

Somerset Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123695
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380713
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2011
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Yeo
Headteacher	Kevin Bryant
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2009
School address	Stockmoor Drive Bridgewater Somerset TA6 6AH
Telephone number	01278 422100
Fax number	01278 721400
Email address	office@somersetbridge.somerset.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	Forget Me Not Nursery
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	36
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	N/A

Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	22–23 September 2011
Inspection number	380713

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by 12 teachers and met with parents and carers, pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at its records, policies, assessments and questionnaires from pupils, staff and 82 parents and carers.

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

- How effective have the school's actions been to raise attainment?
- How well have leadership and management developed the capacity to deal with the issues posed by a rapidly changing and expanding school?
- Does teaching have the required consistency and quality to promote good learning?

Information about the school

Somerset Bridge Primary School is of average size but is expanding rapidly. In September 2010 it moved to new buildings and welcomed a new headteacher. About a half of the teaching staff were new to the school at the start of this term. The school has a new Nursery which provides childcare in the Early Years Foundation Stage; it was established in June 2011. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is growing and is above average. The largest group of these pupils has moderate learning difficulties.

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

Somerset Bridge Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It is experiencing a period of extremely rapid change and is quickly growing in size. The calm, effective leadership of the headteacher has helped the school weather these challenges. With many new staff, including a larger leadership and management team, he is fully aware that the challenge is now to move quickly forwards. Pupils' attainment has been broadly average throughout the school's changing circumstances. Satisfactory care and support systems and satisfactory teaching have enable all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to achieve satisfactorily.

While many lessons are of good quality, teaching is inconsistent. In particular some lessons lack pace and sufficiently challenging activities. Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively to promote learning in all phases of lessons and do not always take the initiative. However, pupils' good behaviour, their enjoyment of learning and very favourable classroom relationships all make positive contributions to progress. Pupils are clear that they feel safe and well cared for and adopt healthy lifestyles well. The curriculum meets requirements, but does not link subjects together sufficiently to offer consistently stimulating learning experiences.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a satisfactory start to their school lives and the new Nursery has numerous strengths. However, previously unreliable assessments have not given leaders and managers a sufficiently clear view of the area's strengths and weaknesses and this has limited their planning.

Since September 2011 an improved capacity in leadership and management has enabled the school to develop a clearer focus on areas of weakness and improvements are under way. Many essential systems to develop the school are now embedded and self-evaluation is increasingly effective. However, a more systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching, while planned, has not yet started. Senior leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school and most planning for the future is pertinent and sharp. However, this focus is relatively recent and has yet to have a significant impact on provision and achievement. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is therefore satisfactory.

About 40% of 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?

- By September 2012, improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - monitoring teaching with greater regularity and rigour to promote best practice
 - ensuring lessons provide appropriate challenge and pace for all pupils
 - improving the capabilities and deployment of teaching assistants.
- By April 2012, improve the way leaders and managers of the Early Years Foundation Stage evaluate children's progress and plan for the future.
- By September 2012, develop the curriculum to provide more links between subjects and a greater range of stimulating and creative activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The recent rapid growth in school numbers has been accompanied by an increasing proportion of pupils who face barriers to learning, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Despite this trend, over the last three years attainment has remained close to average, with no significant variations between different groups of pupils. Provisional national assessment results for 2011 confirm this pattern, but a dip in attainment in writing in Key Stage 2 has led to urgent action being taken by the school to reverse identified weaknesses in pupils' writing skills.

Pupils make satisfactory progress. They are keen to learn and work hard in all subjects. Good classroom relationships encourage a 'can do' atmosphere and, where teaching is at its most effective, progress is good. A good Year 5/6 mathematics lesson, for example, typified the strengths of better learning. Pupils' relationships with one another and their teacher were very positive. Well-planned activities kept all groups working at full stretch and pupils were keen to share their calculation strategies in the closing session, consolidating their good learning. However, this practice is inconsistent and some lessons do not focus on learning sufficiently so progress is slower. Given their starting points this pattern represents satisfactory achievement overall for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who receive good support.

