

Send CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125285
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	293252
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Sheppard
Headteacher	Mrs S V Springall
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001
School address	Send Barns Lane Send Woking GU23 7BS
Telephone number	01483 223464
Fax number	01483 223464

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is a little smaller than most. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The school serves its own and neighbouring villages and some pupils come from the nearby town of Woking. Pupils' standards on starting school vary from year to year. They are broadly average in some years and below average in others. They were below average for the current Year 2 pupils, particularly in language. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities, particularly in Year 2. Most pupils come from homes which are relatively advantaged.

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. Parents agree and say that their children make good progress here and are very happy. The happiness and security of all pupils is at the heart of all that the school does. This commitment is demonstrated by the school's excellent pastoral care. Its success is shown by pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and show this by their good attendance and their exemplary behaviour. Pupils show an excellent awareness of how to keep healthy, for example, by eating fruit at playtimes or choosing healthy food from the salad bar. They also make the most of the opportunities to be physically active in the school's delightful grounds.

Pupils achieve well to reach average standards by the end of Year 2 because of good teaching and learning, supported by a good curriculum. In the Foundation Stage the adults provide a good variety of stimulating activities that encourage children to learn through play and exploration. In Years 1 and 2 teachers plan interesting lessons that successfully encourage pupils to be involved in their own learning. The school is particularly effective in providing a variety of motivating resources and tasks that encourage pupils to become enthusiastic readers. As a result, pupils make very good progress and reach above average standards in reading. This has had a strong impact upon the skills and confidence of the pupils with learning difficulties. Progress in writing is satisfactory. Teachers are working together to improve the way in which they teach writing. As a result pupils' work is improving, but more remains to be done to raise the performance of more able pupils.

The school carefully tracks progress and has a considerable amount of information about each pupil. This is used well to identify ways in which teachers could improve their lessons. However, the information is not used sufficiently to set sharply focused targets for all pupils. This has resulted for example, in some pupils failing to reach their targets because they have been too challenging. The information is not used consistently well to guide pupils on how they can improve. This has had an impact on the standards of the more able pupils in writing.

Leadership and management are good. Staff have a shared commitment and view of the direction that the school should follow. They work as an effective team to make improvements. While some strategies, for example those to improve writing standards, are still to have their full impact, others, such as initiatives in reading have already borne fruit. Since the last inspection, the school has raised standards in mathematics, which were below average. Improvements to accommodation and resources are contributing strongly to pupils' well-being and their standards in areas such as information and communication technology (ICT). This track record shows that the school has a good capacity for continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils, especially the more able, are consistently challenged in writing.
- Ensure that the information from tracking pupils' progress is used effectively to set targets and to guide pupils on how they might improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach average standards overall by the end of Year 2. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They quickly learn to work together and enjoy finding

