

# Speldhurst Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118607
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	326856
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 June 2009
<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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	137
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>	Sandy Scott
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrea McGlew
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 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>	Langton Road Speldhurst Tunbridge Wells TN3 ONP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01892 863044

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 June 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326856

**Fax number**

01892 862196

<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 primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average but fluctuates across the school and in some year groups is above average. The main additional learning need recognised is dyslexia as well as individual specific needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Reception children within one mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The school has gained the Healthy School Award. The deputy headteacher is currently on a two-year secondment.

## 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 has several outstanding features and provides an effective education for all its pupils. Pastoral care is extremely strong because everyone in the school works hard to make sure each child feels valued, secure, confident and ready to learn. The vast majority of parents agree with these judgements. They greatly appreciate that it is 'a very warm and friendly school' where pupils are allowed 'to flourish' and where the pupils' views are 'always listened to, making them feel a real part of the school'. This is a key feature in pupils' exceedingly positive attitudes to learning that, together with their good, and at times exemplary, behaviour, is reflected in their good personal development. Pupils have a particularly good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle through the well-planned provision for personal, social and health education. The good curriculum is particularly strong in reading and mathematics. It is enriched exceptionally well through the school's creative approach and teachers provide exciting and interesting activities that successfully motivate all pupils. Consequently, attendance is good and pupils and parents alike stress how happy it is here, and pupils leave visitors in no doubt about how much they enjoy being at school.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children get off to a good start and build effectively on their starting points, which are above typical expectations. Because of effective teaching and a good curriculum, all groups of pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well. Standards over time in Year 6 are exceptionally and consistently high, though strongest in reading and mathematics. This reflects the considerable work the school has done since the last inspection in raising achievement in the basic skills. Writing remains a priority for the school and it has put in place many strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing. However, opportunities are still missed to provide even more chances for the youngest children to practise their writing, and expectations of the quality of pupils' written work in subjects other than literacy are not always high enough. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing. They use this information well to give additional support when needed and ensure pupils in mixed-age classes achieve as well as each other.

Improvement over recent years has been largely due to the focused and clear vision of the headteacher, supported effectively by governors. They have successfully driven forward the developments seen since the last inspection, such as the rise in pupils' achievement. Other leaders are increasingly involved in this process and moving forward improvements successfully in their own areas. This steady and sustained improvement combined with a clear vision for future improvement demonstrates clearly that the school has a good capacity to make further progress. Pupils are encouraged effectively to play their part in the life of the school and the local community. Whilst they have a good knowledge of western cultures and learn about other world cultures, their understanding of living in a diverse and multicultural Britain is less well developed. The school is aware of the need to develop this aspect of community cohesion.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding above the levels expected for their age in most areas of learning. Their competence in areas of communication, language and literacy as well as problem solving, reasoning and number is less strong. By the end of the Reception year most children have made good progress and are above average in all areas of learning except writing, which remains average. Behaviour is good because

of the strong focus on personal development, and children learn to sort out their differences and soon play well together. They also settle very quickly after joining the Early Years Foundation Stage because the adults have good links with the local nursery and communicate closely with parents. The children learn well because they are soon at ease with the adults and thoroughly enjoy the interesting, well-planned activities. These are well balanced, with good opportunities to make independent choices as well as being guided appropriately by adults. Whilst the activities planned cover all areas of learning, additional opportunities to tackle the relative weaknesses in writing have yet to be developed. In partnership with the headteacher the Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well and checks on how well new strategies and ideas are doing are carried out with increasing rigour. Each child's progress is closely watched from the start so the school can gauge how well children are doing. Pupils are safe and secure because staff look after each individual child's needs well.

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

- Ensure teachers always set high expectations when pupils use their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Raise pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a multicultural Britain.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Across the school pupils achieve well from above average starting points. Children get off to a good start in the early Years Foundation Stage and pupils' good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6. Following a dip in 2007, high standards and good achievement have been maintained, although standards fluctuate from year to year because of the relatively small numbers and changing nature of the classes. Consequently, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, they have reached standards overall that are exceptionally and consistently high. Standards in reading and mathematics in particular are extremely high. Whilst less strong, standards in science and writing are above the national average. Writing remains the subject across the school where pupils' standards and progress have risen less rapidly and as a result is correctly the school's current priority. The school sets challenging and demanding targets for pupils of all abilities. Good teaching, combined with effective tracking procedures, are the key factors in why these are being met and in some instances exceeded.

