

Sparsholt Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116317
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338791
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Liz Kounnou

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	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucy White
Headteacher	Stephen Young
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed six teachers and saw 13 lessons. Meetings were held with the governing body, teachers and pupils. Inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work and looked at pupils' books, work displayed around the school, school policies, assessment information and records. Inspectors analysed 96 questionnaires from parents and carers, 11 from staff and 72 from pupils to inform the inspection process.

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

- The achievement of gifted and talented pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging for all groups.
- The achievement of pupils of all abilities in writing to evaluate the improvements secured since the last inspection.
- The extent to which pupils feel safe and lead healthy lifestyles to determine the impact of the curriculum and the school's care, guidance and support in promoting these and other aspects.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. It draws pupils from a wide area and numbers are rising steadily. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. The majority of this group have been assessed with moderate learning difficulties. A very few have specific needs linked to autistic spectrum disorder, and speech, language and communication difficulties. The school is in the process of setting up an after-school club.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The school code, 'Show care, kindness, respect for others, pride in our work and let the teachings of Jesus guide us in all we do', is woven into the very fabric of this outstanding school. Staff expect pupils to do their best and, as a result, their attainment is high and all groups of pupils make consistently good progress. The levels of concentration seen in lessons, particularly from the oldest pupils, are quite remarkable and reflect pupils' outstanding behaviour and desire to learn. Their outstanding achievements result from very high levels of trust and responsibility and the exceptionally high levels of enjoyment in learning seen throughout the school. As a consequence, attendance is high.

The capacity to maintain excellence and improve the school further is outstanding. Staff continually make highly effective improvements to the outstanding curriculum so that it is packed with hands-on opportunities for investigation which motivates pupils of all abilities. At this early stage of the school year, the walls and corridors are already filled with vibrant and informative displays that celebrate pupils' achievements and promote even higher standards. The way the headteacher shares leadership responsibilities in this small school is highly effective and results in concerted efforts to raise standards and a relentless pursuit of excellence. Extremely robust tracking systems, that highlight pupils that are doing well and those that might be falling behind the school's expectations, underpin outstanding leadership. Leaders know exactly what needs to be improved still further as a result of the regular checks they make. Governors are exceptionally rigorous in fulfilling their duties.

Teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice. The school meets the needs of the very-able pupils exceptionally well. A part-time secondary school specialist works with the most-able mathematicians to provide high levels of challenge. This is just one of the strategies employed to ensure gifted and talented pupils are fully engaged in learning. There are occasions when writing opportunities in lessons across the curriculum are not set at the right level to ensure the most able extend and practise their skills. Individual learning targets are set for writing and mathematics to engage pupils and help them understand their next steps in learning. However, some of the writing targets lack clarity and rigour and are not always relevant to the work taking place in classrooms.

Pupils consistently say they feel safe at school due to the high levels of care shown by all staff and the diligent systems in place to keep them safe. Nowhere is this more evident than in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage class. Throughout the school, pupils readily look after one another with older pupils being very considerate of younger children's needs. In assemblies, for example, pupils sit in clusters rather than

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rows with older pupils taking responsibility for the younger children in each cluster. This is just another example of the school's code in action.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of writing across the curriculum by ensuring that:
 - opportunities for writing across the curriculum are set at a high enough level to match pupils' skills, particularly for the most able
 - pupils have writing targets that are relevant to the tasks they are completing in lessons so that they can judge their own success.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

High achievement has been a feature of the school for a number of years. Pupils' exemplary behaviour, both in and out of the classroom, along with their excellent attitudes to learning and ability to work cooperatively and independently, make a highly effective contribution to their learning and progress, which overall are good and at times outstanding. Children make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, quickly settling into school. Their enthusiasm for learning is successfully built on so that standards are high overall by the end of Year 6 and have been for a number of years. However, pupils' attainment in writing does not consistently match their high attainment in reading, especially in the topic work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have started the year studying Macbeth and are completely enthralled with the play. A homework task, involving watching a DVD of the play, prepared pupils well for the topic. One girl acted as Lady Macbeth and answered questions from the rest about how she was feeling after the murder. Pupils went on to write letters to her making excellent use of emotive language. One pupil commented that this letter was so much harder to write than the one they wrote last week. The most-able mathematicians in Years 5 and 6 show great skill in solving problems and were able to work out how many sheep can fit into different sized sheep-pens. Year 1 and 2 pupils work independently and industriously and respond well to the high expectations. For example, Year 1 pupils are already learning how to write with care in a joined script. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because great care is taken to ensure they increase not only their skills but also their independence.

Attention to detail leads to excellent outcomes. When learning about substance abuse, Key Stage 2 pupils gained a thorough understanding of the effects of too much alcohol by trying out eyeglasses that made them unable to walk in a straight line. This memorable experience was related with glee to the inspection team. Pupils take their social responsibility very seriously and have used their own initiative to raise money for a number of charities including the Lukomera school for the deaf in Uganda. Pupils enjoy school and are well prepared for the next stage in their life and learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Exciting activities enliven most lessons and many require pupils to think very hard through probing questions. Teachers' marking clearly informs pupils what they have done well and how they could improve through a system known as '3 stars and a wish'. Regular assessments feed into the school's tracking system and help staff to adapt planning to meet the needs of all pupils. In a very few lessons, the most able are not challenged to improve their writing skills. Similarly, the learning targets set are not consistently used to help pupils judge for themselves how well they have done. In subjects other than English, the use of worksheets occasionally limits opportunities for writing at a high level. Support and guidance provided in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well planned and related to their needs. This group is included in the majority of lessons and encouraged to play a full part. Well-tailored individual sessions that provide extra support are a key to pupils' good progress.

