

Southfield Foundation Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120043
Local Authority	Rutland
Inspection number	358675
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Buckby
Headteacher	Stuart Williams (Executive Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons, taught by five teachers, were observed. A number of small groups taught by teaching assistants were also visited. Meetings were held with pupils, the literacy coordinator and two representatives of the governing body. Several discussions were held with the Executive Principal and two vice principals. The inspectors looked at records of the pupils' progress and at lesson plans, some of the school's policies and a sample of the pupils' work. Questionnaire responses from staff, pupils and 57 parents were analysed.

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

- How well is assessment used to accelerate the pupils' progress in English and mathematics?
- How extensively are the pupils informed about how well they are doing and what they need to learn next?
- How is the school monitoring the impact of its improvement strategy?

Information about the school

The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. Almost all of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. A very few pupils come from other European backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There is a greater proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities than average in other primary schools.

Following a period of working in partnership with the local secondary school, the school entered into a formal federation agreement with Catmose College on 1 November 2010. The school is now led by the Executive Principal. A vice principal, with responsibility for teaching and learning, is based at the primary school. The name of the school will change to Catmose Primary School at the start of the next academic year.

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

2

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. In order to end a period of disruption and uncertainty, the governors took the bold and innovative step of entering into a federation with the local secondary school. This decision brought the immediate benefits of the proven and successful leadership of the Executive Principal and his team, a very clear direction for improvement, and a strong drive and ambition to raise attainment. The introduction of robust systems for checking the quality of teaching, and more rigorous tracking of the pupils' progress, are now used to good effect to hold the teachers to account for each pupil's progress. While there are clear indications of improvements in the pupils' performance, there is some way to go to ensure that all pupils are making good progress. Currently, achievement is satisfactory. Attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average, but not as high as it should be because too few pupils reach the higher level of attainment by the end of Year 6.

While some of the teaching is good, much is satisfactory. Some lessons are well focused on what pupils need to learn next, but in others tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the pupils' needs and the pace of learning is not brisk enough. Consequently, the progress that the pupils make varies considerably. They do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of how well they are doing or of what they need to learn next in order to make rapid progress. Some of the marking is helpful, but it does not consistently inform pupils about how to improve their work.

A recent review of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities illustrates very well how the new leadership team is incisively examining the school's strengths and weaknesses and acting quickly to find solutions. The review correctly identified effective focused teaching, and effective recording by teaching assistants. However, links with the support that some pupils received in lessons were weak because individual education plans were not sufficiently well written or used. More precise planning for these pupils is now being introduced, along with training for the staff.

The interesting curriculum, and the good care, guidance and support that the pupils receive, result in good personal development and well-being. The broad range of sports clubs and activities contributes well to their good understanding of staying fit and healthy. First aid and cycle safety training develop the pupils' excellent and well-tuned understanding of both their own safety and that of others. In discussion, the pupils say they feel very safe at school at all times. They are well behaved in lessons and on the playground. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, while their moral and social development is particularly strong, their knowledge of other cultures and faiths is patchy.

The Executive Principal, vice principals and governors share a strong desire to bring rapid improvements. Their self-evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and well

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focused, and their transformation plan sets clear priorities for building on the modest improvements in attainment made over the last few years. Since the last inspection the provision and outcomes for the youngest children have improved considerably, and are now good. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 so that eight out of 10 pupils reach the expected level, and four out of 10 pupils reach the higher level, by 2012.
- Accelerate the progress that the pupils make by:
 - ensuring that teaching is at least good throughout the school
 - planning tasks that are always matched well to the needs of all groups
 - providing consistently good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - generating a brisk pace of learning in all lessons
 - keeping pupils fully informed about how well they are achieving and what they need to learn next.
- Broaden the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cultures and faiths represented in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory. Some of the children start school with skills and abilities that are less well developed than expected for their age. They do well in the Reception Year, and most reach the expected level for the start of Year 1. Over the last few years this good start has not been built upon successfully, but attainment last year, at the end of Year 2, improved to close to the national average. Pupils are continuing to make faster progress in Years 1 and 2. This was evident in lessons where work was generally well matched to the needs of most groups and tasks were interesting and engaged the pupils. Nevertheless, there was still scope for greater challenge for the more-able.

