academic and personal qualities. The quality of the senior leadership is outstanding and they have set a very clear direction to raise standards. The outcomes are clear and the systems are embedded within the school. The leadership team are well on their way to ensuring consistent quality of teaching across the school, which is the next step in raising standards further. The governing body fulfil all their legal requirements and are becoming more effective as they gain experience. The self-evaluation systems in the school are outstanding and, together with the school improvement plan, demonstrate that the school is determined to move forward. Challenging targets are used and these are supported by the excellent tracking system.

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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	1

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	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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Snodland C of E Primary School, Snodland ME6 5HL

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed being at your school, meeting with you and your teachers as well as talking to you during the day. Yours is a good school which has made considerable progress over the last two years. You and the school have many strengths including the following:

- You have an outstanding leadership and management team who are determined to help you do well.
- You attain above average standards by the time you leave school.
- The vast majority of teaching is good.
- The school monitors your progress very well and ensures that you all get the help you need and that you all make good progress.
- There is mutual respect and trust between you and the adults.
- You behave well and enjoy being part of the school community.
- You enjoy the opportunities for extra-curricular activities.
- You understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe.
- You are proud of your school and enjoy your learning.

In order to help the school improve and become even better, we have asked the school to:

- share the best things that teachers do in their lessons with each other to improve the consistency of the quality of teaching
- improve the opportunities for you to experience and understand life in a multi-cultural society.

We wish each one of you every success and happiness in your future education.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood Lead Inspector

6 June 2008

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