

Seabrook Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118678
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	363888
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Julie Sackett

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	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Jones
Headteacher	Elizabeth Carter
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The team observed seven lessons taught by four teachers. Discussions were held with senior staff, members of the governing body, pupils and parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, policies and records of pupils' progress and attainment. The inspection team considered 69 responses to questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as questionnaires from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The learning, progress and attainment of all pupils, particularly of potentially higher attaining pupils and girls in mathematics.
- The quality of pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of measures to enhance pupils' awareness of, and respect for, different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs within the United Kingdom.
- How effectively the provision in Early Years Foundation Stage, and its leadership and management, contribute to children's learning, progress and attainment.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, enable the necessary continuity and improvement in the school.

Information about the school

Seabrook is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are few pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are taught in mixed-age classes. The breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body, was included in this inspection. The school has a range of awards including International Schools (foundation) award and Healthy Schools status.

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: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Seabrook is an outstanding school, providing an exceptionally stimulating, enjoyable and well-rounded education for its pupils so that they develop into mature, thoughtful and responsible youngsters by the end of Year 6. The headteacher, very ably supported by the senior leadership team and governing body, has been highly effective in creating an excellent team with a strong commitment to ongoing improvement. The headteacher sets exceptionally high expectations but, in partnership with her senior team, also ensures that the support is there to enable all members of the school community to give of their best. One staff member said: 'The whole team support each other and work hard towards a common goal of providing children with valuable opportunities.'

Outstanding pastoral care, the establishment of an exceptionally strong school community and excellent relationships with parents and carers are all notable strengths. One parent suggested that: 'the school goes to great lengths to involve parents in every step', while another commented: 'Seabrook School is a very special place. The caring, supportive and Christian values which underpin the school's ethos make it feel like one big family.'

Children get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to excellent relationships and a high quality learning environment. Children settle quickly, rapidly grow in confidence and become active and motivated learners with a strong sense of belonging. One parent wrote: 'It is sometimes a struggle to stop my child from running straight into school without saying "goodbye", such is his enjoyment.' Excellent progress continues across Key Stages 1 and 2 so that, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is high in English and mathematics and has been sustained at these levels over several years.

The overall quality of teaching is outstanding and characterised by consistently high expectations of all pupils, strong relationships and mutual respect. Teachers' detailed knowledge of their pupils is used very effectively to adapt plans to meet the needs of all to secure outstanding progress. Excellent care and support mean that pupils are interested and active learners.

The school's detailed self-analysis of its strengths and development needs, combined with rigorous tracking of individual pupil's progress, means that self-evaluation is accurate and very well focused on priorities for development. The key issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed in full. For example, high quality

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marking is used consistently to ensure that pupils have a very well-developed understanding of their learning and the school sets challenging targets for all pupils, including the most able, to successfully support their excellent progress. Given its track record of improvement and innovation in many areas, together with sustained high standards, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

Pupils' personal development and their wider educational outcomes are exceptional, contributing to their high level all-round achievement. The school's links with the international community, in addition to well-established local links, are very well developed, and reflected in the school's achievement of the International Schools award. That said, the school has recognised the need to provide pupils with more planned opportunities to appreciate and value people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of the United Kingdom. A strong focus on safeguarding ensures that pupils feel very safe and they are entirely confident that issues raised will be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend existing strategies to promote community cohesion by:
 - increasing the range and number of opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of, and respect for, the diversity of beliefs and backgrounds represented in differing areas of the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children enter school with a wide range of skills and knowledge. Overall, however, their attainment when they start is below age-related expectations. Inspection evidence shows that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and potentially higher attaining pupils, make outstanding progress overall. As a result, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is high.

Pupils respond very positively to the high expectations set for them. They frequently employ mature and sophisticated collaborative skills to enable them to work independently of adult help when required. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 a group of pupils faced with a challenging multiplication problem talked animatedly about their thinking and persevered to achieve the correct solution to the problem without the need to resort to adult support. Pupils demonstrate increasing confidence and flexibility in their use of different strategies to support their learning as they progress through the school. In mathematics, both pupils' past work and work within lessons illustrated their growing confidence in the use and application of basic and more advanced number calculations in problem-solving situations. In a Years 5/6 lesson, pupils worked together to discuss how they could make an Iron Age shelter using given materials, sketching their ideas to demonstrate their thoughts to others. The pupils' enjoyment

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and thoughtful consideration of each other’s opinions and the outstanding quality of the finished work were impressive and typical of how, and what, they learn.

Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and contribute to the very positive ethos for learning and to pupils’ exceptional behaviour. Pupils are very caring towards each other and one pupil said: ‘Children are really kind to each other and everyone follows the Seabrook way.’ The pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils’ ability to reflect was evident in an assembly about responding to challenges and ‘Noah’s Ark’ observed during the inspection. All the pupils relished the opportunity to participate and did so with enthusiasm, while one pupil suggested that Noah remained calm because ‘he knew that God was by his side’.

The pupils’ contributions to the school are genuinely appreciated by staff members and pupils are keen to show how much they enjoy their responsibility. For example, school council members were extremely proud of their success in contributing to the interviewing and selection process of recently appointed members of staff. A wide range of extra-curricular activities are well attended by pupils and enhance learning further. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoy growing and eating vegetables such as peas and potatoes during gardening club. First-hand experiences such as these make a strong contribution to pupils’ understanding and adoption of healthy lifestyles, which is reflected in the school’s achievement of the Healthy Schools award. Pupils’ excellent achievement, coupled with above average attendance, excellent behaviour and outstanding social skills, mean that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

1

How effective is the provision?

Observations of teaching confirmed that pupils make excellent progress overall, regardless of their background or ability, because of the very effective approach adopted by teachers. In all the lessons observed, pupils were keen to please teachers and other adults and were inspired and motivated by the ideas and resources presented in very carefully planned lessons. Teachers constantly assess how well pupils are responding to the work provided and adjust where necessary to support learning. Marking is excellent because it is consistently used across the school to give pupils feedback about how well they are doing and to provide clear next steps for pupils’ learning. One parent suggested: ‘I strongly believe that my child would not have been as successful without the strong guidance and structure Seabrook consistently offers.’

Teaching assistants work in an extremely well-developed partnership with teachers. They have clearly defined and agreed roles so that all pupils’ learning is maximised as a result of their support. For example, three pupils from a Years 1 and 2 class very successfully consolidated and built on their knowledge of how to spell some ‘tricky words’ like ‘said’ by writing them in chalk on the playground while enjoying the strategies suggested by the teaching assistant to help them remember in the future.

Initiatives such as the development of more real-life, problem-solving activities in mathematics and the introduction of the ‘creative curriculum’ have been highly successful in providing learning experiences which offer considerable breadth and depth. This is reflected in one parent’s assertion that: ‘Seabrook cares for every aspect of a child’s learning – academic, social and emotional.’ Links between subjects are clearly and confidently established and this fact, combined with an exceptional range of enrichment opportunities through visits, visitors and trips, makes a strong contribution to pupils’ enjoyment of all that the school offers.

The quality of care and support for pupils is exceptional. Those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and their families are supported outstandingly well. The school persists in looking for solutions to challenging issues faced by some of its pupils and the family liaison officer plays a key part in facilitating effective support. The breakfast club provides a secure, calm and nourishing start to the day with activities which ensure that pupils who attend are in the right frame of mind for learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where	1

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relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has very successfully sustained strong teamwork and a clear sense of purpose and direction during a period of staff changes. Staff members are proud to be part of the school team and morale is high. This is reflected in the comment made by one member of staff who wrote: 'I love working at this school', while another wrote: 'We are all treated as equals and our thoughts and opinions are always taken into account.'

The headteacher and her senior leaders complement each other's strengths very well and leaders at all levels work very effectively to monitor and evaluate every aspect of the school's work. Staff are focused relentlessly on securing further improvement. Data and information are collected and analysed rigorously to provide meaningful analyses that pinpoint areas where improvement is needed. Targets are ambitious and action is swift where any hint of underperformance is highlighted. As a result, any levelling off of performance or in individual pupils' progress is quickly checked and reversed. Key priorities are rapidly addressed and improvements are secured. For example, the focus on developing the depth and breadth of the curriculum has been successful in making learning meaningful, relevant and highly stimulating for pupils and contributes very well to their outstanding enjoyment and achievement.