The rich and exciting curriculum is the key feature in the school's success. One notable example is the enrichment afternoon, when pupils 'swap' teachers for subjects such as art, music and dance. This allows teachers to teach to their strengths and pupils to experience a high level of challenge. A wide range of extra sports activities are open to all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6; attendance at these is very high and makes a significant contribution to pupils' healthy lifestyles. The same excited buzz found in lessons

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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continues after school during these activities.

Care for pupils continues to be outstanding, as seen at the last inspection. The excellent partnerships with key professionals contribute significantly to the well-being of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Skilled teaching assistants also make a good contribution to the learning of these pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and the governing body are extremely clear about the actions needed to drive forward school improvement. Rigorous and effective checking of the impact of initiatives is a major factor in the school's continuous and steady improvement. The governing body is supported in its excellent work by high-quality information and very good partnerships with the headteacher. The school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding. A review of the extent to which the school promotes community cohesion led to strong links with a school in London, where the pupil profile is very different, and a school for the deaf in Uganda. The headteacher's thorough knowledge, not only of the key talents of his staff but also the achievements of the pupils, drives improvement exceptionally well while retaining a shared ethos underpinned by successful teamwork. The monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough. Development points are acted upon quickly so that improvements in the quality of teaching and learning continue to be made to address any unevenness.

Parents and carers make a significant contribution to the community, supporting the school magnificently. They do this by raising large sums of money to widen the provision but they also give their time and ideas readily. The school has excellent safeguarding procedures. A safer car park system, introduced in response to parental concerns, illustrates the importance placed on this area of the school's work. The school is in the process of setting up its own after-school club.

The school works well to promote equality and to tackle discrimination. The adults know which pupils are doing well and those that may have stalled in their learning, due to a well-maintained electronic tracking system. The headteacher regularly focuses on the progress of vulnerable groups and raises any concerns with staff during staff meetings to ensure that pupils of all abilities make at least good progress. No-one in this school is complacent about the success achieved. There is a shared commitment to continuous improvement strongly linked to high levels of enjoyment in learning for all pupils.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding teaching means that children achieve exceptionally well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, the vast majority exceed the levels expected for the age range by the end of the Reception Year. It is a delight for children to learn in this exciting classroom. The outdoor area is filled with enjoyable activities, such as making birthday cakes for the Gruffalo with wet and sloppy mud. Indoors, there are similarly inspirational activities; children in their second week of school could not wait to get started at dressing up as the Gruffalo with 'Terrible Claws' on hand in the dressing-up box. Opportunities to practise early writing skills are everywhere. Assessment is a strong feature with adults making rigorous checks to identify the next steps for learning. Consequently, early writing and reading activities build on the skills that children bring to school when they start. Plenty of opportunities for speaking and listening help to keep the children interested and provide excellent challenge.

Leadership of this stage is outstanding and has resulted in sustained and significant increase in the proportion of children reaching average levels by the end of the Reception Year.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A particularly high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. An overwhelming majority expressed highly positive views of the school. All parents and carers said their children were happy at school and this reflects the evidence gathered during the inspection. A large number of parents and carers wrote extensive letters expressing their great satisfaction. One wrote: 'The school has improved year after year, the staff are all friendly and approachable and to be honest are a big part of my children's life.' The concerns of a very small minority of parents and carers regarding pupils' progress were not borne out by the evidence during this inspection which shows that progress is at least good. Nonetheless, the inspection team found that writing across the curriculum is not always challenging for the most-able pupils. One parent raised concerns about the size of a new classroom. The team found that the school had sought and acted upon the advice of the local authority in this matter and is not exceeding the recommended numbers in each class.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sparsholt Church of England Primary 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.

The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 127 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	79	18	19	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	76	79	18	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	62	65	29	30	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	59	28	29	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	67	70	23	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	70	25	26	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	71	25	26	0	0	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)	64	67	23	24	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	63	29	30	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	66	26	27	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	65	26	27	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	73	76	21	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	76	79	17	18	1	1	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



23 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sparsholt Church of England Primary School, Winchester, SO21 2NR

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our visit. You worked extremely hard in the lessons we saw and your behavior was excellent. We found your comments very helpful. You told us how much your teachers help you to do your best. Your school is outstanding and your teachers are helping you to make really good progress. There are very many outstanding things in your school.

The features we liked most are:

- the very happy atmosphere in every class.
- how much you enjoy your lessons and concentrate
- the way that you take care of one another, in particular the way the older children are looking after the new Reception children at the moment
- the way you try hard to stay healthy by taking lots of exercise on the playground equipment and in the sports clubs.
- your sensible suggestions for improving the school help the headteacher to make sure you all do your best.
- how you use your own initiative to help other people, such as raising money for Lucomera school for the deaf in Uganda.
- the way that staff and the governing body ensure that you are safe and well cared for at school.

To help the school become even better, we have asked the governing body, headteacher and staff to help you improve your writing in topic work. You could help by trying really hard to think about your targets when you are writing.

Thank you again for talking to us about your school and making us welcome.

Yours sincerely

Liz Kounnou Lead inspector

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