

South End Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121891
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359107
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Joseph Peacock

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Gerrard
Headteacher	Mr Noel Springett-McHugh
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed 14 teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents and pupils, and looked at school planning and assessment data. They examined the school's documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and pupil's welfare. They scrutinised 100 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils.

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

- overall standards and, in particular, the attainment of boys
- the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum and their impact on standards
- the effectiveness of new leaders, managers and governors in bringing about improvement following a period of staffing turbulence.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average for a junior school and a major refurbishment programme is on-going. This includes a new building for performing arts. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average but an above average proportion have a statement of special educational needs. Very few are known to be eligible for free school meals. There has been significant staffing turbulence over the past two years and a new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed just over a year ago. The school is a leading literacy school and has gained a number of national awards including a Healthy School Award.

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

The school is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. Staffing turbulence and long-term absences have contributed to a downward trend in overall attainment over the past two years. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have achieved much in a short time, introducing new management structures and policies which are succeeding in reversing this trend. Procedures to enable teachers to track more effectively how well pupils are doing are having a positive impact. Governors are keen to develop their role but, to date, they are not sufficiently involved in evaluating school effectiveness. 'There is a new vibrancy about the school...' is a typical comment from parents. Pupils now refer to their classrooms as learning bases and are much clearer about their individual learning targets. Already, there are encouraging signs that attainment is improving. The gap between girls' and boys' attainment, for example, is closing rapidly. Recently appointed leaders and managers have accurately assessed strengths and areas for development. Their commitment and intention to improve are clear but they are just beginning to demonstrate a positive impact. In view of this, the capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Most pupils enter Year 3 from the infant school next door with above average skills for their age. Pupils thrive in the stimulating and attractive learning environment. More able pupils invariably make at least satisfactory progress and achieve above average standards. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well, making good progress from their starting points and, by Year 6, most achieve the standards expected for their age. The enthusiastic and hardworking staff ensure all these pupils are provided with appropriate support and plan worthwhile learning experiences for them. The falling trend in standards is largely as a result of fewer of the pupils who start in the school with average attainment reaching above average standards by Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning over the past two years has not been sufficiently effective to ensure that all pupils made at least satisfactory progress. Currently, attainment in English is above average. In mathematics it is average. An above average proportion of pupils achieve the standard expected but not enough pupils are achieving above average standards. Assessment information is not being used consistently well by staff and, as a result, some pupils are not being provided with appropriately challenging tasks. Pupils generally demonstrate above average skills in many areas of learning. All competently and confidently use computers and their completed work in most other subjects is of a high standard.

There is a quiet, calm atmosphere for learning in most lessons. Pupils' consistently good attendance reflects their enjoyment and pride in their school. Their contribution to the life of the school and local community is exemplary. The good care, guidance and support for individual pupils are instrumental in fostering positive attitudes, good behaviour and caring relationships between pupils and with staff.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good with effective planning and challenge for all pupils
 - improving the use of assessment in mathematics to plan relevant work for all pupils
 - closely monitoring the achievement of pupils of average ability to enable more to achieve above average standards.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - newly-appointed leaders of learning (middle managers) develop a thorough understanding of the school's assessment data and use it effectively to raise standards
 - governors gather first-hand information about the effectiveness of the school's work, particularly outcomes for pupils, so that they can better hold leaders to account.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory
 - may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5
 - inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils clearly enjoy school. In most of the lessons observed, there was a good atmosphere for learning with pupils concentrating well. On occasions, pupils were quick to help and support those who were not sure about what to do. The expertise of teachers and specialist support staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have the help and resources they need to complete their work. Most make good progress as a result.

Attainment in English is above average with pupils achieving particularly well in writing. Most demonstrate above average skills in science and information and communication technology. The variation in the quality of teaching means that pupils' progress is not consistent across year groups or subjects. School data shows that the current Year 6 generally made good progress when they were in Year 5. However, overall standards in mathematics are below those in English as fewer attain above average standards. Pupils are now grouped by ability, narrowing the range of skills teachers have to plan for in mathematics sessions. It is too early to assess the impact of this strategy on raising standards.

Pupils are polite, confident and very articulate. All demonstrate exceptional interpersonal skills. They clearly enjoy learning and the vast majority aspire to and successfully meet the school's high expectations of their conduct. Listening to pupils' views has been a priority for the new headteacher and pupils communicate with him by email or share their thoughts in individual conferences when discussing their targets. The school's values, 'inspiring responsibility, confidence and creativity,' help pupils to develop positive relationships, courtesy and respect for one another. Their responsible behaviour

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contributes significantly to their sense of security. The various roles and responsibilities pupils undertake enables most to develop key social and other workplace skills well.

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	2
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	1
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	2
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?

Teaching is satisfactory overall. One lesson observed showed teaching to be outstanding so that pupils were highly motivated by a challenging task and made excellent progress. Teachers take special care to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and most successfully challenge the more-able. In many instances, not enough is expected of average attaining pupils and they make satisfactory rather than good progress. Occasionally, teachers spend too long explaining things, limiting the time for pupils to learn by working on appropriately challenging tasks.

A developing and improving curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of school and helping to raise attainment levels. Despite the pressure to raise standards in English and mathematics, staff have remained committed to planning and delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. The new leaders are busy revising and developing the curriculum to make it more creative and interesting for pupils. Teachers' expertise in information and communication technology, physical education and the performing arts is being used to good effect in lessons, raising standards and pupils' skills. The good range of extra-curricular activities is well attended and pupils enjoy singing in the choir and dancing in local competitions and events. The school's strong focus on values underpins

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the success of its work with parents, carers, pupils and external agencies to promote individual learning, development and well-being. Time for reflection during the school day helps pupils to understand and adopt values that inspire responsibility and confidence. A key strength is the quality of provision for pupils with additional emotional and social needs. They and all pupils thrive in the caring and supportive atmosphere where staff are quick to praise and celebrate their achievements. Cooperation between the infant and junior schools is being developed to ensure more effective transition arrangements.

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?

The new strategic leadership team has successfully introduced a culture of high aspirations and expectations matched by equally challenging targets. Leaders have also established a clear emphasis on learning and have worked hard to improve the context within which it takes place. Pupils are proud of the attractively refurbished learning areas for year groups and the new modern names such as 'learning bases', 'the avenue' for the corridor and 'the link' for their computer room. Leadership and management team has been restructured to ensure there are key people to lead learning in each phase. Most of these appointments are very recent and the role of these leaders in monitoring effectiveness is still embryonic and developing. Nevertheless, the school has clear evidence of recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievements. Governors bring a wealth of useful skills from their professional backgrounds and are beginning to improve their own effectiveness in holding the school to account. Appropriate policies promote equality of opportunity but not all groups of pupils are performing equally well. Safeguarding procedures are good with some exemplary practice in ensuring safe recruitment and child protection. Pupils have a secure knowledge on how to keep themselves and the school safe. Developing links with different ethnic groups in the community is an on-going area for the development of community cohesion. Links with other schools and the local community are particularly strong.

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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

Most of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire have positive views about the school. A common thread in many comments was the appreciation of the skills of the new headteacher. A few want the school to involve them more in supporting their children's learning and a very small minority think that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged the partnership with parents and carers to be good. Behaviour management is a strength. The revised policy and procedures with rewards and awards is very positive, ensuring pupils feel safe and are happy at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South End 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 330 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	46	51	51	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	51	47	47	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	43	47	47	3	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	39	45	45	6	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	39	51	51	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	35	53	53	8	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	39	55	55	1	1	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)	38	38	46	46	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	35	50	50	5	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	30	52	53	8	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	31	52	52	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	52	39	39	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	49	39	39	2	2	1	1

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 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South End Junior School, Northamptonshire, NN10 9JU

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school. You and your school council members gave inspectors lots of valuable information. Many of you told inspectors how much you enjoy being pupils at South End Junior School. We can see from your good attendance how much you enjoy school. Well done to all of you for showing us how well you can behave in lessons and around the school and for making the school a happy place for everyone. It was impressive to see how sensible, responsible and caring towards others you are. We judge your school to be satisfactory.

School councillors told us that your teachers are fantastic and make lessons fun. However, inspectors found that learning in some lessons was better than in others. It is important to raise standards in mathematics and so we are asking your teachers to make sure each of you has challenging work which will help you to concentrate and work hard. We are sure that you will be able to cope and that standards will rise.

The good care, guidance and support that staff provide make sure that you feel safe and cared for each day. Your parents and carers agree and had lots of positive things to say about the school.

Your headteacher, with the support of hard working governors and staff, is helping to make school exciting and interesting every day. We would like to see the governors helping new leaders more by checking on how well things are going and what still needs improving. The recent refurbishment has given you a school to be proud of. We particularly liked the attractive new learning hubs and the way your hall is turned into the plaza cafe at lunchtimes. The money raised by the school council, parents and carers has clearly been well spent. We hope that you will continue doing your best and play your part in helping to make your school even better.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Peacock (on behalf of the team)

Lead inspector

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