

Silverdale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114454
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338367
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	658
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tamsin Freemantle
Headteacher	Gill Knox (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Three quarters of the time was spent observing learning and inspectors observed 22 lessons and 18 teachers. Meetings were held with the chair and vice chair of governors, staff, groups of pupils and a small group of parents. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, safeguarding information, assessment data and records of school monitoring and evaluation. Questionnaires returned by 145 parents and carers, 302 pupils and 42 members of staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the school engages all learners, and is supporting teaching to share best practice and accelerate pupils' progress in science
- the impact of measures to raise pupils' attainment in writing in Years 1 and 2
- the impact of the new leadership and management in securing improvement in pupils' attainment and progress
- pupils' knowledge and understanding of culture and communities other than their own.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools and is oversubscribed. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The range of needs includes academic, dyslexia, behavioural, emotional, social and physical difficulties. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in three discrete Reception classes. The school is part of a local excellence cluster that provides additional training and support for staff and pupils. A children's centre shares the site and is managed privately. Governors manage a breakfast and after-school club. The school has recently experienced some significant staff changes at senior management level. The acting headteacher was appointed as the substantive headteacher in the week before the inspection. Some senior posts are being filled temporarily and several middle leaders are relatively new in their role.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. After a turbulent period caused by significant changes at senior leadership level, it is improving and has some good features. The good aspects in care, guidance and support and good engagement with parents result in strengths in pupils' personal development and well-being. Almost all pupils enjoy school, behave well and form positive relationships. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that by the time they transfer to Year 1 they make good progress to exceed expected age-related levels. Over the last three years attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has shown steady improvement. Last year attainment was significantly above national averages in English and mathematics and at the higher levels, but in science it was below average and declined significantly. Overall pupils achieve satisfactorily, making good progress in English and mathematics but less so in science. This is partly due to teachers' lack of knowledge, meaning they are less confident in teaching science activities. For example, there are insufficient investigational tasks and other work set is too low-level. A very different picture emerges in English and mathematics, where pupils respond well to opportunities to develop their speaking, listening and practical skills in a range of ways. Learning, teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory but there are already examples of more effective teaching, with strong features evident in all years. Marking of pupils' work is often good in English and mathematics but is not as effective in science.

The headteacher has a clear sense of direction and increasingly the school has a secure view of its strengths and weaknesses, but self-evaluation and forward planning is not robust. The school has successfully tackled a stubborn pattern of underachievement in writing in Years 1 and 2 but has not done the same in science. Senior leaders and most middle managers are still developing their skills, while those longer in post demonstrate clearer impact on raising pupils' attainment through meticulous tracking of pupils' progress. This approach and the developing focus on improvement shared by staff and governors ensure a satisfactory capacity to improve further. While the school's community is a cohesive one, the school does not do enough to teach pupils about life in other parts of the country and further afield.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in science by:
 - ensuring all teachers have secure subject knowledge
 - giving pupils good opportunities to develop their investigative and scientific

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skills, through fun, interesting learning activities

- marking work carefully with clear guidance on how to improve.
- Improve the strategic leadership of the school by:
 - bringing greater rigour to the way all leaders develop planning, and monitor and evaluate the school's work
 - developing leaders' skills at all levels in how to monitor and evaluate more effectively and consistently for improvement in their curriculum areas.
- Strengthen the school's promotion of community cohesion by:
 - actively promoting the pupils' engagement with a number of differing community groups in Britain and further afield.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

■ **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

3

Pupils are keen to talk about the interesting things they have learned. They especially enjoy learning through practical opportunities, though they do not have enough of these in science. Year 6 excitedly told inspectors that as 'evacuees' they had made ration books, identity cards and wore gas masks, but were disappointed that the steam train broke down. Others enjoyed seeing Macbeth, researching smuggling first-hand and loved mathematics because it was usually fun. These opportunities and the good care and support they feel they receive ensure they are happy at school. Pupils work well together and cooperate in groups. They listen well and mostly try hard. Most of the pupils inspectors talked with said they felt safe at school, though a few parents and carers and a minority of pupils expressed their concerns in the Ofsted questionnaire. Pupils show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and many said they loved the healthy school dinners and participate in many sports. Even the youngest ones enjoy their fruity snacks. Pupils contribute well as school councillors and play buddies and through their ecological work. Although they support a school in Uganda and fund-raise for charities, their multicultural awareness is a weaker element. Attendance is satisfactory and for a number of pupils this represents an improvement .

Year 1 children particularly enjoyed learning the value of money, buying and selling items in the shop, while older ones were challenged to solve increasingly complex fractions. Pupils' writing is flourishing because of the early and effective focus of teaching letters and sounds and 'fun' writing activities. Lesson observations, work in pupils' books, on display and the school's own tracking systems show that overall pupils' make satisfactory progress. Progress in English, especially writing and mathematics, is much stronger than in science, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, though those with less severe learning needs make the least progress because provision is not well focused on their needs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

An increasing amount of teaching is lively, engaging, focused and purposeful. Year 6 enjoyed conducting tests on mould and micro-organisms and this challenged their thinking on viruses and fungi. Where teachers use assessment effectively and have good subject knowledge, as in English, learning is carefully matched to meet all pupils' needs. In a role as farmers or friends, Year 4 used their individual target books to help them focus on their targets before writing a diary entry; good writing followed, such as 'the hot bright burning fiery sun'. Teachers' questioning to check for pupils' understanding and involvement in their learning are strengths, as are pupils' good attitudes to learning. Some good-quality marking is evident in English and mathematics; this helps pupils' understand 'next steps' for improvement. Nonetheless, too much dull, flat teaching was also seen and in these lessons pupils lost concentration and made limited gains in their learning. A science book scrutiny revealed overuse of worksheets, poor marking, few investigational opportunities and similar work set for pupils of all abilities.

