

# Seend Church of England Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126414
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328496
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Deborah Zachary

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)	108
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>	Christian Checkley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steven Bennett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 September 2005
<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>	School Road Seend Melksham SN12 6NJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01380 828334

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**Fax number**

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The majority of Seend's pupils come from the village but a large minority travel to the school from further afield. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is broadly at the levels expected for this age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, but proportions in any one year group vary. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds, and none speak English as an additional language.

Seend is smaller than most primary schools. As a result, all classes contain two year groups. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the same class as some Year 1 pupils.

## 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. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well. Pupils' personal development is good. One of the school's outstanding features is the way pupils contribute to the school community. Their moral and social development is excellent. They behave exceptionally well and they feel extremely safe and secure. The school achieves these things through strong leadership and through adults who show a strong care and concern for the children. The result is that the school is a very welcoming environment where pupils greatly enjoy learning. One parent summed their views up by calling it a 'brilliant school' whilst another was very explicit in describing 'a genuine atmosphere of friendship'.

Teaching is good throughout the school. Lessons are carefully planned and pupils are told what the aims of the lesson are. As a result they engage with their learning and are keen to assess what they have understood. The school has recently developed the use of individual targets, such as 'use full stops and capital letters', and these are starting to be applied well across the school. The curriculum gives pupils a good breadth to their learning. Visitors to the school and visits to places of interest greatly enhance pupils' experiences; in the week of the inspection, for example, a visiting author provided the stimulus for writing across all classes. Some aspects of cultural development such as music are strong, but pupils have a more limited understanding of the full range of different cultures that make up Britain today.

Led very effectively by the headteacher, all staff make a strong contribution to leadership. The school's self-evaluation is good, and the school has a good capacity to improve further. Classroom learning is monitored extremely well, and the standards pupils reach in tests are analysed very well to see if they demonstrate areas of weakness. As a result of this, writing has been identified as an area to improve and a very well-thought-out strategy for improvement is now being followed. The school records each pupil's standards in reading, writing and mathematics each year. However, the way these assessments are recorded does not lend itself to fine-tuned analysis of the progress the pupils make from year to year. This means that whilst individuals who need to do better are usually identified by the very competent class teachers, patches of slower progress by whole year groups are not spotted quickly. At the moment there is too much variation in progress: it is excellent in some subjects and some year groups, but only satisfactory at other times. Opportunities are therefore missed to take quick action to raise standards for a whole group of pupils together.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Last year, they entered with standards that were broadly as expected nationally. They made very good progress to reach standards significantly above average before they entered Year 1. The current children in this age group are also doing well. Their personal and social development is particularly strong, and because this is well managed they benefit from the presence of the older year group in the same class. They work well together in pairs and groups. Even the youngest children are confident in independent play activities and most organise themselves well. They are very well looked after and a good partnership with parents ensures that the children feel safe and secure.

The children benefit from good teaching and a very attractive and well-organised learning environment. The outdoor play area is well developed. Tasks are well matched to the stage children are at, because regular assessment provides a clear picture of what individuals need to be working on. There is a good balance between taught activities and more independent play. Though the teacher is new to the school, the adults are working well as a team. Intervention to focus play is usually good, but at this early stage the teacher is still getting to know pupils and occasionally intervention could be quicker.

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

- Record assessments in a way that ensures any relatively slower progress is identified and improved more quickly.
- Improve pupils' understanding of Britain as a multicultural society.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards in Year 6 national tests have remained above average overall for a period of years, though standards do move up and down because year groups are small and some years there are more pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The progress of pupils of all abilities has been good, regardless of their different starting points.

Though assessment records lack fine detail, the current Year 6 pupils are broadly on track to reach targets that are challenging in relation to their Key Stage 1 results. Senior managers also set targets for other year groups that can be used to track progress. However, because these targets are set in relation to the previous year's level and do not take into account the pace of progress prior to that, they are not always challenging enough in relation to earlier starting points, for example at the beginning of a key stage.

Within the picture of overall good progress, the data suggest that there is variation in the progress of different year groups in different subjects. For example, the school's year-on-year data on standards suggest that progress was excellent in reading for last year's Year 5 pupils, and very good for those in Year 4. Progress in mathematics was much slower for Year 4. School data also suggest that progress for the pupils in the current Year 2 is much quicker than that they made in Year 1.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils demonstrate the ability to reflect, and respond well to collective worship. They clearly enjoy school and attendance is above average. Pupils have a good understanding of how to remain healthy, enjoying the school's provision for physical activities, including 'wake and shake' and 'huff and puff', often led by the pupils themselves. It is no wonder that pupils have been very successful in sports activities. The school has achieved the Healthy School award. Pupils are exceptionally good at keeping each other safe and secure, whilst not being over-cosseted. The headteacher has paid close attention to ensuring a secure environment in which some risks can be taken, and has invested in suitable apparatus for 'risky play' through which pupils can learn to look after themselves. Features such as the 'friendship bench', where pupils can sit if they want support from the 'playground friends', help the feeling of security as well as enabling the older ones to demonstrate their sense of responsibility.