In Years 3 to 6 the pupils' progress is inconsistent. Over recent years it has exceeded expectations in some years, but still too often falls short of what is needed for the pupils to make good, rather than satisfactory, progress. This is because in some lessons learning does not move on quickly enough. The pupils make secure progress in lessons but, again, the match of work to pupils' needs is not always precise enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with statements of special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as a result of the school's use of group teaching. These groups also include pupils who are falling behind, who are given short but well-focused support by teaching assistants to help to catch up with their peers.

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The school has maintained the many good features of the pupils' personal development since the last inspection. The pupils are attentive and respond positively to their teachers. Many outcomes for pupils are strong, because of the good opportunities and enrichment available to them. The pupils continue to make a good contribution to the school, particularly by giving their views at the school council and taking on the role of safety officers. All of the Year 6 pupils have a responsibility which they welcome and tackle with pride. The pupils greatly enjoy a very harmonious atmosphere in which to learn and play.

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	3
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	1
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	3
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?

Although the teaching in some lessons is good, it is satisfactory overall. There are inconsistencies that result in the pupils making steady progress rather than the rapid progress needed to reach higher levels of attainment. An exception to this is in reading, where focused teaching of phonics, for example in Years 1 and 2, results in the pupils doing well.

A stronger feature of some lessons, notably in Years 5 and 6, is the skilful questioning by the teacher that draws out the pupils' knowledge and understanding. The introduction of setting arrangements for the teaching of English and mathematics is bringing some benefits. Older pupils strongly support this change and feel they are getting more work which more closely matches what they need to learn next. This was not consistently borne out in lessons, where, for example, a few pupils did not have a sufficiently strong

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understanding of multiplying and dividing decimals by 10, 100 and 1000 to tackle the problems set for them.

The quality of marking of pupils' work varies considerably. Consequently, pupils are not getting the consistent guidance that they need in order to improve their work. The teachers' comments do not always identify how the pupils can improve their next piece of work. As a result, the teachers' assessments are not as effective as they should be in determining what the pupils need to learn next. In addition, some lesson plans, although detailed, lack clarity about how the different ability groups will be challenged and supported during the lesson.

The curriculum is well organised, and over the last year has become more diverse and interesting for the pupils. Teachers are now making effective links between subjects to create coherent learning opportunities. The school plans many interesting and enjoyable activities that enhance and extend the curriculum. The older pupils particularly enjoy and look forward to residential visits. They also value their involvement in the school's work to promote ecology. Care, guidance and support for pupils also make a good contribution to their personal development and well-being. The pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are well supported through effective links with external agencies. The school works closely with parents, and a number commented positively on the benefits of the care and guidance that their child receives. The school is particularly successful in creating a safe, friendly and calm environment for the pupils. This especially beneficial to the very few pupils who arrive at the school speaking little English, who make substantial progress in speaking, reading and writing.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the Executive Principal and the vice principals has galvanised the staff in their determination to raise attainment. The vice principal with responsibility for teaching and learning is now frequently checking the quality of planning, the implementation of the curriculum, the standard of pupils' work in their books, and the effectiveness of teaching in lessons. This rigorous approach to monitoring is highlighting weaknesses and ensuring that steps are taken to bring improvements.

The school's transformation plan, which is regularly evaluated, accurately sets out the key areas for improvement and gives clear targets to be achieved by the end of this school year. The school tracks the progress of all groups of pupils and evaluates their performance regularly at meetings between the vice principal and each of the teachers.

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While improvements have been made, for example for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, not all are doing as well as they could.

