

Somerby Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	119951
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379918
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Lead inspector	Terry Elston

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Fynn
Headteacher	Julia Hurrell (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Terry Elston

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited seven lessons taught by two teachers. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress; curriculum planning documents; policies and documents relating to safeguarding; examples of the ways in which the school supports different groups of pupils. The inspector also analysed completed questionnaires from pupils, staff and nine parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is a much smaller-than-average-sized primary school, where numbers have fallen over the last three years. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils are taught in two mixed-aged classes. There has been an acting headteacher since the start of January 2012. Many members of the governing body are recently appointed.

The school meets the government's current floor standards which determine the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has recently gained national Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils do well in all aspects of their development and enjoy being part of this small community. The excellent relationships make pupils feel safe and valued. The school is good rather than outstanding because pupils have insufficient guidance on how to improve their work and have too few opportunities to work independently.
- Pupils make good progress so that their attainment is above average by the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and benefit from working alongside older pupils.
- Parents and carers rightly see the good teaching as a key reason for their children's good achievements. Pupils say how much they enjoy lessons and the way, as one commented, 'Teachers help them when they find work difficult.' Teachers are skilled at ensuring that pupils of differing ages and abilities make equally good progress.
- Pupils behave well because they know the rules and understand the impact of their actions on others. The good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development shows in the way they reflect on issues such as the tragedy of war and the beauty of nature.
- Good leadership and management are key reasons for the school's success. The leaders share ambitious targets for improvement and know how to achieve them. The acting headteacher's perceptive evaluation of the school's performance data has already led to raised attainment in writing. However, procedures for the evaluation of teaching and learning in the classroom lack the rigour necessary to achieve the school's aim of outstanding provision. The governing body is very supportive, but with so many new members it does not yet have the skills to fully hold the leaders to account.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils make the best possible progress by teachers:
 - giving them more opportunities to work independently at challenging tasks
 - providing clear guidance in their marking to show pupils how to improve their work.

- By July 2012, improve the leadership and management by:
 - evaluating the teaching and learning rigorously and giving teachers clear guidance on how they can improve their teaching
 - enabling the governing body to take a more active role in evaluating the provision and holding the leaders to account.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Inspection evidence confirms the views of parents and carers that their children make good progress. Pupils agree, and are rightly proud of their good achievements. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enter the school with skills and experiences that are broadly similar to those expected for their age. The good teaching of reading, writing and number skills means that these children achieve well. They count confidently and enjoy reinforcing their learning by discovering numbers in sand and water outside. They enjoy books and soon learn the sounds of letters. Their early writing skills develop well, as was observed when they wrote about a very hungry caterpillar. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by many opportunities to experience the wonders of nature. For example, one child was enthralled to find a ladybird outside and cradled it carefully in her hands in case it got cold.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 build well on this good start. By the end of Year 1 and Year 2, their attainment in reading is above average. They read fluently because teachers ensure they know how to build sounds into words. This means they tackle unfamiliar words with confidence. Their writing is imaginative and presented well. This was seen to good effect when they wrote about traditional tales putting their own slant on the story. In mathematics, pupils learn to calculate quickly in their head and enjoy discovering the properties of different shapes.

By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above average in English and mathematics. In recent years, attainment has been higher in mathematics than English because of boys' underperformance in writing. The school has done much to capture boys' imagination when planning writing tasks and this has closed the gap. Pupils read confidently and skim texts quickly in books and on computers to gain information. Their stories are imaginative and their formal writing is often of high quality. For example, their letters of complaint concerning an imaginary 'holiday from hell' when their ship sank showed an excellent grasp of how to criticise without being rude. Their mathematical skills improve well because of the way teachers focus on

developing their quick recall of number. Pupils calculate easily and are very good at working with fractions and decimals. Their problem-solving skills are less well developed because they have too few opportunities to practise them.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The small classes mean that these pupils have a great deal of individual support while enjoying good opportunities to work with older and more-able pupils. They do particularly well in their reading because of the good teaching of word-building skills.

Quality of teaching

Teachers make lessons fun for pupils by their effective use of new technologies. They use the interactive whiteboards to show how to build sounds into words and calculate complex mathematical puzzles. The youngest children made rapid progress when using digital cameras to take photographs of the rooms and staff to compile an excellent book of their school. Teachers are very consistent in the way they manage behaviour and this makes lessons calm and productive. Parents and carers value this approach to teaching and learning highly and say how much it contributes to their children's enjoyment of school. Pupils agree, and say how much they enjoy lessons.

