

Severnbanks Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115746
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357812
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Hugill
Headteacher	Pam Howell
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed seven teachers and visited fourteen lessons. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, assessment information, teachers' planning, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures. They analysed questionnaires returned by 91 parents and carers, 25 members of staff and 86 pupils.

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

- The achievement of all groups of pupils in writing, with a particular focus on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether teaching and learning are sufficiently effective to meet the particular needs of all pupils, and especially those who may be vulnerable to underachievement.
- Whether or not the leadership team has taken effective measures to address previous weaknesses, accelerate pupils' progress and sustain improvement.

Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller-than-average primary school. There are seven classes in the school and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of those with a statement of special educational needs are well-above average. The main areas of need are speech and language, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.

There is a daily breakfast club managed by the school's governing body. The school has an onsite children's centre, which is subject to a separate inspection.

Since the last inspection the school has achieved the following awards: a full International Schools award, Healthy Schools Plus, Activemark, Eco-schools bronze and silver awards, an Early Years Quality Mark and an Investor in People 10-Year 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, who is supported by an outstanding governing body and senior leadership team, improvements have been implemented which have made an exceptionally positive difference since the last inspection. That has resulted in consistently good and frequently better progress for all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and rising levels of attainment, notably in the current Year 6. The key features that have led to the improvement are robust methods of monitoring pupils' progress, which are used exceptionally well by the senior leadership team to influence and improve teaching and learning directly and consequently to raise standards. Pupils achieve very well because the quality of teaching is never less than good and in over half of all lessons it is outstanding. In the vast majority of lessons all groups of pupils are challenged to do their very best. However, on rare occasions, more-able pupils in the Year 1 and Year 2 classes are not challenged sufficiently in their writing. Self-evaluation is extremely accurate and the well-informed and highly committed staff are determined to provide the very best education for all the pupils, regardless of the pupils' backgrounds or capabilities. Consequently, the school demonstrates an excellent capacity to sustain improvement. The curriculum is varied and stimulating and makes an excellent contribution to pupils' enjoyment. Pupils contribute to planning what they will learn and have an outstanding understanding of how to improve their work. Teachers make learning very exciting, through interesting topics and excellent use of trips and visitors. Comments by parents and carers such as 'My child loves coming to school' are typical and it is no surprise that attendance is above average and improving.

Pupils' excellent behaviour and relationships with all staff create lively, purposeful classrooms. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community, through the school and eco councils, by helping at lunchtimes and organising charity events. The school is an exceptionally caring community, where pupils' welfare is given the highest priority. Excellent attention is paid to supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which ensures that potentially vulnerable pupils are included fully in all aspects of school life and achieve very well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good start to school life. They make good progress and enjoy exciting experiences, such as exploring and investigating in 'Forest School'. However, they do not always experience a full range of learning experiences when they work in the outdoor area adjacent to the classroom. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. As a result of highly successful partnership work and mutual visits with pupils from Poland, Norway and Romania, pupils demonstrate that they can engage exceptionally well with others from different ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that more-able pupils in the Year 1 and Year 2 classes are always given sufficiently challenging writing tasks.
- Ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are always engaged sufficiently and interested in their learning by planning for and providing exciting learning experiences when they work and play in the outdoor area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Children enter the Reception class with skills levels that are much lower than is usually expected for their age in their personal development and in their early communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children do well in learning new things in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their attainment rises to below, but closer to, the expected levels by the time they join Year 1. Infant and junior pupils make consistently good and frequently outstanding progress, so that by the time they leave the school their attainment is average and rising steadily year on year. That indicates excellent progress from their very low starting points. Pupils' attainment is slightly lower in writing than in reading and the school has introduced many successful strategies to improve this. For instance, pupils are encouraged to discuss their writing together and refer to success checklists before they put pencil to paper. There are also excellent resources to promote literacy and numeracy and pupils say they use these prompts all the time. In lessons, the pupils show exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and high levels of perseverance and sustained concentration. All pupils work very well together and are clearly involved and engaged in their learning. Staff work very effectively with pupils who have specific, and sometimes quite complex, difficulties and barriers to their learning. Those pupils learn successfully and make outstanding progress. Pupils with additional needs are identified quickly and benefit from high-quality intervention strategies.

