

Sarratt Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117404
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379414
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2012
Lead inspector	Ted Wheatley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Martin
Headteacher	Dominic Bennetts (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2006
School address	The Green Sarratt WD3 6AS
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	2–3 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Edward Wheatley

Additional inspector

Maria Coles

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors saw eight teachers teach 15 lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, pupils and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers visiting the school during the inspection. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at achievement information, development planning and self-evaluation records. They took into account 92 returned parental questionnaires.

Information about the school

Sarratt Church of England Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few are of minority ethnic heritage. Very few are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportions of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are broadly average. The school meets the current floor standard. The on-site privately managed and run Ducklings Pre-School is inspected and reported separately.

The acting headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2011.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well. Most pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 reach above-average levels of attainment and make good and often excellent progress. There are occasional weaknesses in spelling because a few pupils do not always learn to associate sounds with correct spelling when they read.
- In Reception, children make satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Reception learning activities are well organised, but do not always have clear learning purposes, or provide opportunities for investigative work for children to make independent choices of what they do.
- Teaching is usually challenging, interesting and fast paced and meets the learning needs of pupils. Occasionally, work is not planned to match all learning needs, and pupils' usual good progress is interrupted. Pupils know how well they are doing, what they need to do next and how to improve their work.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding, and pupils are invariably attentive, concentrate intently and work hard. On the few occasions that work is not challenging enough for them, their behaviour remains exemplary.
- Leaders have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and effectively implement action to drive attainment to higher levels.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, improve the accuracy of spelling of the few pupils who have difficulties, by ensuring teachers always make sure that every pupil knows how to correctly blend sounds to form accurately spelled words.
- Improve the quality of teaching by July 2012 to be mainly outstanding by ensuring:
 - work is always matched to the learning needs of each pupil
 - children in Reception have planned opportunities to engage in investigative tasks and have more opportunity to choose the activities they follow.

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Main report

Achievement of pupils

Since its previous inspection, the school has sustained above-average levels of attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2. There are minor fluctuations between year groups because attainment on entry to the school varies between different years so there are slight variations in the results of key stage assessments from year to year. Nevertheless, a significantly above-average proportion of pupils reached the higher National Curriculum levels in the latest end of key stage assessments, and these levels of success are being maintained in current classes. By Year 2, pupils write very well with expression using complex sentences. Their reading is above average, although not as consistently as competent as their writing. By Year 6, pupils speak well and their reading attainment is above average. They write fluently using a very wide vocabulary and range of complex-sentence structures. They explain their understanding of new learning well and write imaginatively. Minor differences in performance in English and mathematics have been successfully reduced. Pupils at both key stages have a very good command of basic numeracy skills and apply them to mental and written calculation problems extremely well.

Pupils of all abilities and ethnicities make very good and, sometimes, excellent progress. For example, Year 6 pupils made very good progress in editing provided texts. They used adjectives to add expression to their writing, connectives to create complex sentences, and accurately punctuated the new texts they produced. They analysed their own work and constructively criticised each other's efforts, which promoted further progress. The least-able pupils, including those with disabilities and those with special educational needs, made good progress in improving the standard of punctuation in the texts they worked on. The very few pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English are effectively supported and they rapidly gain the command of the language needed to make the same progress as that of other pupils. Occasionally, there is a slowing in progress when pupils do not spell accurately, most noticeably at Key Stage 1 and this shows in otherwise detailed and imaginative writing. This is because, sometimes, even when pupils read, they do not sound out accurately what they read in order to learn how to construct words that they then try to spell.

In the Reception class, children make satisfactory progress overall, and in some activities their progress is good. They play extremely well together and cooperate readily in sharing resources. However, they do not develop strong enough independent learning skills, and do not sufficiently initiate their own learning activities.

Parents and carers are mostly pleased with how well their children achieve and inspection findings endorsed good achievement through most of the school. A few parents and carers think communications are not good enough to tell them how well their children are doing. Inspectors found effective, courteous procedures to keep

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parents and carers informed about pupils' progress, school activities and to address any concerns.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers are pleased with how well their children are taught. A few think that pupils' learning needs are not fully met and inspectors agree that this is, occasional, but not regular, practice. The main picture is of good, challenging teaching that is sharply tailored to pupils' abilities, and which results in their very good progress. Lessons are usually purposeful with varied activities that ensure pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and provide clear direction for how work can be improved. Most pupils follow the guidance given, and also know their learning targets. The best lessons encourage individuality and enable pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and to make mature decisions about how they improve their own work. On infrequent occasions, the work is not varied enough and neither the most- nor least-able pupils follow tasks that are suitable for their ability. In addition, occasional lack of attention to ensuring pupils blend sounds competently means that a few pupils do not always spell accurately – although the teaching of reading is generally good as reading standards show. Overall, the curriculum is well planned with opportunities for pupils to improve their computer skills and to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills.

