

# Sedley's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118595
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	326853
<b>Inspection date</b>	8 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Sydney

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	83
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Houston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Coppitters
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 May 2006
<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>	Church Street Southfleet Gravesend DA13 9NR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 833221
<b>Fax number</b>	01474 834 355

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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 small village school with a Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and three other classes where pupils' ages span two years. Pupils are White British, and there is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school has the Healthy School Award, the Safer Schools Award, Investors in People and the Financial Management Standard in Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. There are strengths in the curriculum, pastoral care, and personal development and well-being of pupils, which are good. There is a real sense of community in this small school, with every child known by every adult. The result of this is that behaviour and attendance are exemplary, so important ingredients are there already for pupils to progress faster. The curriculum is being re-invigorated by introducing learning through topics and this is motivating pupils and teachers alike, especially where it involves first-hand investigations and practical activities. The impact of the revised curriculum is evident in the higher standards achieved this year by pupils in Year 2.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as the result of effective provision. Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, with good progress made in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 6, standards are average. The emphasis in the school has been on about reaching a certain level, especially in Year 6, rather than on the progress all individuals make throughout their time in school. The school now has a wealth of data to track pupils' progress. However, what is missing in some classes is the use of these data to plan lessons that match work to individuals' needs, particularly important in this school where classes are mixed age. Consequently, progress for pupils in Years 1 to 4 is inconsistent and overall satisfactory rather than good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good behaviour management skills and pupils enjoy their lessons. However, during lessons teachers' assessment does not pick up consistently on whether individuals have been left behind, or are ahead of the class. There are still inconsistencies in marking. There is good practice where pupils are shown how to improve and are involved in assessing their own work. Marking is not always linked to pupils' targets, so that there is no instant useful feedback to pupils on how well they are doing or when it is time to set a new challenge.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has demonstrated the satisfactory capacity to improve. For example, when results in Year 2 in writing were very low last year, staff training needs were identified and everyone worked together to improve the quality of literacy teaching. This was successful, with the result that standards in the current Year 2 are much higher. However, leadership and management are not focused sufficiently on improving the rate of pupils' progress in Years 1 to 4. Monitoring of teaching and learning does not identify the features of good teaching and learning in the school and these are not shared widely enough to ensure all pupils benefit from consistently good teaching.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Most children join the Reception class with attainment in line with expectations. They come from a variety of pre-school provision and parents praise the way they are helped to settle in quickly. By the end of Reception, they have made good progress, particularly in their communication skills because there is now a strong focus on phonics and reading. Standards are above average. Teaching is good, with a balance of activities led by an adult and those chosen by the children, which encourage a sense of independence and co-operative learning. The new classroom and outside area enable a wider range of opportunities but there are not enough links between inside and outside learning. The curriculum is broad, relevant and well matched to children's stage of development and age. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for developing early writing and making marks. Assessment and record-keeping are

good but are not used consistently to provide individual planning. Staff have good partnerships with parents, encouraging them to 'stay and play' in the morning. One parent said, 'My child looks forward to going to school every day. She has learnt a huge amount in one year: academic, social and behavioural.'

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

- Increase the rate of progress in Years 1 to 4 by improving assessment during lessons and, by using existing data, ensure planning improves and work matches the abilities of individuals.
- Strengthen the monitoring of learning and teaching by all levels of management so that the quality of lessons is always at least good.
- Spread good practice in marking across the school and ensure that it is linked to pupils' targets.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In 2008 at the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in writing were exceptionally low, and low in reading and mathematics. This represented inadequate progress. In Year 6, in 2008, standards were just above the national average, and this represented satisfactory progress for those pupils. In 2008, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made similar progress to others, while more able pupils made comparatively less progress from Years 2 to 6 in mathematics and science.