All pupils say they feel extremely safe in school and that bullying is extremely rare. Older pupils are very clear about internet and mobile 'phone dangers. Risk assessments are shared with the pupils and they all know that they can talk to school councillors, peer mediators or staff. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of the need for exercise, healthy food and drink, and good hygiene. They like very much the daily 'wake and shake' sessions and the wide range of sports activities which the school provides. Pupils enjoy planting, harvesting, cooking and eating a wide range of fruit and vegetables, including strawberries, lettuce and beetroot. They say they enjoyed thoroughly completing a healthy living project earlier this year, which resulted in them making much healthier food choices at lunchtime. Year 6 pupils are currently enjoying taking part in a 'learning for life' project in conjunction with the local police and health and youth workers. That is proving to be extremely successful in enhancing their understanding of the dangers of drugs, alcohol, sexual health risks and pressures surrounding change, which is preparing them exceptionally well for transition to secondary schools. Pupils are very proud of and highly committed to their school and local community. They play a key role in influencing school decisions and their own learning as well as in impacting on and responding to the needs of their local community. For example, Year 6 and Year 2 pupils act as buddies to new pupils in school and peer mediators maturely settle friendship disputes at break and lunchtimes. Pupils are currently working with local councillors and residents to identify the town's

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future needs. Staff and pupils are in their fourth year of supporting a 24-hour charity event and raise an impressive sum of money each year for this.

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	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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' excellent subject knowledge and high expectations ensure that lessons are exciting, stimulating and, in most cases, extremely challenging. There are a few rare occasions in the Year 1 and Year 2 classes when the more-able pupils are given the same tasks as the average-attaining pupils, which do not extend their writing skills. Mostly, however, pupils are engrossed and highly active learners and their work is tailored very carefully to meet their various capabilities. Teachers' planning is very detailed and shows exactly how the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are to be met. Lessons move at a swift pace and pupils' interest and engagement are captured by interesting resources and stimuli. The use of assessment information is excellent. Pupils throughout the school know their literacy and numeracy targets and exactly how to improve their work. Classrooms are rich learning environments, with informative 'working walls' which display useful vocabulary and learning targets. In an outstanding literacy lesson, pupils demonstrated high degrees of personal responsibility for their own learning as maturely they identified their own success criteria for non-chronological report writing. The headteacher and staff have worked successfully to devise an innovative curriculum. They have focused primarily on raising pupils' attainment and

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achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, but this has not been to the detriment of other subjects. Outstanding cross-curricular links are evident in all classrooms and individual staff have inspired pupils with specific topics and ideas. For example, Year 4 pupils are currently very enthusiastic about their philosophy lessons, in which they discuss the merits of a large room with no windows or a small room with lots of windows confidently. Pupils enjoy and benefit considerably from an extensive range of visits and visitors. The governing body and friends of the school subsidise visits heavily to ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to take part. The excellent 'Forest School' is run by enthusiastic and qualified staff, who provide exciting activities such as mud painting and tree and leaf exploration.

