

Sellindge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118387
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326819
Inspection date	10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Jacque Buttriss

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	112
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	Dudley Shipton
Headteacher	H Baxter
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Main Road Sellindge Ashford TN25 6JY
Telephone number	01303 812073
Fax number	01303 812073

Age group	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 primary school with a privately funded nursery on the site. All the school's Early Years Foundation Stage children are in the Reception Year group. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to most schools. There is extended schooling in the form of breakfast, after school and holiday clubs. All pupils are in mixed-age classes. Half of the full time teaching staff, including the deputy headteacher, have joined the school this year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides, as one parent put it, 'an excellent level of well balanced education' for all its pupils. Another explains that 'this school is full of love, care and warmth'.

Children join the school with skills below those expected for their age. They make excellent progress from the start and achievement is outstanding throughout the school. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average overall and well above average in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very ably supported with the result that they also make outstanding progress.

Outstanding teaching engages and inspires all pupils to do their best. As one Year 6 boy said, 'We have really hard challenges – I like that.' A Year 3 pupil agreed, 'I find it fun and I like all the lessons.' The excellent curriculum engages pupils fully and is very well enriched by a wide variety of additional activities and opportunities. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils' needs are fully met. Learners are helped to know how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

'Everyone always gets a warm welcome at Sellindge school,' commented a parent, and it is this inclusive family atmosphere that helps to ensure that 'the school takes a strong interest in children as individuals'. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They have a keen awareness of how to be healthy and stay safe. They thoroughly enjoy their school days and their behaviour is excellent. Attendance is good. Pupils happily take on many responsibilities, including a very successful 'buddy' system to welcome new pupils and help them settle into the school community. There is an active school council and pupils know that their views are valued. The school is greatly involved in the local community and vice versa. They enjoy many joint activities, such as the 'Diggers and Dippers' club in the school's own gardens and allotments. Pupils acquire excellent skills to prepare them exceptionally well for their future lives.

The highly dynamic and hard-working headteacher is strongly supported by a dedicated team. Together, they energetically drive forward school improvement. Leaders at all levels set highly challenging targets, many of which are exceeded. They have very good planning and review systems in place and governors provide excellent support in holding the school to account. Community cohesion is good overall, with outstanding features, but there are not yet sufficient opportunities for pupils to gain an awareness of the variety of faiths, cultures and socio-economic circumstances across the United Kingdom.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and full of praise for all it does for their children. 'Sellindge is a wonderful school with an amazing headteacher,' writes one parent, while another reflects the views of many with the comment, 'I am so proud my daughter attends Sellindge Primary School.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Reception children at this school have an outstanding start to their education. Excellent teaching enables the children to make outstanding progress. By the time they are ready to join Year 1, they attain broadly average standards and are confident, happy individuals with a fast-growing love of learning.

