

# Sedlescombe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	114522
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	378879
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Melanie Knowles HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Maidment
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marian Ham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26–27 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Brede Lane Sedlescombe Battle TN33 0RQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 870585
<b>Fax number</b>	01424 870949
<b>Email address</b>	office@sedlescombecep.e-sussex.sch.uk

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## Introduction

Inspection team

Melanie Knowles

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kevin Rae

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons, taught by seven teachers. Four of these were joint observations with the headteacher and three were joint observations with the deputy headteacher. In addition, an inspector made a visit to the breakfast club. An inspector also listened to a group of pupils from Year 1 reading. Inspectors spoke informally to pupils on the playground and met with two groups of pupils. They also held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at relevant documentation including data on pupils' attainment, progress and attendance, school development plans, key policies and evidence of the school's monitoring of behaviour and teaching and learning. Inspectors also looked at a sample of pupils' work books and teachers' lesson plans. They analysed 134 questionnaires from parents and carers and others completed by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

Sedlescombe Church of England Primary School is smaller than average. The number of pupils on the school roll has grown over the last three years and new school buildings have been added to accommodate seven classes. The school serves a village community, although an increasing proportion of pupils travel to the school from the surrounding area. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has risen slightly over the last three years, but is below average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is above average. The majority of pupils who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs have speech, language and communication difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The government's floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress, was exceeded in 2011. The school has gained the Artsmark gold award and the Activemark and has Healthy School accreditation.

The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils. The breakfast club provides care and a meal to pupils from eight o'clock each day. This facility is used regularly by nine pupils.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. Due to steady improvement in the quality of teaching, a higher proportion of pupils now achieve well. Sedlescombe is not an outstanding school because teaching in a few classes is sometimes satisfactory rather than good and overall attainment in English and mathematics, although improving, remains broadly average. Pupils get off to a strong start in the Reception class and by the end of Year 6 most have well-developed skills, particularly in reading and mathematics. Older pupils generally write with imagination and use a wide range of vocabulary, but some have weak spelling skills and pupils do not routinely check their work for errors.
- Much of the teaching at Sedlescombe is characterised by energy, pace and enthusiasm. Most teachers make good use of a range of strategies, including questioning, paired work and discussion to ensure that all pupils are engaged in their learning. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly, but do not always give precise guidance on how pupils could improve their work.
- Pupils say they enjoy learning, feel safe and are well cared for by the staff. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. A large majority of pupils say that behaviour in lessons is good most of the time.
- The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, has been successful in bringing about improvement since the previous inspection. Together, they monitor the quality of teaching and learning rigorously and ensure that staff receive high-quality feedback so that they can improve. Robust data analysis informs school development plans, but these lack quantifiable measures so that school leaders and governors can evaluate the impact of their initiatives.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure above-average attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - increasing the proportion of teaching that is consistently good and outstanding
  - ensuring that teachers' marking always gives clear guidance on the precise next steps that pupils need to take in order to improve their work
  - addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge of sounds and letters, particularly at

Key Stage 2, and encouraging them to routinely check their own spelling.

- Ensure good quality of planning for improvement so that leaders at all levels, including governors, can evaluate the impact of their actions by:
  - including measurable targets for each priority
  - identifying milestones at which to evaluate progress.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

The vast majority of parents and carers say they are happy with the progress that their children make at Sedlescombe and the inspection team agrees that achievement has improved and is now good. Inspectors found that pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work with enthusiasm in lessons.

Assessments indicate that most children are at age-appropriate levels in all areas of learning when they join the school in Reception. Children make good progress during their time in the Reception class and most join Year 1 with communication, language and mathematical skills that are above the expected levels. The Reception classroom is bright and stimulating and provides a language-rich environment for children. The small outside area is used well to provide a range of activities that develop skills across all areas of learning. Interesting topics excite and motivate the children. Good rates of progress are sustained across Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. For the last three years, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in all areas has been rising steadily. Last year pupils left Key Stage 1 with levels of attainment that were the equivalent of around one term ahead of national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has introduced regular teaching of letters and sounds in Reception and Key Stage 1 and this is having a beneficial impact on pupils' ability to spell correctly. In Key Stage 2 many pupils have gaps in their knowledge of letter sounds and the standard of spelling is weaker. School leaders have identified this issue and the subject leader for English has drawn up an action plan to address it. Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 is above average which reflects good progress from their starting points. Pupils enjoy reading and benefit from well-planned opportunities to read fiction and non-fiction books in lessons. They also read regularly at home.

The proportion of pupils attaining the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school remains broadly average overall, but has increased over the last three years. Work seen in lessons and in books confirms that most pupils make good progress from their starting points and now achieve well. Data show that differences in the achievement of boys and girls and for those eligible for free school meals are being reduced. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress overall, although tracking data show higher achievement for these pupils in reading and writing than in mathematics. The current school plan rightly has a focus on continuing to narrow the gap between pupils of different abilities.

## Quality of teaching

The practice seen during the inspection confirms the school's view that the quality of teaching has improved and is now mainly good with some outstanding practice. The overwhelmingly positive responses from parents and carers to the inspection questionnaires show that they agree that their children are taught well.

