

Saltwood CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118744
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291234
Inspection date	12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Martin
Headteacher	Elizabeth Pettersen
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001
School address	Grange Road Saltwood Hythe CT21 4QS
Telephone number	01303 266058
Fax number	01303 264899

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

In this average-size school, there are fewer-than-average pupils with learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'Saltwood School is a very special place. Individual needs are addressed and pupils' progress is clearly apparent in all aspects of their work'. This comment, typical of many made by parents, describes this outstanding school where pupils achieve exceptionally well and attain consistently very high standards. Leadership and management are outstanding because there is no hint of complacency among the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors. While they know that this is a school with a high local reputation for success, they strive for continued improvement. This is especially evident in the now much better provision for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils' learning needs are identified much sooner than they used to be and this has resulted in their benefiting from improved support. Several parents commented on this. For some of these pupils, the progress in this year's tests has been spectacular. One parent described their child's results as, 'Better than we dared dream'.

This is a school with many able pupils and it caters for them particularly well. Children are generally of above-average ability when they start in the Reception Year. They progress at a rapid rate so that almost all attain and a great many exceed the early learning goals expected for the Foundation Stage of children's education. Teaching and learning are outstanding because lessons are consistently good or better throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations and they set challenging work that is generally well matched to pupils' abilities, although some parents would like to see even more difficult work set for the very ablest pupils. Lessons run at a brisk pace so that pupils get a lot done. Pupils explain that their teachers expect them to 'work hard and play hard' and they certainly rise to this challenge. A very high proportion take part in the many clubs and other activities on offer. Pupils enjoy the excellent curriculum because, they say, 'It helps make learning fun', for example, by linking subjects together so that they can be studied in more depth. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the special themed weeks, such as the recent Water Week, where pupils of all ages linked work in geography, science and other subjects. Saltwood provides an unusually wide range of opportunities to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils, including several run in conjunction with other local schools.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Attendance is excellent, behaviour in lessons is exemplary and pupils enjoy taking responsibility. Parents praise the way in which the school helps their children to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Care, guidance and support are good. Welfare arrangements are strong and pupils have a clear picture of how well they are doing, with most knowing what they need to do to do better. Pupils are confident that, when bullying occurs, it is mostly dealt with well. However, several parents express the view that not all class teachers are as effective as the headteacher in following up incidents, for example, when children exclude one another or make unkind remarks.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all staff monitor and take effective action where there are incidents of pupils being unkind to one another.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are consistently very high and pupils achieve exceptionally well. Standards are much higher than those expected for the children's age at the end of the Reception Year. Parents

typically describe how their Reception child 'can now read and write to a high standard and has a confident attitude to school'. Results in the national assessments in Year 2 are very significantly above average, as are those in the Year 6 tests. The school's many able pupils have traditionally done very well but, in the past, some less able pupils have not always made such good progress. Changes, which have accelerated this year, have meant that the school is now identifying earlier those pupils with learning difficulties so that they can be given more support. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties now also make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent, but pupils do not always treat each other with kindness and respect. Though bullying is quite rare, pupils and their parents confirm that incidents do occur and there can be prolonged periods of 'falling out' when problems are not dealt with effectively by class teachers. Pupils otherwise have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They enjoy school and they find their lessons 'interesting and fun'. Their enthusiasm is evident in their excellent attendance. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle, and a great many take part in sports outside the school day. Pupils like to take on responsibility, for instance, as school councillors, and they contribute to the school community by, for example, older pupils 'playing with the Reception children and helping them to settle in'. The very high standards that pupils have in their key literacy and numeracy skills prepare them exceedingly well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers have high expectations and they ensure that pupils always know what they should be doing. That means that even the youngest children settle to work quickly and without fuss. They are encouraged to work at a brisk pace and so they get through a very good amount of work. Teachers make very good use of the information they have about how well their pupils are doing and they match work closely to pupils' different abilities. Work for the many able pupils is challenging and so pushes them to achieve their best, although there is scope for a few very able pupils to be set even more difficult tasks. Pupils with learning difficulties now benefit from well-targeted support, much improved over the past year or so, and this has helped them make impressive progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The high standards in English, mathematics and science have not been achieved at the expense of other subjects. Parents say, 'Teachers provide a lovely range of ideas and activities to stimulate their classes, often extending the curriculum into exciting projects, such as whole-day design and technology sessions'. Pupils also enthuse about the special themed days and weeks. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been vastly improved since the last inspection, with interactive whiteboards in every class and a new suite that enables a whole class to be taught together, with each pupil having access to an individual computer. There is a very good range of well-attended clubs. What particularly stands out in this school

are the many extension activities offered to pupils identified as gifted and talented. These help pupils excel across many different academic, creative and sporting endeavours.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from very good academic guidance. Even the youngest children know, by the end of the Reception Year, the National Curriculum levels at which they are working and all pupils have specific, practical targets that identify what they need to do to move ahead to the next level. Not all can remember these details, but they have contributed to the excellent progress that pupils make because all of the children have them to hand on a card when they are working. Much marking also gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve.

Arrangements for looking after pupils' welfare are very strong. Risk assessments and procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are thorough, and all staff have had recent child protection training. However, not all staff are perceived as being effective at resolving difficulties when pupils fall out with each other. Although parents and pupils confirm that matters are sorted when the headteacher is involved, they say that class teachers, 'Do not always tackle bullying issues robustly enough'. Sometimes disputes smoulder on because teachers do not all follow through with promised action.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Thorough and accurate monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress means that the headteacher and leadership team have an accurate, if sometimes overly modest, picture of how well the school is doing. As a result, they have been extremely effective in bringing about continuing improvements that make this an ever-more successful school. This has not gone unnoticed by the school's supportive but demanding parents. They comment that, 'The headteacher and staff work extremely hard to get the best from each child'. Governors bring considerable expertise and play a very active role in the school community. They visit regularly and report on aspects of the curriculum, and they follow up with parents any issues that are raised. Because they are not simply dependent on the headteacher for information on the school, they provide constructive challenge that helps to drive school improvement. The school's consistent track record of academic success and the way it constantly challenges itself to do even better illustrate its outstanding capacity for continued improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 the 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?	2

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saltwood C of E Primary School, Hythe, Kent CT21 4QS

Thank you for making me welcome, and particularly to those who helped me on my brief visit. At the start of my visit, one of your mums told me that Saltwood was 'a super school', and she was right. It is an exceptionally well-run school where consistently very good teaching helps you to achieve very high standards. One of the most striking things about your school is that your headteacher, staff and governors are always on the lookout for ways of making things even better. I was pleased to see, for example, how much ICT has improved this year.

I could see that you enjoy and are very proud of your school. You are especially keen on all the different activities the school arranges to make learning interesting and fun, both in school and in the various clubs and outside events that so many of you attend. You behave extremely well in lessons and you mostly get on well with one another. I was sorry to learn, though, that sometimes some children can be unkind to one another. Although the school takes very good care of you all in other ways, some of your parents told me that not all of the teachers do enough to sort things out when, for example, friends fall out with one another. In some cases, things have only been sorted when Mrs Pettersen steps in. I have asked the school to look at this and to make sure that class teachers deal more effectively with any problems that occur. You can help too by being kind to others and telling staff if anyone else is upset.

I was impressed with how well you know the levels you are working at and to see that you all have targets to help you move ahead. You must make sure you all know and refer to your targets so they can help you to continue to make such excellent progress.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Yours faithfully, Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector