

# Sandwich Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118547
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	326846
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Collard

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	146
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pamela Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Wood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	School Road Sandwich CT13 9HT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 612228
<b>Fax number</b>	01304 613358

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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether pupils' progress has improved in writing, an issue identified at the last inspection
- whether assessment is used well enough in lessons to help plan challenging work for all abilities of pupils
- whether the leadership and management have taken the right actions to continue improving the outcomes for pupils.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, interviews with the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors, and discussions with pupils and staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own self-assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This average sized school serves its local area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils speak English fluently, although a significant minority come from other countries including America and Western Europe as their parents and carers are working at a large business complex nearby.

## 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. Since her arrival in 2006, the headteacher has laid out a clear vision which aims to make sustainable changes that will turn the school into a centre of excellence. Good foundations have been laid that have the potential to enable this to happen. These have included improvements to the learning environment, raising teachers' expectations about what pupils are capable of, and eliminating any pockets of underachievement. In addition, subject co-ordinators are being trained to take a much more strategic role in whole-school planning, although this is still at an early stage. These changes are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' standards. Those in the present Year 2 are reaching above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a much improved picture compared to the 2008 national tests. All this demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Children enter the Reception classes with skills broadly as would be expected for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of the well-planned opportunities and start Year 1 well prepared for more formal work. Through Years 1 and 2, good progress continues through activities which provide many challenging and practical experiences. This good achievement is most noticeable in writing, an issue from the last inspection. From the work seen and from recent assessments, it is clear that many pupils have already achieved or surpassed the targets set for them at the start of this year. In Year 2, the best standards are in mathematics, where higher proportions of pupils are achieving above the levels expected for their age. There is evidence that more focused writing tasks, linked to other subjects, are beginning to have a positive effect. All this is helping prepare pupils well for their next stage of education.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Everyone is polite, considerate and happy to settle very quickly when asked to work on their own or in small groups. Pupils are keen to learn, as in one mathematics lesson where there was hardly a sound when the class were working out their fractions. In discussions, they are inquisitive and listen to each other's contributions, although sometimes a few are just a little too eager to have their say. Pupils understand about how to stay fit and healthy. For example, they are pleased when they have regular physical education lessons and feel aggrieved when, because of some unforeseen circumstance, these do not happen. Equally, they know about staying safe. In the morning they come into school sensibly and promptly and, at playtimes, the recent introduction of school buddies has helped those who have any concerns or friendship problems.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is due to the excellent pastoral support that is a strength of the school's provision. As with all pupils, those from other countries quickly settle into school life and make firm friendships. An intense discussion took place during lunchtime on Pancake Day about whether this festival was celebrated in other countries or whether there were any other similar celebrations. Parents rightly acknowledge that the school has fully encouraged interaction by making sure that pupils and their families feel involved. For instance, American parents were asked for information about Thanksgiving Day and a Fourth of July barbeque marked the end of these families' first year at the school. Parents, staff and pupils also want to instigate ideas and have recently been raising money for a former teacher to build a house in Cambodia. This is all helping develop a good sense of community. The governors and headteachers of both this school and the local junior school have started work on a more formal community cohesion strategy.

Teachers comprehensively plan their lessons, developing tasks and activities that will encourage pupils to think. There is a good balance of both teacher input and independent work. On most occasions, a clear idea is given about what will be learnt, and during final discussions about whether this has been achieved. Good expertise from the teaching assistants helps improve the work of those who find it difficult. Their input is good and, through regular training, their expertise is being continually updated. Pupils are encouraged to judge how well they have done, although marking and comments do not always indicate how things can be improved. Pupils said that they sometimes did not know how they could make their work better, and did not always have a clear idea about whether they were doing well.

The good curriculum is enhanced by a variety of visits and visitors as well as specific themed events. Mathematics and music are developed well and displays show that there are a number of budding artists. While there is good subject balance, the recent upgrading of computers means that, as yet, full use of information and communication technology is not completely integrated across a range of subjects.

Leadership and management are good, although much of the burden falls to the headteacher. Unavoidable staff difficulties have meant that, at present, subject co-ordinators take good responsibility for their own areas but not all take a role in the decision-making processes for whole-school developments. For example, while the good assessment procedures can pinpoint where individual pupil support should be provided, the subject coordinators have little impact on whether initiatives are being fully effective across the school. The governors provide strong support and are able, through their committees, to question decisions. They have a good view about what is improving and what still needs attention. Nevertheless, the good self-evaluation is strongly led by the headteacher and, while it is shared and reviewed regularly, it is not compiled using the full expertise of all members of the school.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with the skills expected for their age. Established systems help children to quickly find their feet and settle well into this caring, nurturing environment. Parents commented about how pleased they were with the way their children settled into Reception. They appreciate the school's efforts in making all children, especially those from abroad, feel at home. Good teaching, a well-planned curriculum and a stimulating environment foster positive attitudes and ensure children make good progress, particularly in mathematics. Children happily play and learn together; consequently their behaviour is outstanding for their age. The good balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities helps to whet children's appetite for learning. As one child said, 'You never know what will happen next.' However, the school rightly acknowledges the need to further develop the purposeful outdoor activities so that they complement the well-planned indoor learning opportunities across all areas of learning. Staff know the children well and make sure that they get the right level of support to help them develop independence and also to feel secure. Leadership is good. The school makes good use of assessment information to target particular aspects in need of further improvement such as writing. By the end of the Reception Year, most pupils are working within the early learning goals.

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

- Raise pupils' understanding of how well they are doing by developing more consistent marking and target setting.

- Help drive improvement more quickly by involving the whole leadership team in developing major school priorities.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sandwich Infant School, Sandwich CT13 9HT

Thank you for making us welcome during our recent visit. We enjoyed chatting to so many of you and seeing what you were up to in lessons. You will probably not be surprised to hear that we think you are at a good school. The main reasons for this are given below.

- You told us that you enjoyed school and we can see why. You are taught well and make good progress in your work. Those of you in Year 1 are making particularly good progress and those in Year 2 are reaching above average standards.
- You also told us that you feel safe and happy. This is because you are looked after well and know who to go to if there are any problems. We could see that those of you who are playground buddies do your jobs well.
- You have many exciting things to do in lessons. You said how much you enjoy your topics and these are all helping you to do well when you go to your next schools.
- You told us that you would like to have a little more guidance about whether you are getting things right. We agree so we have asked that your teachers try to make sure all the marking shows you how to improve.
- Your headteacher knows what to do to help things get even better and fully intends to make your school one of the best. We have said that there is the potential for this to happen. To help this happen we have asked that all the staff are involved in making big decisions about what to change. Of course you will be able to help with this by continuing to make sensible suggestions about what you think will make the most difference.

Finally, we wish you all the best for the future. Continue to come to school regularly and work as hard as you can.

Yours faithfully

David Collard

Lead inspector