Pupils receive exemplary care because each child and their family are known, respected and valued. Highly effective support for all pupils enables them to make the very best of all the opportunities provided by the school. The daily breakfast club is run by friendly, smiling staff who ensure pupils receive high-quality extended care. Staff provide excellent support to pupils with additional needs. Since 2009, the school has hosted a project to reach out to those families who do not engage with the school or their children's education. A full-time pastoral worker and a part-time specialist family nurse support, engage and empower those parents and carers. The project has been highly successful in helping parents and carers to manage children's behaviour, reduce isolation and make healthier food and lifestyle choices. Consequently, as the adults' self-esteem and confidence have grown, the adults have become better equipped to look after their families and much more involved in supporting their children's learning. One parent commented 'I am extremely impressed by the school and what they do for my children and me. Staff are exceptionally good in dealing with the children's emotional well-being as well as their education needs. I would not send my children anywhere else.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's outstanding and determined leadership has been a key factor in creating an extremely ambitious staff team which has improved the outcomes for all pupils. There are highly effective policies and procedures and an excellent development plan underpinning all aspects of the school's work. Senior leaders provide a relentless and effective focus on improving teaching, which results in high-calibre teaching and learning throughout the school. Senior leaders and staff are fully aware of any difference in progress and attainment between groups of pupils. Through the use of early identification strategies and highly effective interventions, the school has succeeded in narrowing the achievement gap. The outstanding support for potentially vulnerable pupils shows the

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school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, which enables all pupils to achieve very well, whatever their circumstances or difficulties. Staff ensure that they break down any barriers that might lead to gaps in learning and achievement. The governing body provides excellent support and guidance and makes a significant contribution to the school's development. Community cohesion is promoted very well, with an effective audit undertaken and excellent links with a multicultural inner city school which broaden pupils' understanding of life for children in different parts of the United Kingdom. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils exceed statutory requirements consistently. For example, groups of pupils accompany governors on their health and safety walks and note any potential dangers. Taking into consideration an impressive track record of school improvement, the high staff morale and its exceedingly ambitious and determined leadership, the school demonstrates an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills levels that are well below those of other four-year-olds nationally, especially in their language development. Children with language difficulties receive excellent support from a skilled teaching assistant who provides regular speech and language activities. The activities are delivered in a fun and friendly manner, so that children with expressive and receptive language difficulties learn happily to interact and communicate in a non-threatening environment. Good leadership and effective teaching ensure that most children achieve well, although their attainment is below the expected levels on entry to Year 1. Staff make learning fun and enjoyable. For instance, children were engrossed when their teacher put on a magic cloak to rub a key to enter an imaginary land. Children's interests and ideas are valued and linked to their learning. Parents and carers are also involved as they record 'wow' moments that have happened at

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home. The outdoor area immediately outside the classroom is used daily, but activities do not always include all the areas of learning, nor do they always reflect or reinforce indoor learning which limits children's progress. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the personal and learning needs of young children and a strong partnership is formed quickly with parents and carers. Liaison with the onsite children's centre is improving to enable children to have a smooth transfer on entry.

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

Just under half of the families responded to the questionnaire, which is an above-average proportion. Parents and carers expressed high levels of satisfaction with many aspects of the school. They all feel that teaching is good and almost all believe that their children are kept safe, that teaching is good, that their children are making good progress and are well prepared for the future. Inspectors endorse parents' and carers' positive views. A small number of parents and carers raised minor concerns, although there was no common theme among them. They were summarised and raised with the school without identifying any individuals.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Severnbanks 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 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 191 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	53	39	43	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	53	42	46	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	43	45	49	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	46	45	49	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	55	38	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	47	42	46	5	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	35	52	57	6	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)	32	35	52	57	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	37	50	55	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	37	45	49	7	8	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	35	42	46	10	11	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	43	47	39	43	6	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	46	43	47	4	4	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



30 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Severnbanks Primary School, Lydney GL15 5AU

We enjoyed visiting your school very much and I am writing to thank you for two very interesting days. We believe that you go to an outstanding school.

These are the things we found out.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard and play very happily together.
- You are taught extremely well and your lessons are fun and interesting. You work hard and this helps you to make outstanding progress.
- Your headteacher and staff lead and manage the school exceptionally well and they always want the best for you.
- You all enjoy learning very much and are given many exciting things to do. You learn a great amount because the adults always encourage you to do your very best.
- The adults keep you extremely safe in school.

There are just two areas where the school could be even better. We think that the headteacher and staff need to make sure that more able pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are always given challenging work to do in writing. We also think that the Reception Year children need to have more exciting activities in their outdoor area.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and by keeping up your excellent standard of behaviour. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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