Pupils respond well to adults and behave well; this makes a significant contribution to learning. The school has a positive ethos and pupils report that bullying is rare and well dealt with when it does crop up. Pupils understand what constitutes a safe situation and know how to act if faced with potential risks because the curriculum offers good information on many aspects of safety. Absences have fallen over the last three years but attendance remains broadly average. Persistent absence and unpunctuality are also declining.

Many pupils walk or cycle to school and most show a good grasp of the need for

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exercise and the importance of a balanced, nutritious diet. They are keen to contribute to school life, for example through the school council, and recognise their responsibilities for the wider world through raising funds for charity.

Good behaviour and positive relationships are a good testament to pupils’ strong social development. They show great interest in the values and beliefs held by other cultures, for example when looking at Spanish artefacts. They have a firm sense of right and wrong, encouraged by teachers’ consistent pupil management and recognition of success, celebrated in weekly achievement assemblies.

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	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	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

How effective is the provision?

The school has focused on the core subjects of English, mathematics and information and communication technology. However, plans are afoot to give pupils more opportunities to practise skills across other subjects. Visitors also help to enliven pupils’ experiences. For example local builders have spoken to pupils about safety issues that are very relevant in the local area, where so many new buildings are under construction. However, there are limited links between subjects and little creativity in planning, so some activities do not engage pupils. There is a good range of popular after-school clubs, both sporting and otherwise.

Lessons are characterised by a calm atmosphere and positive relationships. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy lessons. However, teaching is inconsistent. This is because of numerous staff changes and monitoring of teaching has not yet

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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established consistently high expectations. Nevertheless, there is much good practice. Teachers plan thoroughly so lessons offer varied activities and teachers use engaging ideas, such as puppetry, to enliven their delivery. In some lessons, however, teachers talk for too long and interest wanes. A lack of deadlines means that pupils are slow to finish tasks so the pace of learning falters. Questioning is not always well adapted to challenge those of different abilities. Teaching assistants engage with pupils but, while they are often deployed to help groups with their tasks, they are not sufficiently proactive throughout lessons.

Marking of work is thorough and offers pupils helpful advice. With pupils' performance now regularly reviewed, the school is starting to introduce targets to provide further guidance. Improved assessment information is used to track pupils' progress and to identify where there may be slippage. This information is also increasingly employed to trigger interventions, including one-to-one teaching for pupils facing difficulties, ensuring consistent progress across all groups.

Pupils say they feel well supported in school and teachers provide sympathetic guidance. The needs of the more vulnerable are well understood and tailored support ensures that the progress of those with, for example moderate learning difficulties, is similar to that of their peers. Good arrangements assist the numerous pupils who start at the school throughout the year after moving in to the area. Impartial advice and plentiful information enable pupils to make informed choices about secondary education. The school is working to raise attendance but does not fully analyse the effectiveness of the measures it takes.

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 have adapted well to rapidly changing circumstances. With a small leadership team in 2010/11, the headteacher and leaders managed the transfer to a new building, the establishment of a new Nursery, the rapid expansion of the school and associated staff changes very well and the school continued to run smoothly. With a larger, capable leadership team and new systems for self-evaluation, the school is poised to move forwards. Many of the systems introduced, such as the close tracking of progress, while comprehensive, are too new to have had a significant impact on pupils' outcomes. However, the school's identification and work with different groups of pupils have ensured satisfactory equality of opportunity. The school also tackles any discrimination effectively.

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The headteacher remains a key figure and his determination and ambition for the school are shared by staff. Thorough plans for the future are well targeted at addressing weaknesses. Recognised inconsistencies in teaching are starting to be tackled through pupil performance checks, now possible because of greater capacity among the expanded leadership team. Comprehensive lesson monitoring is about to commence. Systems to regularly review future plans, working with the governing body, are now in place.