Most teachers have a good understanding of how their pupils learn best and plan lessons that engage and motivate them. The curriculum enables pupils to apply their skills in reading, writing and communication in a range of contexts, but there are fewer opportunities to apply mathematical skills to solve problems and to use mathematics in other curriculum subjects, such as science and design and technology. Teachers generally make good use of assessment information and build on prior learning systematically in lessons. Most of them use skilful questioning to deepen pupils' understanding. Classrooms are well resourced and most teachers use displays to celebrate achievement and provide useful prompts to pupils. In the best lessons observed during the inspection, the pace of learning was brisk and activities were well matched to pupils' needs and interests. For example, in Year 1 pupils were preparing to write an account of their recent visit to a local farm. The teacher used photographs taken during the visit to remind pupils of the day's events. She then took on the role of a pupil trying to write the beginning of her account and asked the pupils to help improve her sentences and ensure that the spelling and punctuation were correct. The pupils really enjoyed helping her correct her work and understood exactly what they were going to do when it was their turn to write. In a few lessons, the teaching and learning were satisfactory rather than good because teachers did not set work that was at the right level for all pupils and they did not use strategies to ensure that all their pupils were actively engaged in the lesson.

Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Some provide very effective individual or small-group support in class for those learners who have particular needs. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. In Years 1 and 2 they tend to write simple comments that inform pupils what they have done well. In Key Stage 2 teachers write positive comments with a green pen and show areas for improvement with a red pen. The comments in red ink do not always give enough guidance to pupils on what could be improved.

Teachers promote pupils' moral and social development by having high expectations with regard to behaviour, cooperation and teamwork and the school makes good use of assemblies to showcase pupils' work and celebrate their achievements. During the inspection, the youngest children had the opportunity to lead a 'celebration assembly' and showed great confidence in addressing older pupils and an audience of parents and carers.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Above-average levels of attendance over several years reflect pupils' enjoyment of school and positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers' clear expectations and consistent application of the school's policy for managing behaviour contribute

strongly to the high standards of behaviour seen in lessons and around the school. Inspectors observed pupils playing happily together outside and making good use of the different play areas. The school's monitoring records and the positive views expressed by pupils and staff confirm that the good behaviour observed during the inspection is typical. A few parents and carers say that their children's lessons are disrupted by bad behaviour. Inspectors found that some pupils with identified behavioural difficulties occasionally have difficulty in managing their behaviour, but observed that these pupils are very well supported in lessons and outside on the playground so that disruptive incidents seldom occur.

Almost all pupils say they feel safe in school and their parents and carers agree. The school ensures that pupils know about the different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of what they should do if they are being bullied. Most say they are confident that issues will be dealt with effectively. A few parents and carers do not have such confidence in the school's arrangements. Inspectors consider that school leaders and governors take any incidents of bullying extremely seriously and have robust arrangements to deal with them.

### **Leadership and management**

Senior leaders articulate a clear and ambitious vision for the school that is shared by governors, teachers and support staff. Almost all parents and carers would recommend this school to another parent and most are very supportive of its work. One parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'It is a very inclusive environment for all children. The staff are very friendly and approachable and the sense of community they encourage allows all children to feel safe and supported.' The school's website provides comprehensive information about the school's work and gives useful insight into the rich curriculum on offer. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the different sports they can try and exciting visits to local places of interest. Across the school, teachers plan topics that are engaging for pupils. For example, in Reception the children were greatly enjoying their topic on water entitled, 'Splish, Splash'. It is clear that the curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by fostering pupils' creativity, encouraging thoughtful reflection and developing pupils' understanding of different cultures across the world.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work as an effective team. They have built the leadership capacity of the school by developing the role of subject leaders. As a result, middle leaders are able to make a full contribution to school improvement. For example, the subject leader for science has supported other staff to improve investigative work and this has led to raised attainment in science across the school. The deputy headteacher has also worked alongside individual teachers to help them to develop their practice and this has contributed to the overall improvement in teaching and learning. High quality professional development opportunities for staff have enhanced teachers' skills in assessing pupils' progress.

Since the previous inspection, school leaders have focused on raising standards and have ensured that all pupils are given equal opportunities to achieve well. They have sharpened tracking systems and now analyse progress data rigorously, looking for

any patterns of underachievement. Last year, they identified that boys were doing less well than girls and that the small group of pupils who are eligible for free school meals were underperforming in comparison to other pupils. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took swift action to address this and as a result, gaps are closing and pupils are achieving equally well. Higher achievement, better teaching and the development of middle leadership roles since the previous inspection demonstrate a good capacity for sustained improvement.

The governing body knows the school well and is very supportive. Governors attend relevant training courses to keep themselves up to date and visit the school regularly to monitor its work. This means that they are able to ask pertinent questions and can challenge school leaders effectively. There are good procedures for safeguarding pupils with a clear reporting system for any concerns over the safety of pupils. School leaders and the governing body have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and the school development plan has appropriate priorities for improvement. However, actions lack quantifiable targets and details of how success will be measured.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



12 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Sedlescombe Church of England Primary School,  
Sedlescombe TN33 0RQ**

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. In particular, thank you to those of you who met with us during the inspection. It was a pleasure to talk to you and listen to your views on your learning and on behaviour and bullying. We really enjoyed hearing about the exciting topics you are studying and the trips you have been on. We found that your school has improved since the previous inspection and is now a securely good school.

You have good attitudes to learning and are keen to join in all the interesting activities that are on offer. Your behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good. You told us that you feel safe in school and that any name-calling or bullying is dealt with very quickly by school leaders. Most of you said that you enjoy coming to school and that teaching is good. You attend school regularly and arrive on time for lessons. We found that your achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good and most of you make good progress during your time at school, although some of you do not have good spelling skills.

To help your school to become even better we have asked the school to do two main things. We have asked school leaders to:

- help you reach higher standards in your work by making sure that teaching is always good in every class, giving you clear guidance on how you can improve your work and helping you to improve your spelling
- check carefully that what they are doing to improve the school is really making a difference.

I know you will continue to work hard and do your best. Thank you for a very enjoyable and memorable visit.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Knowles  
Her Majesty's Inspector



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