things out. They are working securely in most areas of learning when they enter Year 1, but their language skills are a little below those expected of children of this age. In Years 1 and 2, the best achievement is in reading. Pupils respond very well to stimulating resources and reading opportunities, so that they make very good progress. Standards in reading are above average. Most pupils make good progress in mathematics. They develop basic numeracy skills well, but some struggle to choose the correct strategies when solving problems. Pupils' achievement in writing is satisfactory. Most pupils develop their skills appropriately, but the most able make limited progress in learning to develop their ideas in a range of interesting writing styles. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make as good progress as their classmates because their needs are efficiently identified and they are supported well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's Christian ethos and close links with the parish church mean that children develop an excellent understanding of right and wrong. All feel very safe and secure. Pupils get on very well with each other and take a real interest in helping each other. Older pupils have written a guide to the school which provides new entrants with excellent advice on the facilities, rules and the importance of working hard. Lunchtimes and playtimes are extremely sociable occasions where pupils enjoy hula-hooping, playing football, building dens together or listening to a story in the sunshine. Such a wide range of activities also helps them to develop their very good understanding of how to avoid risks and to keep safe. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school, the local church and the community. For example, members of the school council recently designed signs to discourage inconsiderate parking. Such initiatives teach pupils valuable lessons in social responsibility which along with their progress in their key subjects, prepare them well for their junior school education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan well to provide interesting, useful, activities and a good pace of learning. They use effective strategies to involve pupils, for example in sharing their ideas when using interactive whiteboards. Teachers set out their expectations for effort and behaviour clearly and give their pupils much encouragement and praise. As a result, pupils are eager to learn. Teachers' good use of stimulating resources successfully encourages pupils to become enthusiastic and proficient readers. Strong teamwork in the Foundation Stage gives children a very good balance of independence and supervision. The adults provide a stimulating variety of activities, well matched to the way in which young children learn best by playing and exploring. In other years teachers and teaching assistants work together well to make sure that any pupils who need extra help quickly receive this. Teachers use marking well to encourage pupils, but do not always give them guidance on how to improve their work. Although most lessons provide good challenge for the most able pupils this is not fully consistent in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' good achievement. It is well planned to interest pupils and staff ensure that there is a balance in the teaching of different subjects. In the Foundation Stage, stimulating and imaginative activities help children to build their skills well. For example, they enjoy growing their own plants and discussing how best to care for them. Across the school, the curriculum is strengthened by a very good range of special days or weeks, popular clubs and other activities which support pupils' good learning. The enthusiasm, involvement and enjoyment that they generate are important factors in pupils' excellent personal development. As one parent wrote, 'My son comes home buzzing with excitement about what he's done and tired because he's worked so hard'. Planning and resources for information and communication technology (ICT) ensure that pupils develop their skills well and can use these in all subjects. The curriculum is not always adapted well enough to ensure that all more able pupils make the best possible progress in writing, by for example giving them challenging opportunities to use their skills in different subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good overall. Pastoral support is excellent. It involves all staff very well and results in pupils making outstanding progress in their personal development. One parent echoed the views of many when she wrote that her son feels 'loved and cared for'. Systems to protect pupils are robust and effective. Ways of sharing worries, such as circle time or suggestion boxes, help pupils to feel very safe and secure. There are very good links with outside agencies to protect the most vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Such pupils are quickly identified and provided with the specialist help they need. For example, well trained additional adults help pupils with speech and language difficulties. Very effective 'friendship' groups are arranged to successfully help pupils who find getting along with others more difficult. The school gathers a great deal of information about pupils' academic progress. However, this is not being used consistently well by all staff to set pupils' targets and guide them on how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very clear direction for the school. Her exceptionally caring approach is highly valued by parents and her leadership has resulted in a settled staff team, dedicated to the school and its pupils. Roles and responsibilities are shared well and staff carry these out with considerable commitment. Subject leaders are involved well in monitoring teaching and learning in their areas and manage these efficiently. In improving their contribution further, they are becoming increasingly involved in strategic planning. The well organised governors support the school well and are prepared to challenge it when necessary. Several are fairly recently appointed, but are developing their skills and confidence well. Governors ensure that all requirements including those for racial equality are met. The school's systematic methods for self evaluation have given it a good understanding of its strengths and the areas in which it needs to improve.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Send CofE First School, Woking, GU23 7BS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and we are grateful for the help you gave by talking to us and letting us look at your work. We were able to see that yours is a good school.

You make good progress in your work. This is because teachers plan interesting lessons and you work hard. Some of you told us how much you enjoy the books that the school gives you to read. Because of this you become very good readers and we hope that you will never lose your love of reading. You also make good progress in mathematics. In writing, we think that the brightest among you could do even better. We have asked the teachers to make sure that your work is always hard enough to bring out the very best in you. We have asked them to make sure that they set targets that are just right for each of you and give you the help that you need to reach these. This is to make sure that you are as successful as you deserve to be.

We could see that the adults care for you very much and work very hard to make sure that you are all safe and happy. You repay them very well by coming to school regularly, behaving well and being really willing to join in with everything. One of your mums summed it up really well. She said that her son comes home 'buzzing with excitement' and 'tired after working so hard'.

The staff and some of your parents have told us that you will all miss your headteacher when she leaves soon. The adults are making sure that your school will continue to be a place where you are happy and do well. They know what to do to make it even better. Well done to you all and very best wishes for the future.

George Rayner

Lead Inspector