Results for national tests for 2009 arrived just before this inspection. They show that standards appear to have improved dramatically in Year 2, especially in writing, where indications are that they are likely to be well above the national average. Reading is much improved as a result of literacy being a successful focus of the school development plan. In Year 6, indications are that standards are average, with science stronger than English and mathematics. However, an analysis of progress in Years 2 to 6 shows that progress is uneven; too slow in some classes, with a rapid acceleration in English, mathematics and science in Year 5.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils feel secure and valued and know where to turn if they need help. They are clear that bullying does not occur, and if it did, it would be dealt with effectively. Parents see their children developing Christian values. As one boy said, 'The class can help you sort out your worries.' Pupils are confident, friendly and considerate in the playground, and attentive in class. Pupils learn very well about healthy eating and they participate very enthusiastically in sports, both in lessons and in the varied after-school clubs. One pupil said, 'If we're not active, they (the teachers) get us active.' Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is good, although in a White British school, their learning about multicultural Britain is limited. They enjoy school, and their attendance is excellent. They contribute well to the community in school and the local area, with satisfactory links with the wider world. Through connections with business and through national competitions, pupils enjoy team challenges, and learn about innovation and the business world.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Pupils are attentive and keen to learn so that lessons are not interrupted. Teachers manage classes well and the pace of lessons is good. Teachers have introduced more opportunities for extended writing to their lessons and this is helping to improve standards in writing through the school. Pupils feel that the level of challenge in their lessons varies. Some parents suggest that some teaching is 'aimed at the middle' and lesson observations bear this out. Despite being an issue at the previous inspection, planning does not always use the data in school to match work to pupils' ability. There are too many worksheets for younger pupils that do not meet their individual needs. Assessment is not used often enough during lessons to pick up which individuals have understood and to adjust the lesson accordingly. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given effective extra help through group and individual work, but higher achievers are not always extended enough. Some teachers use 'learning pairs' and groups to good effect, especially where pupils of different abilities are mixed. However, too many lessons focus on listening or reading, instead of active learning and practical activities. There are good examples of helpful marking and pupils in some classes are involved in assessing their own work. This good practice encourages them to become independent learners. However, in general, teachers do not always mark books well and do not link marking to the pupils' targets, and this slows down progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school has started to re-organise its curriculum around topics. This means that basic skills, such as writing and computing, are being practised alongside learning other subjects. This way, pupils can make clearer links in their learning and apply it. Pupils enjoy this new curriculum and standards in literacy have started to rise, especially in Year 2. Learners sometimes give their own ideas for topics and they feel that they can now study the things that interest them. Improvements to the curriculum are starting to address pupils' lack of experience of Britain as a multicultural society, for example by looking at the experiences of early immigrants from the West Indies. After initial doubt when their children were new to the school, parents now see academic as well as social advantages to mixed-age classes. Planning is done carefully so that pupils do not repeat work. Trips and visitors really enrich the learning experiences for the pupils, including a residential visit which promotes self-reliance in the older ones. There are good opportunities to learn about the world of work through links with commercial companies. There are too few occasions where pupils engage in first hand learning, however the curriculum is flexible and where teachers do capitalise on opportunities, for example using the building project on the site to study materials and construction in science and design and technology, the resulting work is of a high standard. While there is some practical problem solving in science, the new developing curriculum does not take this far enough.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

One parent described adults in the school as, 'Kind and fair and always there to help'. Pastoral care is good, and is a priority of the school. There are close links with the nearby church. Good pastoral care starts before children enter Reception with good communication between the

staff and previous care providers. Drama performances prepare Year 6 pupils for transferring to a large secondary school. Teachers in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are forging closer links so that children who are born later in the year have a smoother change to a more formal curriculum. Procedures for safeguarding children are robust and the building is adapted for pupils with disabilities. The school has improved its system for targeting extra support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the previous inspection, the school has used data better to track pupils' progress and this is starting to have an effect. However, this is not part of a coherent system. Some pupils do not know their targets or how to move to a higher level. Older pupils who have achieved Level 5 are not given sufficient guidance on how to improve further.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership at all levels promotes pupils' personal development well and the school runs smoothly because of the good teamwork of staff. The school has started to use data more effectively to track pupils' progress but it is still not filtering into all classroom teachers' planning, and lesson monitoring has not picked this up. Monitoring has not focused sufficiently on how to accelerate pupils' learning, while middle managers have not been involved enough in observing lessons. Most priorities for development have been identified but there is no clear plan of action in terms of addressing them. Leadership and management have not effectively tackled all of the weaknesses in teaching and the school's self-evaluation does not focus sufficiently on the academic needs of the pupils. However, when a pressing need has been identified, for example the very low results in writing in Year 2 last year, challenging targets are set, the staff are galvanised, new ideas are implemented and achievement rises quickly. The leadership are now alert to using data to spot underachievement and evidence from the current Year 2 shows that achievement has improved as a result. Staff say they feel involved in school decisions and get 'brilliant career development', evidenced by the school's Investors in People Award. They appreciate all the opportunities they have to take responsibility in this small school. Governors support the headteacher well, but do not challenge enough on pupil progress. The school is central to the local community but too little emphasis has been given to planning community cohesion beyond the local area. Finances have been managed well to construct the new building, and the school has gained the Financial Management Standard in Schools Award.

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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?	3
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	3

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

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

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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	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sedley's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Southfleet, Gravesend DA13 9NR

You may remember that we visited your school recently and came into your lessons. We were very impressed by your behaviour in the school and playground and particularly by the warm welcome you give new pupils. Sedley's Law works! Your attendance is very impressive. You told us that you enjoy the variety of things you learn, especially when you go on trips. You feel safe in your school because children behave well and you can ask adults for help.

We have judged that Sedley's is a satisfactory school. The quality of teaching and learning means that you make satisfactory progress in most classes but the oldest pupils make faster progress. Your personal development is good because all the adults know each of you as individuals and they care for you well. The headteacher and governors have managed money well to provide you with a new building and your school runs smoothly, but there are some things we have asked them to do to make your school even better. This is what they are:

Make sure that:

- work is not too easy and not too hard for each of you so that you all make fast progress
- all teachers give good (or outstanding) lessons
- marking shows when you have reached your target and need a new one.

You can help by telling your teacher when work is too easy or too hard. Please keep up your excellent attendance so that you can make even faster progress.

Very best wishes

Yours faithfully

Ann Sydney

Lead inspector