

Southfield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137460
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	386090
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2011
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Edwards
Headteacher	Nicola Anderton
Date of previous school inspection	No previous inspection
School address	Shrivenham Road Highworth Swindon SN6 7BZ
Telephone number	01793 762210
Fax number	01793 762210
Email address	head@southfield-jun.swindon.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 10 lessons led by eight teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school planning, assessment data, pupils' work, the school's checks on the quality of teaching and a number of policy documents. The team received 91 questionnaires from parents and carers and also evaluated those from pupils and the school staff.

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

- How far key leaders and the governing body have set highly challenging targets for achievement and the success so far in meeting them.
- How effectively the system of assessment and the use of its resulting data support pupils in increasing their achievement.
- Whether partnerships with other groups internationally are effective enough to foster good cultural development.

Information about the school

This is an average size junior school. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The most common of these needs is some form of learning difficulty. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school has Eco Schools and Healthy Schools status.

The school has not previously been inspected since changing its status in September 2011 to an academy. At the same time, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post. The senior leadership team is also new, as are a number of members of staff.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Southfield Junior is a good school. The new leadership team has made a very successful start by preserving the strengths of its predecessor and in promptly making changes to boost pupils' achievement. The governing body has a very accurate perception of the school's strengths and weaknesses and, crucially during this period of significant change, is probing in its analysis of the school's performance. The updated priorities for school improvement focus squarely on the essential next steps for the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school, work hard, make good progress and are proud of their achievements.

Attainment is above average and is rising. The work in books across all four years is well presented, spelt accurately and shows good productivity. Some writing is of excellent quality. Mathematically, the focus is as much on the ability to solve problems and make investigations as it is on arithmetical skill. The pupils do well in these aspects of the subject. The more-able pupils are, like the other pupils, set demanding targets. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy their learning and are enthused to make good progress. These good achievements stem from well-taught lessons, high expectations of work and behaviour, and effective use of resources, particularly teaching and non-teaching staff, and time.

Pupils respond well in lessons, and their good behaviour extends to other activities in the school day. They have good alertness to healthy lifestyles and feel safe and secure in school. They have very good opportunities to contribute to the local community, although their links with people of different backgrounds further afield, especially overseas, are not as marked. Thus, the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory rather than good.

The curriculum is well planned, broad and relevant. School leaders are working to extend its focus on creativity, make it more exciting, develop more out-of-school activities and strengthen links between subjects. The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils, particularly those with barriers to learning.

All staff and members of the governing body are ambitious for the school's future as an academy. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of development, and provide a strong drive for improvement. They have good understanding of the views of parents and carers, who in the main are well engaged in the education of their children and appreciative of the school's work. The careful auditing of the views of

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others is a significant factor in the realistic improvement priorities at present. There is good capacity to improve in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress by developing the curriculum so it consistently
 - increases pupils' creativity in learning
 - promotes pupils' great enthusiasm and excitement about learning
 - provides a well-balanced programme of out-of-school activities
 - includes stronger links between subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion by strengthening the opportunities for pupils to communicate with people of different cultures, beliefs and traditions, especially overseas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The above average attainment of pupils is evident from not only the data tracking their progress but equally in lessons and pupils' books. Key groups of pupils who may from time to time in the past have progressed less effectively have been the focus of successful improvement work. Thus, the girls are achieving as well as boys. While in some classes girls tend to be quieter than the boys, they nonetheless work just as well and reach similar attainment levels. The same holds for the very few pupils from Indian family backgrounds. There are currently some highly achieving pupils among them. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. In some cases, their achievement in mathematics exceeds that in English, but they are keen to learn new language skills and develop the necessary fluency well.

Achievement in writing has been a recent improvement priority in order to raise attainment. The school has had considerable success in meeting this priority. Among the sometimes impressive writing in books, a Year 3 pupil recounting a day in school wrote: 'I was working in my literacy book on a story about a disaster, meanwhile my friend next to me whispered in my ear 'You're a bad writer, you have spelt 'writer' wrong.''