Teachers' questioning is searching and effectively encourages pupils to explain their ideas and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to question each other and to suggest how explanations could be better. For example, pupils planning a 'Doctor Who' script were encouraged to talk through their ideas, to edit and improve them and arrive at a final, polished piece of writing. Their individual targets were available and they were encouraged to refer to these to effectively promote high-quality writing.

Relationships in lessons are a significant strength that promote pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are treated with increasing maturity as they move through the school, encouraging them to make sensible decisions about right-and-wrong behaviour and to have the courage of their convictions.

In Reception, a sound range of activities enables children to make satisfactory progress, and children's own motivation is positive in helping this to occur. However, activities are not always purposeful, and learning is sometimes limited. There are some – but not enough – opportunities for children to make choices, and for them to explore and investigate for themselves, and to develop independent learning skills. This is particularly true in the use of the outside area, but also true for the activities they choose to do indoors. Nevertheless, relationships are good and support children's personal development well. Children enjoy the activities they do.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy school and are very keen to learn. They behave extremely well and concentrate hard, even on the few occasions when work is not very demanding. School records show excellent behaviour is typical. There are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour and pupils confirm poor behaviour is very rare. A small number of parents and carers are concerned that unacceptable behaviour interferes with learning, although almost all think pupils behave well, and inspectors saw only excellent behaviour. A very few parents and carers think relationships between pupils and staff are not always positive. All of the pupils that inspectors independently selected to meet spoke highly of the excellent relationships, trust and affection between staff and pupils.

Pupils behave safely around the school, and know how to stay safe in sports activities and practical work in classrooms. Parents agree that the school is safe. Pupils' attendance is above average, and the school has effective procedures to promote attendance and to follow up on unexplained absences. The school's warm, caring ethos and organisation ensure that pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are exceptionally well supported. There is virtually no bullying of any type and pupils know that such behaviour is totally unacceptable. Pupils feel confident that they can go to any adult in the event of them being worried about anything.

Leadership and management

Inspectors and the very large majority of parents and carers agree that the school is well led and managed. Leaders and managers at all levels have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have taken effective action to reduce any differences between pupils' subject performance and to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers have good opportunities to enhance their professional skills. Action is being taken to enhance further their good capacity to teach reading and associated skills, but it is too soon to judge the impact on pupils' capacity to spell. The acting headteacher is giving a firm direction for the school's further improvement and he is well supported by the staff. The governing body plays a significant role in challenging and supporting him and other leaders, and helping to plan developments. Staff are committed to driving improvements and effectively ensure equal opportunities for all pupils to make good progress. Leaders are now focusing on improving provision in the Reception class, and their plans indicate they are in agreement with inspectors about where improvement is needed. Given the improvements in teaching and pupils' progress, the school is demonstrating the capacity to sustain its strengths and continue improvement.

Parents and carers are very supportive. One wrote, 'This school cares deeply about every child, about moving forward, about making things better.' Many parents and carers contribute to out-of-school activities and help in classrooms. The school runs a helpful programme of events to support parents and carers in helping their children to learn. The school has rigorous procedures to ensure safeguarding requirements

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are met. The school's care of pupils is very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced with a wide range of trips and visitors to enhance pupils' learning. Provision for pupils' personal and social education, excellent relationships and close links with the local church contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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).

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.



6 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sarratt Church of England Primary School, Sarratt, WD3 6AS

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we inspected your school. You gave us a very good idea of how well you like your school in the meetings we had with you and the questionnaire many of you filled in. We think you are at a good school, and that you make good progress in your learning. Some of you make excellent progress.

The following things are particular strengths of your school.

- The teaching in most lessons is good, and there are many activities and trips that make learning very interesting.
- The staff and governing body are working hard to sustain the good things the school does and to continue its improvement.
- The way you behave is excellent and you work extremely hard.
- You say you feel safe, and all of you we spoke to say that you know who you would go to if you were worried about anything.
- Your attendance is above average and improving.
- The school takes very good care of you.

In order for your school to continue to improve, we have asked your teachers to make sure that:

- you recognise the sounds you read and use them to spell accurately
- work is always hard enough so that you make good progress, and that lessons in Reception provide planned opportunities for children to choose the activities they do and to carry out their own investigations.

You can help by checking that you always spell accurately.

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley
Lead inspector

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