The governing body has actively encouraged the implementation of systems and strategies that have proved successful in the secondary school to bring about the rapid improvements in attainment that they are seeking. The governing body is monitoring the success of this approach through full meetings of the primary school governing body and the committees which now oversee, for example, standards in both schools. The school's approach to community cohesion does indeed result in a cohesive community within the school, but there is little evidence of its impact beyond the school, and evaluation of it is limited.

The school has well-developed systems to keep the pupils safe, and parents and carers agree that their children are safe at school. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their child's achievements and events that are planned. The partnership with the secondary school has increased the range of opportunities for pupils, most notably in sporting activities, and has brought considerable benefits, for example in managing budgets.

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	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

Early Years Foundation Stage

An analysis of the performance of the children in the Reception class last year shows that they made good progress, reaching a secure level of development by the time they moved into Year 1. Lively teaching ensures that activities captivate the children. Consequently, they settle quickly into school life and get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are encouraged to be independent, and participate in an interesting range of well-planned activities, some led by adults and some chosen by themselves. The children's welfare is particularly well promoted. As a result, they grow in confidence.

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The children respond well in adult-led activities. These activities are effective, because they are planned well, thoughtfully prepared and carried out in a manner that engages the children. For example, the teaching of letters and sounds skilfully draws the children into saying the sounds, matching them to pictures and beginning to write words containing the sounds. Their writing skills are developed further by writing labels for parts of the 'space station'. Similarly, the range of activities available for children to choose themselves is carefully planned and supported well. The adults develop the children's learning in the outdoor area so that activities flow freely from indoors to out. They also make good use of the role-play 'space station', which the children greatly enjoy. However, some opportunities to extend imaginative conversations are missed.

The children play and work well together. They are well versed in daily routines and are assiduous in tidying up before the start of the next session. The adults monitor the children's choices carefully and record their learning and progress. The information the adults collect forms a comprehensive assessment of the progress made by each child in their 'I can do' books.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A higher proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires than is usual. A number of parents added comments to their replies. Most of these were very positive and remarked very favourably on the school's friendly atmosphere, the care provided by the staff, and their child's enjoyment of school.

A few parents expressed concerns. A number of these were reservations about the federation with Catmose College. This falls outside the remit of the inspection, but inspectors did investigate the effectiveness of the leadership and management, and found that the leadership team has taken determined action to bring improvements. A small number of parents commented on the 'hit and miss' quality of teaching and on lack of progress. An investigation of the pupils' learning and progress lay at the heart of the inspectors' work. They found some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in the progress made by the pupils, and have set improvements in these important areas as priorities for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Southfield Foundation 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 129 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	56	25	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	65	19	33	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	44	26	46	6	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	54	21	37	5	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	63	16	28	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	53	25	44	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	49	25	44	4	7	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)	24	42	28	49	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	46	25	44	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	42	25	44	6	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	44	25	44	3	5	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	23	40	23	40	8	14	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	54	17	30	7	12	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



9 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southfield Foundation Primary School, Oakham, LE15 6SH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently. I am particularly grateful to those of you who spent some of your lunchtime talking to me about your school. You told me that you really like school and feel very safe there. The adults care for you well, and as a result your behaviour is good, and you have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and keep fit.

You told me that you like the recent changes to teaching groups, because the work is better matched to your needs. I have asked the teachers to build on these changes and to help you to make good progress in all lessons. The teachers mark your work, but sometimes they do not give you enough information about what you have done well and what you can do to make your work better. I have asked them to make sure that all of you are given a clear idea about how to improve.

The school provides you with a wide range of opportunities, both during and after school. Your involvement in these activities is helping you to do well in many aspects of your personal development. You are making satisfactory progress in English and mathematics, but some of you could make faster progress and reach higher standards. I have asked the school to take steps to make sure that more of you reach higher standards over the next few years. You can all help by always doing your best.

Your school has entered into an exciting partnership with Catmose College. The senior leadership team have got very clear plans to transform your school from 'satisfactory' to 'good' as quickly as possible. I enjoyed being in your school, and hope that in the future it is successful in helping you achieve as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector

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