

# Smeeth Community Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118381
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312915
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Liz Kounnou

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	127
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gordon Fortescue
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Dawson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 February 2004
<b>School address</b>	Caroland Close Smeeth Ashford TN25 6RX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01303 813128
<b>Fax number</b>	01303 813128

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 January 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	312915

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress pupils make from year to year, how well pupils respond to the targets they are set, and the effectiveness of school systems to check how well the school is doing. The evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of information about pupils' progress and attainment, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display, discussions with staff, pupils and governors, and analysis of the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found little evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools and serves an economically mixed rural area. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. When children start school in the Reception class, their skills and experiences vary, but overall are in line with those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. The school won a Gold Activemark in 2003 that was renewed in 2006, and is currently working towards Healthy School status. In addition the school has held the Gold Artsmark since 2006, and the Basic Skills Quality Mark has been renewed three times, most recently in 2007. A breakfast club and an after-school club provide out-of-school care for pupils. There have been several changes to staff since the last inspection, including recent changes among middle management.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and reach above-average standards in English and mathematics by Year 6. 'I am delighted with the education my daughters have received,' said one parent. Assessment has a very high priority. Indeed, a real strength of the school's good leadership and management is the detailed tracking and recording of individual pupils' progress. Good use is made of the information gained and this ensures that pupils of all abilities generally achieve well by the time they leave, including those with learning difficulties. Progress is good overall in Years 1 to 6. At Year 6, the school is on track for a greater proportion of pupils at the higher Level 5 than last year's group. Some of the present Year 6 are making particularly rapid progress in English. Although still in the broadly average range, standards in the current Year 2 are higher than last year. Nevertheless, the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 make relatively slower gains than others. Progress in the small Reception group is satisfactory; here, too, more-able children could sometimes do better.

There is a real sense of teamwork among staff because of good leadership at the top. Senior staff play a leading role in checking the school's performance, and are supported well in this task by a strong and active governing body. The constant use of assessment information to check its performance, and the very frequent informal discussion and support among staff, form the bedrock of the school's good self-evaluation. These activities give the school a clear view of where it needs to make improvements and indicate that the school is well placed to take things forward. For example, the school has recognised, and are tackling, the need to develop provision in the Foundation Stage to a higher level. Changes to staff mean that some middle managers have yet to play a major role in monitoring the school's work and influencing improvement. Once again, the school is well aware of this shortcoming, which already forms a key priority in its strategic plan.

Astute financial management and good support from the governing body have led to substantial improvements to the school building. Pupils are delighted with their new classrooms. Excellent facilities for pupils in Key Stage 2, and a new information and communication technology (ICT) suite for the whole school, opened at the start of this term. Pupils' attendance is above average. Pupils love coming to school and can think of very little they would like to change, whilst the list of things they enjoy is very long. Chief among these are the extra activities provided through the good curriculum. The many sports activities are popular with boys and girls, and contribute well to their healthy lifestyles. The school council members are proud of their achievements and the influence they have at school. They are especially pleased with the success they have at breaktimes, when certain pupils at the 'buddy stop' make sure that no-one is feeling lonely, and organise the many games and activities available. Pupils' good personal qualities, together with their good academic achievement, mean that they are well set for the future.

Pupils say that teachers make lessons interesting and fun. High expectations are reflected in the displays around the school. Pupils showed great satisfaction in the detailed and delicate watercolours they were concentrating on in one lesson. Teaching and learning are good, especially in encouraging pupils to make choices about how best to approach their learning. Particularly about their the projects they organise themselves. They enthusiastically describe the ICT presentations they designed. Pupils are set challenging targets, but do not always know what they are expected to learn in lessons, or guided sufficiently on how they could improve their work – a factor which prevents some more able pupils from making the best possible progress.