The curriculum is strengthened by a range of visits and extra-curricular sports and clubs from judo to swimming. Pupils really enjoy these activities and other class work, but said, 'science is often boring'. Those vulnerable and gifted and talented pupils receive good additional learning opportunities promoted through the school's participation in the excellence cluster. Guidance and support, especially for vulnerable pupils, is good. The school's close monitoring means that pupils' learning needs are quickly identified, and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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support from teaching assistants, group work or speech and language sessions are often of good quality. Transition arrangements are good and there are examples of where individual pupils and their families have been helped to overcome significant difficulties. Though support for those with more severe difficulties results in their good achievement, for some others with learning difficulties this is less secure. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide a secure start and end of the school day and provide good social opportunities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The dynamic headteacher demonstrates clear ambition and drive to bring about necessary changes. Within the last six months governors have rapidly built on their knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They utilised their expertise in the appointment of the new headteacher and staff restructuring, and challenge the school's efforts to raise pupils' attainment in writing. Safeguarding procedures, child protection and ensuring that all pupils feel safe are satisfactory and meet current guidelines. Middle managers, some of whom are relatively new in post, are motivated and committed to seek further improvement. Their engagement in monitoring teaching and learning first-hand has been limited though some have sampled teachers' planning and pupils' work to good effect. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is insufficiently robust, particularly in science, to bring about improvement, whereas for newly qualified teachers it is insightful and rigorous. Development planning is focused on the Every Child Matters programme, but it is not focused enough on driving up pupils' achievement. Target setting is based on accurate assessment information but is not always challenging enough.

Equal opportunity and eliminating discrimination are promoted satisfactorily, given there is no significant variation in the progress made by particular groups of pupils. The school shows a good understanding of its social, ethnic and religious context and promotes community cohesion very well locally, but not enough is done to enhance pupils' understanding of the diverse communities in Britain today and globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff provide a caring, safe and stimulating environment so that children settle happily and grow in confidence. Children arrive with a wide range of skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and in their personal, social and emotional development. Attainment on entry is broadly average but it varies from year to year. The current year group are achieving well and are already above average in all six areas of learning. This is a result of effective teaching, especially of letters and sounds, and the excellent support for those who find learning more difficult. Children work well independently, in pairs and groups. Good leadership and strong links with parents, carers, pre-school providers and specialists from speech and language therapists to play workers ensure a firm overview of children's ongoing progress. Very detailed tracking of children's progress and use of 'learning journals' and photographic evidence illustrate clearly the good progress children make. From being mechanics in the garage, to counting the different number of wheels on cars and scooters and writing road signs children build on their language and communication skills through 'real life' experiences. The outdoor area is used well as an extended classroom but 'freeflow access' to it is restricted because of the limited space available.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers commented very positively about their children's enjoyment, experience of school and teaching quality. Inspection evidence tends to support many of the positive views, but judged teaching satisfactory overall. Most responded positively to other aspects, while a few are not confident that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors found a consistent approach to managing behaviour. A few commented that the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found some limited evidence of this. The school accepts that more could be done and is keen to further develop communications with parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 145 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 658 pupils registered at the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Silverdale school to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	52	68	47	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	38	81	56	4	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	52	36	85	59	7	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	39	81	56	4	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	66	46	75	52	2	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	38	80	55	8	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	31	92	63	7	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	44	30	84	58	3	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	31	87	60	4	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	21	98	68	13	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	25	91	63	9	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	35	24	89	61	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	48	71	49	4	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



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29 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Silverdale Primary School, St Leonards-on-Sea TN37 7EA

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. You really helped us. We think your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and there are a lot of good things about your school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their education. You enjoy school, behave well and know why it is important to stay healthy. You told us how sporty you all are and we hope that the soccer team got through to the finals! Although teaching is satisfactory, some of your lessons really help you to do your best, especially in English and mathematics. Well done for improving your writing so much! You achieve standards that are average overall, though in science you achieve levels below those expected for your age. All the adults look after you and help you if you need it. Your new headteacher, staff and governors are working to make the school even better, but realise there is still more to do for it to become a good school.

We have asked the school to do three things:

- help you to develop scientific skills and make learning more practical, fun and interesting and give you help and guidance about how to do well in science
- make sure that leaders plan well to make sure you make the best progress that you can and check carefully and regularly that you are helped to do so
- develop links with schools that have pupils from different backgrounds so that you can find out what life is like in Britain and further afield.

You can help, too, by continuing to try your best in everything you do.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning

Lead inspector

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