

South Ascot Village School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109843
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	356641
Inspection dates	29–30 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Gardiner
Headteacher	Gillian Cocklin
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were seen and 11 teachers and early practitioners were observed. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The school's work and a wide range of documentation were reviewed. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school development plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and pupils and from 61 parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

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

- The progress made by pupils in mathematics, particularly the most able pupils.
- The key improvements in the pupils' personal development since the previous inspection.
- How well teachers ensure that work is matched to pupils' differing abilities.
- The role teachers play in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

South Ascot Primary School is an average-sized primary school. In September 2009, the school was amalgamated with South Ascot Nursery School, which shared the same site. For the previous five years, the two schools were federated under the leadership of the same headteacher and governing body. There is a large Early Years Foundation Stage because Nursery-aged children from across the whole of Ascot are entitled to attend. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of 52 part-time nursery places and a class for Reception-aged children. Currently there are 68 part-time Nursery children and five Reception children. Most Nursery-aged children leave at the end of the Nursery year.

The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although an increasing number are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Currently, few pupils are at an early stage of learning English, though the number who speak English as an additional language is increasing each year. An above average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about a third of the national average. The South Ascot Children's Centre is based on the site. The school is open for 48 weeks of the year and offers holiday provision for children from birth to 11 years. The headteacher is head of the centre, but the centre is managed separately and was not inspected as part of this inspection. There is a daily breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body and was inspected as part of this inspection. There is a particularly high turnover of pupils. For example, only six of the current Year 6 class have been in the class since the beginning of Year 1, and there are 33 pupils who have joined the school in the last year at a time other than the normal entry point. The school has Healthy School 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

South Ascot has made across-the-board improvements since the previous inspection and is now a good school. Pupils are proud of their school and make comments such as, 'Ours is a whizz school, we are really happy and everyone is friendly.' ♦ Parents and carers agree. Almost all say that their children enjoy school, and that they in turn are happy with their children's experiences at the school. Their comments are typified by the parent who wrote, 'I think the school is fantastic. The emphasis is on motivating and involving the children in all areas, not just academically.' Care, guidance and support are outstanding and the resulting strong relationships and positive ethos ensure that pupils' personal development is strong. Behaviour is good and pupils have a very positive attitude to school and learning. This is reflected in their high levels of attendance. By the time they reach Year 6, they develop into mature, responsible and reflective pupils who are prepared well for their move to secondary school.

Children get off to the best possible start in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage. Because provision is exceptionally strong, children thrive in the rich and diverse learning environment. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Attainment is steadily improving and, by the end of Year 6, standards are average. Improvements in progress and standards have been particularly good in pupils' reading and writing skills. This is because English is taught well and the school's strong emphasis on providing a clear purpose for writing and by providing a wide range of opportunities for writing in many subjects is paying dividends. Most groups of pupils make good progress in mathematics, although higher ability pupils' progress is satisfactory. Also, standards in mathematics are slightly below those in reading, writing and science. This is because pupils of all abilities do not have enough opportunities to apply their knowledge in practical and investigational activities, and staff do not offer a consistent approach to teaching calculation skills in different classes. ♦

Lessons are typified by pupils' enthusiasm, enjoyment and concentration. Most lessons are of good quality, and those in the Early Years Foundation Stage are almost always outstanding. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities and, because teachers are skilled at motivating pupils, all classrooms have a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Teachers mark books regularly but the advice they give to pupils about how to improve their work is of inconsistent quality. Teachers' comments do not focus sufficiently well on lesson objectives or give clear guidance on how pupils are to meet their longer-term objectives.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is held in high esteem by pupils, staff and parents and carers. She is pivotal to the school's improvement and has ensured that there is strong teamwork and pride amongst the staff. Self-evaluation is accurate and, most importantly, the school knows exactly what has to be done to make further

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improvements in provision and standards. The school benefits from exceptionally strong partnerships with other schools and takes good advantage of joint learning opportunities for staff, pupils and their parents and carers. The close association with the children's centre means that all families are supported exceptionally well. The outstanding partnership that the school enjoys with parents and carers is built on strong mutual trust and learning opportunities for all. It brings a positive benefit to pupils' learning. The school has made good improvements in achievement, teaching and learning since the previous inspection, and has a good capacity for further improvement. ♦

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly for the more able pupils, by:
 - strengthening pupils' mathematical vocabulary
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to apply their knowledge in practical mathematics activities
 - ensuring that staff use consistent methods when teaching calculation.
- Raise the quality and effectiveness of teachers' marking by:
 - ensuring that comments always focus on the extent to which lesson outcomes have been met
 - ensuring that pupils know exactly what they have to do in order to meet their longer-term targets.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter Year 1 with academic skills and abilities that are below average, although their personal, social and emotional skills are well developed. The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms the overall picture of good and improving progress across the school, and broadly average standards in Year 6. The school is successful in ensuring that the pupils who join the school mid-way through the school year make similar progress to their classmates. Pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress towards their individual learning targets due to well-tailored provision. All groups of pupils achieve well in English and science. In some mathematics lessons, progress is good when teachers make activities lively and give purpose to the mathematics being taught. In a good Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were consolidating their knowledge of three-dimensional shapes. The class teacher's enthusiasm and energy engaged the pupils. Challenge was high and pupils were delighted to be able to solve a series of tricky questions. However, in other lessons, the most able pupils in particular are not always stretched enough to reach the higher standards they are capable of.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of right and wrong and they eagerly take advantage of the many opportunities for them to contribute to the school community. They relish responsibility and this is shown through the mature attitude of the school council and the way in which older pupils delight in looking after younger ones. Pupils new to the school are particularly appreciative of the 'new buddy' arrangement to help them settle quickly. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they have a good understanding

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of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle, as reflected in the school gaining Healthy School status. ♦

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	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?

Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to enliven learning and they plan lessons well. On the few occasions when teaching is less than good, it is because teachers spend too long talking to the whole class, and this limits learning to satisfactory levels. Teaching assistants make a good and positive contribution to pupils' achievement, particularly for those who find learning hard or have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are given many opportunities to work in pairs and in small groups and because teachers are skilled at pitching the work at different levels, they generally make good progress. However, in mathematics, higher ability pupils do not achieve so well because work is occasionally not sufficiently challenging for them. In many respects, assessment is used well, with teachers' making sure that pupils understand lesson purposes and intended outcomes, providing many opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and to successfully develop independence in learning. However, overall, assessment is drawn down to satisfactory levels due to inconsistencies in teachers' marking.

The curriculum is of good quality and has some outstanding features. It is planned creatively in that most topics and themes stem from the pupils' own interests and

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questions. In addition, work is frequently built on first-hand experiences. These are strengthened by the many opportunities that are provided for visits out of the school and also visitors into the school. The curriculum is enriched well by an exceptionally wide range of before- and-after school activities. At present, however, the curriculum for mathematics does not secure strong progress for the most able pupils.

Care, guidance and support are a particular strength of the school. In this inclusive school, every child matters and each pupil's individual needs are known. Very strong support is given to vulnerable pupils. For example, the specific before-school clubs for pupils with emotional needs are led well by knowledgeable and skilled support assistants. Excellent induction procedures for the many pupils entering the school through the year ensure that they settle quickly and well. Many parents and carers commented on how much they appreciated the good quality breakfast club, which pupils thoroughly enjoy.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The highly effective headteacher, with strong support from the effective governing body and senior leaders, has set a clear path for improvement based on accurate and thorough self-evaluation and by embedding initiatives which are making a positive difference to pupils' achievements. Middle leadership is good overall, even though some areas such as literacy and science have been affected by staff changes. Staff with leadership and management responsibilities make a good contribution to the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures. There is a determination from staff at all levels to sustain and build upon the improvements since the previous inspection. In this way, the school promotes equality for all pupils well, and no discrimination on any grounds is tolerated.

The work of the governing body has improved since the previous inspection. It is now in a stronger position to provide sensitive challenge to the school because governors find out for themselves how well the pupils are doing. They also ensure that child protection procedures are robust and all regulations are met in full. Community cohesion is good. Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils are developing into caring citizens who respect and value the views of others, and to ensure that a set of common values is embedded in every child. There is a strong involvement with the local community, and the different cultural heritages of the pupils are celebrated well. The school has good plans to forge links with a school in Lebanon, following a teacher's visit.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding provision means that children make rapid progress in all areas of learning. A minority of children who enter year 1 have attained the expected goals for their age. This is because although children enter the Nursery Year with skills and abilities above the levels expected nationally, most of these children leave at the end of the Nursery Year and the profile of children's skills and understanding on entry to Reception is much lower. Leadership and management are excellent. The leader is dedicated to celebrating and developing the uniqueness of each individual and ensures that the large number of staff work closely together to benefit all children. She has a deep understanding of how young children learn and as a result, she ensures that the play-based, child-initiated curriculum builds highly successfully on children's dispositions and interests. A rich range of activities, both indoors and outside, is interspersed exceptionally well with adult-led activities. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and practitioners pounce on every opportunity to build on the children's interests and choices and they are highly skilled at extending the children's thinking and language. An outstanding feature of the excellent teaching is the very high quality questioning of the children. This is a key factor in genuinely challenging all children. For example, children were focusing on vocabulary relating to size when re-telling Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and this focused language was developed and pursued in whatever activity the pupils were engaging. Hence, when Reception-aged children were taking photographs of regular shapes, they had to find large, medium and small circles, square and rectangular shapes around the setting. This enabled these children to make outstanding progress. Children are very happy, secure and confident. Staff know the children exceptionally well in their roles as key persons. They keep highly detailed records of children's progress in all areas of learning which are shared and valued by parents and carers. The children who leave the school at the end of the Nursery Year are prepared exceptionally well for their transfer to other schools.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	1
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

The proportion of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires was below average for a primary school, but the headteacher and staff clearly enjoy their confidence and support. A number of individual comments reflected the excellent care, support and guidance given to pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Almost all said that their children are safe and that teaching is good. A small number of individual concerns were followed up with the school, but followed no particular pattern. Many parents and carers commented on their satisfaction that the school focuses well on developing all aspects of their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Ascot Village 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 228 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	70	16	26	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	72	16	26	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	52	26	43	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	57	23	38	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	66	20	33	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	59	23	38	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	70	17	28	1	2	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)	35	57	21	34	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	56	22	36	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	43	30	49	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	51	27	44	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	74	11	18	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	70	17	28	1	2	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.



1 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Ascot Village Primary School, Ascot SL5 9EA

Thank you all for the warm welcome that you gave to us when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and we are pleased that you helped us to understand your school.

Yours is a good school and you are right to be proud of it. You make good progress in your learning and learn well in all classes because your teachers make sure that your lessons help you. You behave well and your attendance is high. You told us that you enjoy your learning and feel safe. This is because your teachers help you well. Your headteacher is doing a good job and you are lucky to have such a dedicated team of staff. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress because the staff are brilliant in helping them to learn so well.

Even in a good school like yours, there are things that need to be improved. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to do two things. First, to make sure that you do as well in mathematics as you do in English and science, particularly those of you who find learning easy. We have asked your teachers to make this happen by ensuring that you always use the correct mathematical vocabulary in lessons, that they give you more chances to do mathematical investigations, and also that they all teach you in the same way when you are learning how to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Second, we have asked teachers to make sure that their marking always helps you to make better progress. They need to make sure that their comments focus on lesson objectives and also to make sure that you know what you need to do to meet your longer-term targets.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your education.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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