The governing body supports the school and its new committee structure provides better opportunities to check provision. Most members know the issues facing the school and recognise that, in order to challenge rigorously, they must analyse school provision and pupils’ outcomes more thoroughly. The governing body ensures pupils are safe, checking the site is secure and that staff are appropriately trained. Safeguarding arrangements and policies meet requirements. The school is aware of pupils who may be at risk and acts decisively to ensure their well-being.

An essential priority of the school has been to develop its cohesion as an institution in rapidly changing circumstances. In this it has been successful, engaging well with pupils and adults as it develops. The school is aware that there are only limited opportunities for pupils to engage with others in contrasting environments at home and abroad and has plans to address this. Partnerships contribute to satisfactory outcomes for pupils by, for example, ensuring that members of the emergency services boost pupils’ understanding of how to act safely. Good links with secondary schools smooth pupils’ transition into Year 7. A new association with an outstanding local school has initiated plans that will benefit staff training, leadership and management at Somerset Bridge.

The school works hard to engage parents and carers in their children’s education and a favourable questionnaire response indicates that many are very satisfied with this. The school engages with parents and carers over the rapidly changing school environment and over planned curriculum changes. However, it has not provided frequent information on pupils’ progress; with improved assessment procedures the school now has reliable information that it intends to regularly share with parents and carers.

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	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage, benefiting from thorough induction procedures. There are strong relationships with parents and carers, one of whom commented that home visits, 'make the child more confident and the staff more aware of the whole person'. Children's starting points vary but they make satisfactory progress and most move into Year 1 with average attainment. In the Nursery children are already beginning to share and take turns. In the Reception class children develop independence and cooperation because they are often stimulated by interesting experiences. One child commented, 'This is fun' when searching for dragons' eggs with his group, who chose to take scales to weigh the eggs they found.

All children freely access indoor and outdoor learning while undertaking varied activities. When classrooms are filled with excitement as a result of stimulating activities, children initiate work and play and later share their experiences at home. However, this is variable and some sessions are routine and progress is less rapid. Teaching has strengths but is inconsistent, with some sessions over dominated by adults.

The new Nursery meets all requirements for registration; provision for these youngest children is good. The nursery manager has quickly established good leadership and very effective systems and procedures. These ensure that the children are safe and learning well.

There is a common sense of purpose between adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage; they work well to ensure children's safety and welfare. Provision for children facing barriers to learning is effective. Limited leadership capacity last year meant that self-evaluation activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage were restricted. The school recognises that its assessment information is not always accurate and this has made it difficult to develop relevant plans for the future. However, improvements in staff deployment mean that these concerns are now being tackled.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very happy with the school. An overwhelming majority of those who responded to the inspection questionnaire think the school meets their child’s needs, believe their child is making enough progress and are happy with their child’s experience. A few raised concerns about the pace of change but many were impressed with the way the headteacher and staff have coped. Inspection evidence confirms that the school is managing the changes well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Somerset Bridge 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 275 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	63	28	34	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	66	27	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	37	45	40	49	3	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	49	37	45	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	61	26	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	40	45	33	40	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	45	40	49	3	4	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	43	36	44	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	39	48	37	45	0	0	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	50	32	39	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	49	34	41	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	59	28	34	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	51	62	29	35	0	0	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



24 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Somerset Bridge Primary School, Stockmoor Drive,
Bridgewater TA6 6AH**

Many thanks for the welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you.

Somerset Bridge provides a satisfactory education. As you know, things are changing quickly in the school and we think that you and the staff are coping well. We were impressed with your sensible behaviour; we are sure you know that these good attitudes do a lot to help you learn. Your attainment is at similar levels to other pupils of your age and you make satisfactory progress.

We have asked the school to make a number of improvements.

- To make teaching more consistent so that all lessons are good we would like the school to check up on teaching more often. This should help lessons become more challenging and run at a faster pace. We would like teaching assistants to be more involved in all parts of lessons.
- Leaders and managers in the Early Years Foundation Stage should check up more thoroughly on children's progress so they can plan better for the future.
- The mixture of subjects you study should be planned to offer you more exciting learning opportunities.

You can help by maintaining your positive attitude to learning. Once again, many thanks for all your help. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan
Lead inspector

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