Excellent planning and assessment ensure that children settle in well and develop positive attitudes to all aspects of their learning. Care and welfare are, as one parent put it, 'second to none', with the result that children are keen to come to school. They thoroughly enjoy the exciting variety of learning activities on offer across all areas of learning. There is a lively sense of shared enthusiasm as they tackle new projects and select new ideas to explore. The outside learning area has been well developed since the last inspection and is now an integral part of the learning environment. Staff work together very well as a team. Children are nurtured and supported as individuals and their needs are successfully met so that they can develop their skills well and increase their self-esteem.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' understanding of the varied lives, beliefs and cultures of children in other areas of the UK for example by making links to other schools.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children make excellent progress in the Reception Year and their achievement is outstanding across all the areas of learning. Pupils continue to make excellent progress from year to year, so that they reach above average standards overall, and well above in English, by the end of Year 6. The school's recent focus on developing stronger writing skills has successfully increased standards in this area. Current strategies to improve science and mathematics teaching are also significantly increasing progress in these subjects. The excellent support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they make outstanding progress in line with their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Outstanding personal development and well-being results in what is described by one parent as 'a fantastic, friendly, happy school'. Pupils demonstrate great enjoyment in every aspect of their school life. As a Year 3 pupil put it, 'I just really like it all.' Indeed, when asked if there was anything pupils did not like about the school, a Year 6 boy said 'I can't think of anything!' Pupils of all ages have an excellent understanding of how to eat healthily and they all enjoy the fitness trail and the 'Wake and Shake' exercise sessions. The school has gained a Healthy Schools award. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to stay safe, for example regarding internet access, and they know who to go to with any concerns. Behaviour is excellent in classrooms and around the school. Attendance is good and the school is successfully reducing the absences of the small number of persistent absentees. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and there are strong links with local churches and other organisations. Pupils act as play leaders and take on other responsibilities. The school council is actively involved in collecting, discussing and addressing pupils' views and they are having a significant impact on improving the school environment, working towards an eco schools award. Pupils and staff alike are fully involved in many local community events and the community is also welcomed into the school on a regular basis. Pupils' excellent progress in learning and social skills prepares them outstandingly well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Outstanding teaching is evident in the well paced lessons that engage all pupils in an excellent variety of stimulating learning activities. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can do, with the result that they work very purposefully and take pride in their achievements. As one pupil said, 'We've got a lot of good teachers and a lot of exciting things to do all the time.' Pupils of all abilities are well supported and challenged according to their needs so that they all make outstanding progress. Excellent planning ensures that work is well matched to the range of abilities in mixed-age classes. Teaching assistants provide excellent support for the learning in each class, to enable all pupils to achieve as well as they can.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum meets pupils' needs very well in mixed-age classes. It is greatly enriched by the outstanding variety of additional activities and learning opportunities, visits and visitors. The curriculum has been successfully adapted to ensure that lessons are fun and engaging for boys as well as for girls, helping to ensure both achieve equally well. There is a good range of extension opportunities for the more able pupils. Themed days and weeks add variety and are much enjoyed by pupils. Visiting specialist teachers provide valued expertise to enhance curriculum provision in their subjects. The school has adopted new approaches to planning which are successfully raising standards in mathematics and science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care and support are great strengths of this school. Excellent relationships enable pupils to feel valued and gain confidence. The school takes its responsibilities in protecting and safeguarding pupils very seriously and all requirements are rigorously met. Excellent support by specialists and extensive links with external agencies ensure that all vulnerable pupils and their families are very successfully supported. Academic guidance is developing very well. Pupils know their learning targets and teachers' marking helps them to know what they need to do in order to improve their work. Parents are strongly encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and appreciate the excellent information they receive in the form of the weekly 'Scweek' newsletter. The school's new community room is also very well used to support parent learning and development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is highly praised by parents for 'her everlasting energy and drive'. She leads a strong leadership and staff team with very clear direction and shared vision in their drive for school improvement. Indeed, there have been great improvements in a number of areas since the last inspection. For example, writing standards have been very successfully raised and the school grounds have been imaginatively transformed into an exciting learning environment for pupils of all ages. New approaches to planning and

teaching are already having a positive impact on raising standards in science. In these ways, the school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for further improvements. The school's highly robust and comprehensive self-evaluation processes ensure that any areas for development are quickly identified and addressed. There is excellent equality of opportunity so that all pupils are able to achieve as well as they can. Governors provide an excellent blend of support and challenge to the school's leadership and undertake their monitoring roles conscientiously. Community cohesion is good overall. The school and local contexts are excellent. There are good links in place with children's homes in both Kenya and India, which help pupils to learn about the lives, cultures and beliefs of children in far off lands. However, there are as yet no similar links with schools or groups in other parts of the United Kingdom.

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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?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	2
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**

11 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Sellindge Primary School, Ashford, TN25 6JY

Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel very welcome indeed. We very much enjoyed talking with you. Yours is an outstanding school. It helps you to do excellent work and cares for you exceptionally well.

These are the things we especially like about your school:

- You make outstanding progress and achieve high standards in your work. Well done!
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You have excellent relationships and look after each other exceptionally well.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and stay safe.
- You have outstanding teachers who work very hard to make your lessons exciting and fun.
- You enjoy school a very great deal.
- You all work very hard to do your best. Keep it up!
- You do great work with people in your local community and to improve the environment in your own school.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors lead the school outstandingly well.
- Your parents and carers tell us that they are delighted you come to this school.

This is what we think your school could do even better:

- The school could help to develop your understanding of different children's lives, beliefs and cultures in other parts of the United Kingdom.

You could help by continuing to work hard and enjoy your lessons. I would like to wish you lots of success in your future learning. Keep up the excellent work!

Jacquie Buttriss

Lead inspector