

Sebert Wood Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124682
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328192
Inspection date	23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	326
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graham Balaam
Headteacher	Mr Richard Rice
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sebert Road Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP32 7EG

Age group	4–9
Inspection date	23 June 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on pupils' academic development and preparation for the future
- the impact of action taken to improve achievement in Reception
- support for the achievement of the more able, gifted and talented.

Evidence was gathered from observations of parts of lessons, school assessment data, a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documents, discussions with pupils, staff and governors and from the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in as much detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Pupil numbers have been rising in this above average sized school. Free school meal eligibility is low. There are fewer pupils in need of additional support with their learning than in other primary schools. Although rising, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. Just over 10% of pupils have a community language other than English. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is through part-time attendance at the Nursery, and two Reception classes. The school has gained the Healthy School award, Sportsmark and Bronze Level Eco-School status.

The childcare provision on the school site was inspected at the same time as the school. However, as it is not managed by the school's governing body, the findings are reported separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Improvements since its last inspection mean that Sebert Wood Primary is now outstanding in virtually all aspects of its work. Close teamwork, the support of a very effective group of governors and the clear vision of the headteacher have been instrumental in moving the school forward and preparing it for the imminent reorganisation in the area. The pupils, their learning and their personal development are at the heart of all that the school does. Expectations of what they can achieve are high, whatever their circumstances. Whether they find learning difficult or need to be challenged, pupils thrive in an exciting and stimulating environment. The response of one parent encapsulated the views of many when writing, 'My son is so keen to go to school that every morning he stands ready and waiting, saying 'Come on mum' as we get ready to go.'

The headteacher is respected by everyone associated with the school. He has shaped it very much to his vision over many years, but this is always open to scrutiny and adaptation. He has built a thoughtful and reflective team, keen to improve and develop their skills for the benefit of the pupils. New ideas are considered carefully and their impact evaluated rigorously once implemented. Governors very much keep the headteacher and staff on their toes by balancing support with challenge. They are fully involved in planning the next stages of the school's development and make sure that parental views influence their decisions.

Teaching is of a high quality. This and the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning underpin their outstanding achievement. From skills slightly above those expected for their age on entry, pupils make very rapid progress and leave with standards much higher than those usually attained by nine-year-olds. Pupils not only develop basic skills but also the capacity to apply these to investigations and solving problems. Lessons are interesting and engage the pupils. Teachers skilfully use questions to drive learning forward at pace, while making sure no pupil is left behind. The team of highly effective support staff is deployed flexibly and pupil groupings are fluid so that specific needs can be met in each session.

Pupils make huge gains both academically and in their personal development because their skills and interests are recognised and used as a starting point when planning activities such as 'Inspire Week'. Lessons and specific programmes are carefully adapted to ensure that all pupils can succeed. The most able are thoughtfully challenged at all times. The 'Kingfishers' group extends the gifted and talented as do various activities in conjunction with local middle schools. Pupils who find learning difficult, or who need time to develop socially, are carefully nurtured. Strong links with other local schools extend opportunities for sport, music and drama. The school does its utmost to ensure that pupils take part in a wide range of physical activities. 'Fitness Fridays' is a prime example, with activities that are much enjoyed by the pupils.

Great strides have been made in the impact ICT has on the pupils' learning. Pupils turn to laptops and other devices as a matter of course. Teachers use whiteboards and projectors creatively to engage the pupils and make learning more interesting. Not only are pupils taught key ICT skills but they also utilise these on a daily basis to enhance and extend their learning. One excellent example seen was groups of Year 4 pupils preparing multi-media presentations of a poem, using skills way beyond those expected for their age. This included weaving in digital photographs they had taken along with the spoken word. The pupils also greatly enjoy having access to the school's 'Learning Platform' and are quite clear about how to minimise any risks posed by the internet.

The pupils are very impressive young people. Their outstanding personal qualities and the high standards they reach in all areas give the pupils an excellent foundation for success in the next stage of their education and beyond. The school has worked tirelessly to generate their confidence, not just in talking with adults but also in having a go at unfamiliar activities. They are enthusiastic learners and very proud of their school. As one Year 4 girl put it, 'I will be sad to leave but will have very fond memories of Sebert Wood when I go on to middle school.' Their behaviour is exemplary making for a very happy school. This has been achieved because all adults reinforce the school's expectations and the pupils are taught a set of values to influence decisions and help them to make considered choices.

