

Somerlea Park Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112498
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357114
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2011
Reporting inspector	David Evans

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Earnshaw
Headteacher	Karen Joyce
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 8 lessons taught by 8 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of staff, members of the governing body and the local authority, and discussions were held with several groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including pupils' work, minutes of meetings, progress monitoring records and school policies. The responses to 82 questionnaires from parents and carers, 27 questionnaires from staff and 137 questionnaires from pupils were scrutinised.

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

- What is the current quality of teaching and learning in the school and is there secure evidence that outcomes and attainment are improving?
- Are there improvements in leadership at all levels which are contributing to improvements in pupils' progress?
- Do procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning contribute to a good capacity for improvement?

Information about the school

This is an average size school. Most pupils are of White British background; there are very few from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is above that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than in most schools. Awards include the Sports Active Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Bronze Eco award and Healthy Schools status. An acting deputy headteacher has been in place since January 2011.

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

Somerlea Park Junior School provides a satisfactory education. Attainment is low as a result of pupils not making enough progress in earlier years. However, the rate of progress has accelerated rapidly because of improved provision this year, including that of the many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as a consequence of more focused support. Although attainment remains low it is rising quickly and achievement this year is satisfactory. This is an improving school that is emerging well from a period of upheaval. The changes in teaching staff and senior managers in the last few years have impeded improvement since the last inspection. In spite of these challenges, the school is now in a position to move forward. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and its priorities are well founded. This, combined with the commitment of key staff and the rapid improvement achieved in some weak areas of the past, for example pupils' behaviour and a high level of exclusions, indicates that the school has satisfactory capacity for improvement. Pupils attend school regularly and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and of the importance of a healthy diet.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory and the proportion of teaching that is good is rising. Staff, including the large number in support roles, have good relationships with pupils and offer them lots of encouragement and praise that helps develop their self-esteem. However, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils know their targets or the levels at which they are working and pupils do not understand what they need to do to improve their work. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with strengths in pastoral care, particularly for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Members of the governing body and subject leaders are supporting senior managers well in the drive to improve teaching and learning. Much of this work is still at a relatively early stage, but the green shoots of improvement are showing, for example, in the improved outcomes in 2011.

Partnerships with parents and carers are inadequate. Leaders are aware that parents and carers have mixed views of the school and they have identified the need to improve communication and relationships with parents and carers, and encourage greater parental involvement. They are implementing a range of strategies to strengthen these aspects.

The school is now on a clear path of improvement with the aim, vision and systems to ensure the changes made are consistently applied and embedded across the school.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently make pupils aware of the levels they are working at and what is needed for them to reach the next level
 - ensuring that all pupils have challenging targets to achieve and a record of when they reach them
 - instigating effective routines for setting new targets as soon as existing ones are met.
- Work more effectively with parents and carers to ensure that:
 - they are aware of current systems available for communication between the school and themselves
 - they feel confident to come into school and engage with teachers and school leaders
 - the quality of the parents' pages on the school's website and the parents' forum encourage full parental participation in school life.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Outcomes for all pupils are satisfactory. The improving outcomes are the result of better teaching and an improved level of additional support for pupils, including one-to-one teaching, to prevent underachievement. As they move through the school, all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress and for a growing number of pupils progress is good. Pupils generally enjoy their time in school. The school has put a lot of effort into improving pupils' reading and writing and has had some success, as seen in the neat and accurate work in many books. Mathematics is also improving. Year 6 pupils made good progress when writing a conclusion to a story because there was a clear focus on learning through enjoyment and participation and pupils were very keen to read their stories to the class. Data show that, in recent years, pupils of White British heritage and many of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities made less progress than similar groups of pupils nationally. The inspection identified no major differences in the progress of these particular groups, or of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

While a few pupils have concerns, the behaviour of the large majority is satisfactory and improved behaviour in lessons is supporting better learning. Pupils know that poor behaviour is not acceptable and that staff take action when necessary. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to share their views and suggest where improvements might be made. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory social skills, readily engage with visitors and are eager to accept responsibilities. There are missed opportunities to promote good spiritual and cultural development, for example, in assemblies. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles, make healthy choices at lunchtimes, eat healthy snacks and take part in a good deal of sports. Attendance is now broadly average and the school has taken positive steps to increase this over the last year or so.