Teachers ask probing questions that make pupils think carefully about an answer. They make a point of including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in their questioning, and one pupil beamed with pride when he solved a difficult mathematical problem. In the main, teachers' expectations are high for all groups of pupils and all pupils make good progress. Occasionally, however, there are too few opportunities for the more-able pupils to move ahead at their own pace. For example, while in one lesson pupils had to sit for too long as a group and the more-able ones were held back, in another they were sent quickly into groups and all made excellent progress.

Teachers do much to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, they encourage them to reflect on issues such as poverty in Victorian times and the choices people have to make in everyday life. They provide very good opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with their talking partner and encourage them to always value each other's opinion.

Teachers make detailed assessments of pupils' progress in lessons, and use these well to plan future work. They mark pupils' work promptly, but are better at saying how good it is rather than how it could be improved.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils, as well as their parents and carers, think behaviour is good. Inspection evidence supports this view. From the time they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, children develop a very clear sense of right and wrong. Improvements in behaviour over recent times have coincided with pupils helping to draw up rules for the way they should act towards one another. Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils are acutely aware of the dangers of bullying of any type and how to respond if it happens. All adults in school take rare occurrences of aggressive behaviour seriously and work closely with pupils and parents and carers to prevent it happening again.

Records show that these strategies to improve behaviour and eliminate bullying are effective. In lessons, pupils are eager to learn and concentrate hard. They listen carefully to the teachers and mostly remember to put their hands up to answer questions. They are very punctual to lessons and attendance rates are high. Parents and carers respond well to the school's rigorous systems to discourage unnecessary absences.

From an early age, pupils take responsibility well. The youngest children learn to wash their hands after messy activities and dress themselves. They develop their independence well and choose their own activities sensibly. Older pupils take a pride in looking after the younger ones because, as one said, 'This school is like a big family.'

Pupils have a good awareness how to live healthy lives and eat nutritious foods, and most follow this consistently. They understand the potential hazards of using the internet and have a good awareness of the dangers of fire and busy roads. They say they feel extremely safe in school and parents and carers agree. They enjoy being involved in the community and have good opportunities to join forces with other schools for sporting events. Their good cultural awareness is enhanced by fruitful links with schools in a nearby city with a more diverse ethnic population and a school in Nepal.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher ensures that the school runs smoothly and has already made improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and boys' writing. Self-evaluation is rigorous and areas for improvement are ambitious. This shows the school's good capacity to improve further. The leaders' commitment to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is evident in the way they are taught to make the right choices and always consider the feelings of others. Parents and carers value this provision highly and some say it is the reason they chose this school.

The leaders use data on pupils' performance very well. Their good commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils is evident in the way they monitor the progress of different groups rigorously and provide extra support if any is falling behind. There are robust systems to tackle any form of discrimination that help make the school a safe and happy community. The leaders work very closely with parents and carers, who feel well-supported. They say that the school keeps them informed about school events and their children's learning. Regular questionnaires to canvas their views help them identify areas for improvement that the school uses to set future targets.

Senior staff support teachers well with good opportunities for further training. The evaluation of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and improving with regular observations of lessons by the acting headteacher.

The leaders have introduced a broad and balanced curriculum with a secure focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills while providing many opportunities for pupils to enhance their artistic talents. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors to make learning interesting and an extensive range of after-school

clubs. The recent focus on topics that capture boys' enthusiasm has done much to raise their attainment, particularly in writing.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is effective in working with the leaders to ensure that arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements. Members of the governing body share the leaders' high expectations and ambitions for the school. They are well-focused on rapidly developing their skills in evaluating the school's provision and outcomes.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Somerby Primary School, Somerby LE14 2PZ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to your school. I really enjoyed seeing you work hard in lessons and play so happily outside. Those of you who were kind enough to speak to me or who filled in questionnaires said how much you enjoy your work. You think yours is a good school and you are right.

I was impressed with how hard you work. You make good progress, particularly in your reading, writing and mathematics. It was good to see you behave so well, make such good friends and take care of each other. You have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and live healthy lives. Even the youngest ones think a lot about people in the world who are poor and sad. The senior staff know how to improve things and make sure the school runs smoothly. You work hard at the activities provided and enjoy the many clubs after school. Your teachers make learning fun and you are right to say how well they help you when you find the work hard. They work closely with your parents and carers to make sure they know how well you are doing at school. All staff at the school take very good care of you and keep you safe.

Your teachers are always looking for ways to improve. I have asked them to give you more time to work independently and to make sure that their marking of your books shows you how to do even better. You can all help by telling your teachers about the lessons that you really enjoyed and taking good notice of their advice about your next steps in learning.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston
Lead inspector

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