Pupils of all backgrounds work and play happily together showing great consideration and respect for others. This helps to make the school an extremely cohesive and harmonious place that strikes the visitor immediately on arrival. The pupils are proud of their contribution to school life through their council, where they know to vote 'not for their friends but for the person who will do the job best', or by applying to take on the role of 'playground friend'. Pupils are acutely aware of environmental matters through activities such as 'Eco and Recycling' week. They have developed very strong views about how to protect the planet and its inhabitants. Gardening club, where they cultivate vegetables, emphasises the natural world and the pupils are involved in local issues such as tree planting and the design of a nearby playground. They have a very sharp awareness for their age of global issues. International links are a little more limited. However, it is an area the school intends to strengthen to add even more to the school's excellent contribution to community cohesion.

The commitment of the headteacher and governors to meeting the needs of families is reflected in the building of the children's centre, so that pre-school provision can run on the site, and the introduction of the successful breakfast club. Parents are unanimous in their happiness with the school's commitment to the well-being of their children. Pupils say they feel safe. They know they can always discuss a problem with an adult and that it will be dealt with sensitively. Bullying is not an issue as far as they are concerned but they are quite clear how the school would deal with any incidents.

In spite of all this success, there is no complacency at any level. Everyone is constantly looking for ways to improve outcomes for the pupils. An example being that the recent fall in Key Stage 1 writing standards has been tackled rigorously. The contexts for the pupils' writing are interesting and engaging with the result that standards have returned to a high level. There is a very clear understanding at all levels of the school's qualities and a determination for it to become even better. Its future is in very safe and accomplished hands.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Nursery and Reception classes provide a secure and challenging environment for the children. Excellent links with the pre-school ensure that they settle quickly and happily into the Nursery. Parents greatly value the information they are given about how to help their children make good progress. The adults look after children with utmost care and attention so they feel safe. The development of early literacy and extending vocabulary is a major priority and children benefit from a high level of proficient adult support. Children make excellent progress so that by the end of Reception standards are generally above those expected. Children's personal development is outstanding because all adults provide good role models, guiding children to consider others, to show good manners and behave well. Consequently, children develop very positive attitudes to learning and behave exceptionally well. These

qualities, together with their excellent progress in literacy and numeracy, prepare them very well for their start in Year 1.

Teaching is now outstanding across the setting. Children love learning because they are provided with a wide range of exciting opportunities to explore and discover for themselves. As one parent commented, 'The Nursery is a fantastic learning environment; the staff provide a wonderful and stimulating start to children's education.' Children immerse themselves in activities which very successfully link areas of learning. For example, describing aliens and using a computer to create a picture of one. Early ICT skills are taught very well and children soon securely access and use specific software. A major improvement is to be seen in the carefully planned outdoor learning experiences that children thoroughly enjoy; for example, using bulldozers to create a building site and planning where to build houses.

Though relatively new to the role, the leader has a good understanding of the strengths and areas to improve. A key strength is the support and professional development for all staff, including the on-site pre-school, so all adults work as a close-knit team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop broader international links to build on the strong understanding of wider communities that the pupils already have.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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	1
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

24 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sebert Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP32 7EG

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help when we visited your school recently. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school and we agree with you that your teachers take excellent care of you. You also care greatly for each other. Well done. Your behaviour is excellent and those of you who have special jobs, like the 'playground friends' and the school council, carry out their duties very responsibly. Thank you for sharing your views with us. You are part of an outstanding school and you all work together to find ways of making it even better.

You make excellent progress during your time in school, learning the skills you need for your futures and how to be mature and responsible people. This is because you are taught extremely well and have interesting things to learn. It was great to hear how much you enjoy school. It was also good to hear about how safe you feel and that there is always someone to talk to if you are worried. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. We were also impressed by your care and concern for the environment.

Your headteacher, other staff and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. We think that there is one thing that could make your experiences even more interesting. We have suggested they try to develop links with people across the world.

I am sure that you and your teachers will work hard to make this improvement. You can play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to show such pride and enthusiasm for learning.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Martin Beale

Lead inspector