The pupils make a massive contribution to the school community and strongly support the village, for example through church activities and through fêtes and shows. Activities such as packaging and selling seeds give them some experience of managing money, whilst school council members are learning about democracy. Though they have limited experience of the multicultural mix found in many British cities, where pupils may eventually work, their preparation for the future is good. Their good basic skills and their understanding of how to learn and work with others are big assets.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and discipline is managed well. Praise is used well, for example in the Year 1 and 2 class, to encourage pupils to cooperate with each other. Teachers use a range of strategies to interest pupils and develop their understanding, for example, 'talk partners' through which pupils can share ideas in pairs. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson the very good use of brief and crisp discussions with a friend developed pupils' fluency and vocabulary whilst keeping pace high. Work is often chosen for its relevance. During the inspection pupils in Years 3 and 4 drew on their class visit to Braeside to inform their writing, whilst those in Years 5 and 6 have used their recent experience of snow to write imaginative poems. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

Weaknesses in teaching are more to do with missed opportunities than any major issues. For example, teachers' own writing does not always provide a model for pupils of how to join letters.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is wide ranging and features focus weeks that are used very effectively to give pupils in-depth experience of particular areas. Visits and visitors have included theatre visits and workshops, sports coaches and museum trips as well as the recent work closely related to the improvement of writing. The curriculum is organised effectively to give support to individuals, for example through booster groups or targeted activities for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 all have the opportunity to attend at least one after-school club, covering diverse areas from art to judo. Despite all these clear strengths, the school's development plan rightly acknowledges that the curriculum could be further developed to be more flexible and combine topics more creatively in response to pupils' needs.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care is very strong and all statutory safeguarding requirements are met. Good links with playgroups and secondary schools ease pupils' transitions when they start and leave. Effective partnerships with outside agencies ensure that the school can draw on advice from other professionals where needed. As a result, individual plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are informed and specific, and support is good. Guidance is effective. Books are well marked and provide pupils with clear ideas of how to improve their work. Pupils' individual targets are tracked and achievement of targets is celebrated, for example with a sticker. Individual targets are comparatively new, and the full impact on standards is yet to be seen. At the moment the school development plan appropriately identifies the need to develop

teachers' skills in assessing small steps in pupils' performance in order to support the setting of targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The good involvement of leaders at all levels is one of several improvements made since the last inspection. The staff work as a close-knit team and are committed to raising achievement, for example in writing, through the sensible and informed changes to teaching and curriculum made this year. Planning for improvement is very clear and strategies are well designed to achieve required outcomes. Governors are well informed about the school and challenge effectively, fulfilling their responsibilities well.

The school knows its pupils' backgrounds well, not just in terms of ethnicity, religion and economic circumstances, but in many cases through having close contact with families stretching back many years. Equality is promoted sensitively, and the school does its best to ensure, for example, that no pupils are prevented by family circumstances from taking part in trips. The school itself is highly cohesive, and pupils themselves also feel that they play a strong part in the local community. Less attention is as yet given to the broader national community beyond the standard coverage of religions in Britain through religious education, but initial steps to develop a sense of a world community are in place.



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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	2
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

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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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	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	3
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**

12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seend Church of England Aided Primary School, Melksham SN12 6NJ

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school yesterday. A particular thank you to those who gave us your views on the school. We agree with you that the school is good. We can understand why you enjoy your work – you have lots of interesting activities to do, and activities such as dressing up like people in the Second World War sound really fun. All the adults in your school look after you really well.

You benefit from good teaching, and we were really impressed by the way you are assessing how well you understand the aims of each lesson. The signs the younger ones use to show how well they think they can do something are very effective. It is also good that you know your targets for learning so well. We think you have an excellent understanding of how to keep each other safe, and you help around the school outstandingly well. Your behaviour is really impressive.

You are making good progress, not just in English and mathematics, but also in other areas. We wish we'd seen your superb football team in action. However, every school can improve, and your headteacher and staff are keen to make things even better. We have asked them to do two things:

- Use the information they have about how well you do in tests and assessments to check exactly where you are learning rapidly and where you are not doing so well, so they can help you catch up more quickly if needed.
- Give you more knowledge and understanding of what it is like to live and work in parts of Britain where there are many different cultures.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Zachary

Lead inspector