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

### **Grade: 2**

From their first days in school children are given an effective grounding in their personal development. They quickly form valuable relationships with friends and grown-ups and develop a good understanding of right and wrong and what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Such values and attitudes set the pattern for the rest of their time at Speldhurst and beyond. Pupils respond well to their responsibilities and are good at helping one another, with older children being trained as 'buddies' for the younger ones. They make an effective contribution to school and community life, for example, through the school council. 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 staying safe and are extremely good at leading and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. A good foundation for pupils' future economic well-being is provided by ensuring good achievement in the basic skills. This has been further

strengthened by developing pupils' attitudes to learning through both the 'Building Learning Power' and 'Thinking Actively in a Social Context' initiatives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The key features of good teaching are based in the very good relationships adults have with children. These help pupils to develop extremely positive attitudes towards school and their learning. Throughout the school pupils work well and the chatter as you enter a classroom is all about what they are learning. Much has been done by the school to foster pupils' learning skills, with the next step rightly having been identified as the need to develop their independent learning skills further. Pupils' behaviour is good because it is managed well, ensuring classrooms are places for learning. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities effectively, whether individually or in small groups, so that these pupils make the same progress as their peers. Overall teachers plan effectively to meet the range of pupils' needs. This is because they use assessment increasingly well to plan activities for different groups. The school is aware of the need to ensure that the good practice seen in teachers' marking is consistent in all areas of the curriculum to enable pupils to see just how they can improve further.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The creative curriculum introduced over the last year, alongside extremely well- planned enrichment activities and the wide range of clubs, has been instrumental in securing pupils' considerable enjoyment of school. A well-planned programme of personal, social and health education helps to promote pupils' good personal development. 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. Additional teaching staff are used effectively to enable pupils in the Year 4 mixed-age classes to have focused, age-appropriate teaching in mathematics and science. As a result of this and a good focus on planning lessons to take account of different age groups, pupils in Years 1 and 4 make the same progress regardless of their class. Information gained from checking and evaluating pupils' progress is aiding in the development of the curriculum, including in tackling areas of relative weakness. For instance, the school reviewed the provision for science and introduced a new scheme, successfully raising standards. The school is currently focusing on raising the quality of writing across the school. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write for many purposes as part of the creative curriculum. However, their expectations of the quality of the written work pupils produce in other subjects is not yet consistently high enough to raise standards further.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Considerable strengths lie in the pastoral care provided for the pupils. This is a school in which individual needs are fully recognised and where their pastoral care is given a high priority. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are all secure. Pupils feel very safe at school and explain that bullying is not a problem. Good links with outside agencies and parents add to the

effectiveness of the school's strong focus on supporting pupils' social, emotional and academic needs.

Academic guidance is firmly focused on how pupils can make good progress. Clear targets are shared with pupils at the start of lessons and mean that pupils know what they will be learning. These are used effectively so that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve on a day-to-day basis and can check their own understanding. New systems to check how well pupils are doing in science are planned to raise achievement and challenge to the high levels seen in reading and mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher regularly analyses the school results and monitors teaching to see where it is most effective and what needs to be improved. Governors play an effective role in supporting the headteacher in this process. Consequently, senior leaders have a very good understanding of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses. Priorities are accurately identified and their strong focus on teaching and learning has been effective in securing pupils' good achievement since the last inspection. Other leaders in the school are becoming increasingly involved as a result of the headteacher's support in developing their leadership skills further. Pupils are encouraged effectively to play their part in the life of the school and local area. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Leaders undertake informal evaluation of the school's role in developing community cohesion and are aware of the need to develop their links with the wider United Kingdom community in particular.



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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### 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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
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

<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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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

<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?	3
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**

18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Speldhurst Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Tonbridge Wells  
TN3 0NP

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear that you enjoy school so very much, that all the adults are kind and look after you exceedingly well so that you feel safe and ready to learn every day. You all get on well with each other and are extremely clear about how to keep healthy. We think you 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 high. The curriculum planned for you is good at meeting your needs. Your teachers are good at doing what is expected to help you all make good progress in your work. We agree that you are helped to enjoy your learning because there are such a lot of really interesting things for you to do and get involved in. Together with the 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 all the writing you do is as good as the writing you produce in literacy lessons.
- Help you to understand what it means to live in Britain with all its many cultures.

You can help by always using the skills you have learnt in literacy when you are writing in other subjects. 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