A major success of the school's leadership is the school's strong sense of community. The 'small school ethos' contributes very well to the trusting relationships that are evident and ensures pupils' good personal development. Pupils behave well throughout the school day. All the requirements for safeguarding pupils are met, but some health and safety risk assessments should be more robust. Parents value the school and unanimously agree that their children enjoy it. 'Our children love going to school – they enjoy the enormous variety of activities on offer,' was one positive comment. A small minority however, feel that the school does not take enough account of their suggestions and concerns. This inspection found some evidence to support their view.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

The Foundation stage is satisfactory with good features. Since the last inspection, children have been making satisfactory progress in the Reception class, and reach the expected goals in all areas of learning. The school takes a more positive view of provision in the Foundation Stage, judging it to be good. Children thoroughly enjoy some very exciting activities. For example, during the inspection many of the children chose, with glee, to put on their wellies and wet-weather clothes so that they could go outside and experience the exceptionally wild, wet and windy weather conditions. The outdoor area is also used well to promote learning throughout the day. While teaching and learning are satisfactory, basic literacy skills are taught well and these form a valuable foundation for children's good progress in subsequent year groups.

There have been several staff changes since the last inspection and the school has recognised the need to provide further training to extend expertise in this area. Currently the school is working effectively, in partnership with the local authority and another successful school, to ensure that Foundation Stage staff receive the support and guidance they need. This is at an early stage of development and has not yet ensured that there is always sufficient challenge in all the activities provided, especially for the most able children. Nonetheless, children are encouraged to make a lot of choices and to take responsibility; for example, at the start of each day they put their name in the right place to show what type of lunch they would like.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop the evaluation skills for middle managers in order to raise standards further in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- Ensure that pupils know what they are clearer about what they are expected to learn in all lessons and how to improve their work.
- Improve communication with parents so that all groups feel they are fully informed.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 January 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Smeeth Community Primary, Ashford, Kent TN25 6RX

Thank you all for making me so welcome and helping me when I visited your school. This is a good school and you are making good progress especially in Key Stage 2 where standards are above average. The staff and governors work well together to help you to succeed at school.

Here are the things that are best about your school:

- You behave well all through the day and work hard in your lessons.
- You really enjoy school, especially all the extra activities.
- Teaching is good and you have fun in your lessons.
- The staff and governors have made sure that you have a fantastic new ICT suite and some new classrooms to work in.
- The school council take a lot of responsibility and its members have made sure that playtimes are enjoyable for everyone.
- You have a lot of opportunities to make decisions about your work.

There are a few things that could be better. I have asked the school to make sure that those of you in Reception, and some of you in Years 1 and Year 2, make faster progress than you do now. I have also asked the school to make certain that all the staff with special responsibilities keep a check on the school's work, and that all of you know exactly what you are going to learn in your lessons and how you could make your work even better. Lastly, a small minority of your parents were not happy about the way the school lets them know what is happening. I have, therefore, asked the school to make sure that all your parents feel informed.

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

Yours faithfully

Liz Kounnou Lead Inspector

16 January 2008

Dear Children,

**Inspection of Smeeth Community Primary, Ashford, Kent TN25 6RX**

Thank you all for making me so welcome and helping me when I visited your school. This is a good school and you are making good progress especially in Key Stage 2 where standards are above average. The staff and governors work well together to help you to succeed at school.

**Here are the things that are best about your school:**

- You behave well all through the day and work hard in your lessons.
- You really enjoy school, especially all the extra activities.
- Teaching is good and you have fun in your lessons.
- The staff and governors have made sure that you have a fantastic new ICT suite and some new classrooms to work in.
- The school council take a lot of responsibility and its members have made sure that playtimes are enjoyable for everyone.
- You have a lot of opportunities to make decisions about your work.

There are a few things that could be better. I have asked the school to make sure that those of you in Reception, and some of you in Years 1 and Year 2, make faster progress than you do now. I have also asked the school to make certain that all the staff with special responsibilities keep a check on the school's work, and that all of you know exactly what you are going to learn in your lessons and how you could make your work even better. Lastly, a small minority of your parents were not happy about the way the school lets them know what is happening. I have, therefore, asked the school to make sure that all your parents feel informed.

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

Yours faithfully



Liz Kounnou  
Lead Inspector