The governing body challenges the school exceptionally well through questioning and scrutiny of its work. It is also successful in working with the school to ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are deeply embedded in the daily work of the school so that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is good. The school is totally committed to equality of opportunity and no discrimination of any kind is tolerated. This has resulted in a strongly inclusive ethos in which all pupils play a valued part.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The combination of a rich and stimulating curriculum and outstanding teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage makes a significant contribution to children’s learning and development so that children make excellent progress. Activities are very well structured to secure high levels of engagement and to deliver excellent learning. For example, in an outstanding lesson, children worked together to create Aboriginal style ‘dream time stories’. They drew patterns and pictures in trays of sand. They then used these very successfully to help them to verbalise and refine their stories before committing them to paper. This approach, coupled with strong adult interaction, ensured the strong interest and engagement of all the children and contributed to excellent progress in the development of the children’s fine motor and communication skills. The strength of the curriculum is recognised by parents and carers, one of whom wrote: ‘There has been a great emphasis on making learning fun and experiential. Children enjoy their time in school enormously’, while another wrote: ‘My son is so lucky to have a fantastic learning environment. He skips into school every morning!’

Children work with one another with enthusiasm and sustain excellent levels of concentration. Children relish their learning. The outdoor area acts as an extension of the classroom and all areas of learning are well developed to the same high quality, both indoors and outdoors, so that children learn to be independent and to exercise choice exceptionally well. Children make rapid progress in the development of self-esteem because they feel valued and the quality of inclusion is exceptional. One parent noted: ‘It’s been wonderful to watch my child’s confidence grow.’ As a result, children are very able to work independently as well as with others, supported by a range of learning strategies. For example, one child concentrated for an extended period of time in the ‘writing area’ to construct her story, regularly referring to displayed vocabulary to help her to complete the task successfully.

Excellent leadership is evident in the creation of a stimulating, safe and welcoming environment which is extremely successful in promoting children’s learning and well-being. The school is totally committed to working in close partnership with parents and carers and its success is reflected in the confidence expressed during the inspection. One parent said: ‘My child has achieved so much in the first year of school. I feel it’s down to the way that staff work with parents and children to ensure they rise to challenges and fulfil their potential.’ Children’s progress is well assessed and this information is used very effectively to inform planning. The introduction of individual ‘Learning Adventures’ for each child has been extremely well received by parents and carers. These provide an ongoing link between school and home and

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include contributions by adults at school and at home with a strong focus on learning and progress. One parent wrote: 'The learning adventure book is a great way to hear what she has learnt at school and for us to feed back what she's doing at home.'

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

An above average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority, and those who spoke to the inspection team, are very happy with the school and with the progress their children are making. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and that the headteacher leads and manages the school exceptionally well. They say that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and provides a safe environment. The very small number of constructive criticisms were shared and discussed with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Seabrook Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	93	5	7	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	93	4	6	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	61	88	8	12	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	87	9	13	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	88	8	12	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	60	87	9	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	90	7	10	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	61	88	8	12	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	63	91	8	12	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	88	7	10	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	63	91	6	9	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	65	94	4	6	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	66	96	3	4	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



15 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seabrook Church of England Primary School, Hythe, CT21 5RL

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would now like to tell you what we found out about your school. We agree with you that Seabrook is an outstanding school. These are the main reasons why we thought the school is so successful:

- Your teachers do an excellent job, so that you make excellent progress.
- You all try really hard to do your best at all times. We were very impressed by the way you worked together and listened to each other's point of view.
- You thoroughly enjoy all the different and interesting activities, both during and after school, because your teachers do their best to make learning fun.
- Your headteacher, staff and members of the governing body do an excellent job of organising the school and making sure that you are safe.
- You behave exceptionally well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers. All of this helps you to succeed.
- All the adults in the school look after you very carefully and always make sure you get help if you need it.

Even in an outstanding school there are a few things that will help it to become even better. We have asked the school to look at more ways of helping you to know about people with differing beliefs who live in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett

Lead inspector

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