

Southway Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125941
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	359969
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Lake
Headteacher	Dinah Goss
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 14 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, parents, staff and pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, information on pupils' progress, safeguarding policies and other documents. Questionnaires from 111 parents and carers, 94 pupils and nine members of staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- What are the levels of pupils' progress in writing and science, including the more able?
- How and where does teaching need to develop to become consistently good or better?
- How well do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress?
- What is the impact of leaders, including middle managers and the governing body, on making provision and progress more consistent?
- How well are interesting activities used to engage pupils and to support their enjoyment of school?

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average-sized junior school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has a below-average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have a wide range of needs, including autism, specific learning difficulties and more complex needs. The school has received several awards including the Activemark. There have been several changes in members of staff over the last two years, including a completely new senior leadership team and headteacher.

A privately run breakfast and after-school club meets in the school but was not part of this inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This happy and improving school provides pupils with a sound education. Parents are pleased with the way the relationship between home and school has developed recently. One parent spoke for others by saying, 'The school is welcoming and supportive and teachers are friendly and dedicated.' High rates of attendance demonstrate the pupils' great enthusiasm for coming to school. They particularly appreciate and enjoy the interesting activities planned by members of staff through the 'learning journey' topics and 'take away' homework tasks.

Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress overall, with pupils performing best in mathematics. Recent improvements in marking and target setting have started to close the gap between attainment in reading and writing. Teachers plan together across year groups but do not always fine tune planning to meet the differing needs of each class. In addition, in mathematics and science, teachers do not consistently use marking and target setting to help pupils know what they need to do next to improve their work. Consequently, progress is uneven across the school and learning is not always quick enough, particularly for the more able pupils.

The good care, guidance and support are instrumental in securing pupils' good personal development and safety. Pupils say that they feel safe because 'teachers listen to us' and 'there is always someone to help us'. Members of staff work closely with parents and carers and external agencies to help pupils who are finding life difficult and are in need of additional emotional support. Pupils are good at taking responsibility, are polite and considerate and proud of their school.

There are satisfactory procedures for self-evaluation that enable the strongly committed senior leaders to have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done next to improve the school. Leaders, including the governing body, have worked successfully to increase pupils' enjoyment of school by developing the curriculum. They have put firm foundations in place to support better learning, and these are starting to have a positive impact. There are some effective additional programmes to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and consequently their progress is increasing. Leaders are aware that some science topics are not being covered in sufficient depth to support good learning in this subject and pupils have too few opportunities to take the initiative in their learning and to give reasons for their findings in investigative work. The role of middle managers has not been developed enough to enable them to prevent dips in performance within the school and to ensure good provision in all classes. There are clear and relevant plans to improve the school, demonstrating the school's sound capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching and learning to 80% by:
 - ensuring all pupils, especially the more able, are always challenged enough
 - being more flexible and adapting planning to match differing needs in each lesson
 - using marking and target setting to show pupils how to improve their work in mathematics and science.
- Extend the curriculum and rates of progress in science by:
 - ensuring topics are given sufficient coverage
 - providing pupils with greater opportunities to take the initiative in their learning and give reasons for their findings during investigative work.
- Expand the role of middle managers to play a greater part in ironing out inconsistencies in teaching and learning across the school so that progress is consistently good.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment is above average when pupils join the school in Year 3. Pupils enjoy school very much, including the interesting cross-curricular topics. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils enjoyed pretending to be archaeologists in Egypt as they explored the perimeter of various shapes. In another good lesson in Year 4, pupils enjoyed collecting information for their brochures about a Safari Park.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and attainment is above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress, but progress is uneven between classes and subjects. A recent improvement in the way writing is being taught has resulted in better progress being made in this subject and intervention strategies are starting to provide better support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils do not consistently learn at the rate at which they are capable. This is particularly true of the more able pupils and in science, where pupils are not given enough opportunity to take the initiative in their learning or in how they record what they have discovered. For example, in one science lesson pupils of all abilities had completed the same written task and presented what they had learnt about the properties of materials in exactly the same way.

Behaviour is good and pupils are courteous and move around the school sensibly. They work hard most of the time and cooperate well in pairs. Occasionally the pace of work drops because pupils do not always take the initiative by regulating the pace of their learning and their behaviour. Nevertheless, pupils' above-average attainment and good personal development prepare them well for the next stage of education and later life.

Most pupils say that they feel safe at school and they know how to stay safe. For example, pupils were involved in carrying out a risk assessment on the new adventure playground and also drew up safety rules for its use. There is very little unpleasant behaviour and pupils told inspectors that their concerns are dealt with swiftly by peer mediators or members of staff. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They

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have a good awareness of moral and social issues. For example, the school council led an assembly on the importance of friendships and pupils enjoy acting as eco warriors. Pupils reflect thoughtfully during times of worship and appreciate cultural differences learnt through music, art and dance. Pupils are developing a greater understanding of what it is like to live in multicultural Britain. They are keen to adopt healthy eating habits and enjoy keeping active at playtime, demonstrating why they have been awarded the Activemark.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

In just over half the lessons observed, teaching was good and no inadequate teaching was observed. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good relationships with the pupils and plan interesting topics based on their good subject knowledge. As a result pupils are keen to learn. For example, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed learning about coordinates by working outside on a large grid. Target setting and marking are being used well to support and plan writing activities, but assessment information is not used consistently in mathematics and science. In these subjects teachers are not always planning work to meet pupils' differing needs, or enabling the more able pupils to take the initiative. For example, in one lesson in mathematics, opportunities were missed to move learning forward more rapidly when it became obvious that pupils already had a thorough understanding of the work planned. Teaching assistants provide some good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, teachers do not always plan sufficiently to

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meet the differing needs of these pupils to ensure that they make consistently good progress. Marking provides helpful guidance to move learning forward in writing, but less so in mathematics and science.

The curriculum has been developed to make it more meaningful and relevant to the pupils, although leaders have discovered that science topics are not always being covered well enough to secure good progress. Pupils appreciate the good range of enrichment opportunities, including visitors and clubs that enhance their personal development. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy lifestyles.

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well, enabling them to feel safe and valued. Pupils and parents appreciate the good arrangements to aid a smooth transition from the infants' school and pupils are confident that if they have concerns they will be dealt with swiftly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders embed ambition and drive improvement satisfactorily because they have a thorough knowledge about what the school does well and how it should be improved. The new leadership team has a strong determination to make the necessary changes required to ensure consistent progress across all year groups, following a recent dip in performance in the end of Key Stage 2 2009 tests. Actions taken have recently improved attainment and progress in writing and are starting to do the same in science. Leaders have increased the rigour in monitoring rates of progress so that weaknesses are identified and rectified more quickly. The governing body has been improving strongly over the last two years and has become more robust in monitoring the school's work and providing challenge for underperformance. It is too soon, however, to be able to show sustained impact of recent actions taken. Leaders promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination satisfactorily. All pupils are included well socially, and the school is working on improving the consistency of learning and progress, particularly of more able pupils.

At the time of the inspection, the school's safeguarding arrangements were found to be good and parents agree that pupils are kept safe at school. The partnership between the school and external agencies is good, enabling leaders and pupils to benefit from support from various sources. The school has good activities for pupils to learn about local culture and there are clear plans to promote community cohesion further by forging links with a school abroad and a contrasting school in the United Kingdom.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

There was a very positive response to the inspection questionnaire. Most parents and carers are pleased with the school, especially with the way children enjoy school and are prepared for the next stage of education. The inspection team also found this to be the case. A few parents and carers would like the school to take more account of their suggestions and concerns and are not happy with the way the school is dealing with unacceptable behaviour. The school is in the process of evaluating a recent questionnaire for parents and will soon explain how they are responding to their ideas and suggestions. The inspection team found that the school deals with unacceptable behaviour appropriately.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Southway Junior 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 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 303 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	65	35	32	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	58	44	40	2	2	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	40	61	55	3	3	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	44	55	50	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	50	53	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	42	57	51	5	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	45	55	50	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)	50	45	51	46	7	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	45	51	46	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	27	57	51	5	5	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	28	59	53	9	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	49	44	53	48	5	5	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	53	45	41	6	5	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



17 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southway Junior School, Burgess Hill RH15 9SU

We enjoyed coming to see your happy school. Thank you for being so helpful during our visit. Your school provides you with a sound standard of education.

These are the best things about your school.

- You learn quickly in mathematics.
- You are polite and friendly and enjoy coming to school very much.
- You feel safe at school and well done for attending regularly and keeping healthy.
- We agree with you when you say that teachers take good care of you and give you interesting things to do.
- The headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to make the school better.

These are the things we have asked your school to do next to make it better.

- Your teachers should always give you work that is just right for you, especially those of you who find learning easy.
- You should have helpful information on how well you are doing in mathematics and science and how you can improve your work.
- You should cover science topics more fully, and have opportunities to do more for yourselves and explain your findings during investigative work.
- The school should make sure all leaders are involved in checking that teaching and learning are always of the highest quality.

Thank you once again for telling us about your school and letting us see your work. You could all help your teachers by taking the initiative with your work and using and explaining your own ideas more.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge

Lead inspector

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