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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	4
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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Adults and pupils have positive working relationships which foster a supportive learning environment. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that support is deployed where it is most needed. Lessons have a clear structure and learning objectives and success criteria are shared effectively with pupils. In the lessons seen during the inspection where teaching was good, pupils were quickly engaged in their learning by a range of activities. Planning used assessments to build on previous learning and meet the needs of different abilities within the class. Where teaching is satisfactory, planning is less effective in meeting the range of abilities within the class and does not consistently take account of what pupils have learnt before. Because of this, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always as high as they should be. When targets are set in marking, pupils respond to them positively, showing that they have improved their understanding, but this practice is not consistently applied in all classes.

The curriculum is adequately matched to pupils' needs and the wider curriculum is supported by a range of partnerships, such as those for sporting activities. In areas of recent development such as the emphasis on improved reading skills it is contributing towards improved attainment. The emphasis on using writing skills across the curriculum, linked to topic work for example, is raising attainment in writing. Provision for developing numeracy and information and communication technology skills is satisfactory. Adults provide satisfactory support for pupils and systems to promote safeguarding are effective.

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A satisfactory system of rewards and sanctions has led to improvements in pupils' attendance. Transition arrangements for pupils joining and leaving the school are supportive.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are giving the school a clear sense of purpose by systematically tackling what needs to be done to raise standards. The local authority and the seconded deputy headteacher have given valued support to the headteacher. This has helped to stabilise the school and give it clear direction for improvement. Partnerships with parents and carers are inadequate because the school has not previously ensured that they are fully involved in the life and work of the school. This partnership is improving slowly as a result of new initiatives, such as the improved school website and a new text messaging system.

Rigorous systems are in place to track the progress of pupils throughout the year and leaders monitor this regularly. Where underachievement is identified, a range of strategies and support mechanisms are used to address this. The school's analysis of the progress of different groups is thorough. As a result, planned actions are closing gaps in achievement, reducing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.

Members of the governing body have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are playing a more pivotal role in the school's development, exercising greater challenge to leaders and contributing towards the school's drive for improvement. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Policies ensure that appropriate procedures and requirements to vet staff are fully applied. The school is actively promoting equalities and community cohesion within the school community. The school's plans to develop awareness of communities further afield are at an early stage of development.

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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	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

The proportion of questionnaires returned was above average. Parents and carers raised concerns over several aspects of the school's work, including behaviour, leadership and management and how well the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. However, inspection evidence does not fully support their views and shows that the school is implementing a number of strategies to ensure a closer partnership with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Somerlea Park 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 196 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	27	46	58	11	14	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	26	33	48	61	4	5	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	20	50	63	12	15	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	16	45	57	14	18	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	17	22	51	65	6	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	18	43	54	18	23	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	20	60	76	2	3	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)	17	22	42	53	18	23	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	13	45	57	16	20	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	10	28	35	33	42	6	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	10	36	46	28	35	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	10	13	33	42	25	32	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	19	40	51	18	23	3	4

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



15 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Somerlea Park Junior School, Alfreton, DE55 4JE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking with you, hearing your views and looking at the work you do. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education and you are making satisfactory progress in your work.

There are some positive things about the school.

You try to listen carefully to your teachers and your behaviour is satisfactory.

You have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy, shown at school meals and in taking part in extra-curricular sports.

Teaching is satisfactory but improving and more lessons are now good.

Your school council is doing a good job on your behalf.

The headteacher and staff know what needs to be done to improve further and are working hard to make it happen quickly.

There are a few things we have asked the school to do to make it better.

We are asking teachers to tell you the levels at which you are working and show you how you can improve.

We are asking the headteacher and staff to work with your parents and carers to develop more effective communication links with the school.

You should be proud of the part you have played in helping to improve your school. You can keep on helping by continuing to behave well and working hard in class.

Yours sincerely

David Evans

Lead inspector

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