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education because they achieve well. They are also enterprising. Through their own research and presentation skills, Year 5 have been able to convince local government not to close the nearby recreation ground. The Eco Schools award is upheld by pupils' great concern for the environment. They understand the need to use resources responsibly, to recycle where possible and to take care of the local area.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' good achievements in music contribute well to their cultural understanding. Singing is a particular talent, as shown when the pupils recorded their latest Christmas compact disc. Pupils' multicultural awareness is not yet as well developed. The

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programme of visits to different places of worship such as the Gurdwara helps broaden their empathy with other groups but such links are not yet frequent enough. Despite this, the pupils help each other to do well in school. The 'buddy' system is viewed warmly by the pupils as a way of supporting each other when difficulties occur.

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	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

School staff are working effectively to ensure that the tradition of above average attainment in its predecessor school is being maintained. In fact, the emphasis is on even higher attainment and the acceleration of progress. The results so far are positive. Pupils have a thirst for learning and, because behaviour is settled in class, the conditions for good achievement are in place. The quality of teaching is good. On occasion, teachers talk for too long, which reduces pupils' concentration and interest. When the pupils have the time and opportunity to work at practical or investigational tasks, their interest redoubles. Many lessons include such opportunities and pupils then maturely manage their own learning, work well in partnership with other pupils and complete their tasks in good time.

The use of assessment to support learning is good. The progress of pupils is tracked carefully to ensure they meet their challenging academic targets. Classrooms display clearly the targets for achievement, lessons are used well to review learning and identify the next steps. Much of the marking of books includes helpful comments on what has been achieved and what must come next, although this is not consistent in

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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all classes.

The contrast in effectiveness between teacher-dominated and pupil-focused learning has been identified as a reason why the curriculum deserves improvement. The emphasis on pupil-centred learning is a key criteria of the curriculum to be introduced in spring 2012. Parents’ and carers’ comments about homework, out-of-school activities, particularly sports, and excitement in learning have also been taken into account in planning the new approach. Parents and carers are well involved in measures to ensure good care, guidance and support for their children. Outside agencies are similarly included, providing effective support to ensure pupils attend regularly and are able to take a full part in lessons and other school events.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

Although it is early in the term of office for the headteacher and deputy headteacher, they have made a successful start. They quickly identified their own priorities for improvement, based on accurate assessment of pupils’ achievement, thorough tracking of progress and good procedures to check the effectiveness of the school’s work. Already a number of improvement initiatives are proving positive. The ‘Going for Gold’ approach to the achievement of challenging academic targets is prominently displayed in every classroom. It is used as the basis for curriculum and individual lesson planning, which is resulting in provision that is focused more on best achievement by all pupils. The approach is not yet written as a key element of the school improvement plan, although the governing body is alert to the need for this.

The governing body has good expertise and experience to challenge constructively school leaders about how well the school is improving. Its business is conducted efficiently, ensuring, for example, that the school is responsive to demands about the safeguarding of pupils. Because the governing body ensures the school abides by the most recent guidance, keeps training and documentation up to date and that all adults in school are watchful, safeguarding is good. The governing body also pursues the promotion of community cohesion appropriately. At present, the focus on life, culture, faith and tradition in different societies overseas is not comprehensive. In answer, school leaders have firm, recorded improvement priorities for the development of direct links between the pupils and those in a school in The Gambia.

Pupils are provided with good equality of opportunity, whether academically or

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socially. They do well in school. There is no tolerance of any form of discrimination, bullying or prejudice. The pupils are testament to this in their attitudes, helpfulness and behaviour towards others.

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	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

About one third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is towards the upper end of an average return. Generally, they show positive views of the school, whether recorded in the ticks on the questionnaire or their comments. A very small minority of parents and carers were concerned about the progress their children were making and a few did not agree that the school took account of their views. There were some written comments showing concerns about the effectiveness of homework, especially the usefulness of the ‘learning logs’ and their children’s excitement in learning. Inspection evidence indicates that both senior leaders and the governing body are aware of these issues and have appropriate plans for improvement.

In contrast to the concerns, there were at least as many parents and carers who wrote positively about the school. They noted the approachability of staff, including the new headteacher, in listening to and responding to their views. Several commented on the improvements introduced this term by the new headteacher. Additionally, parents and carers of the youngest pupils in school are clear in their praise for the school’s efforts to welcome and settle them into good learning. These positive thoughts tally with the evidence from inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Southfield 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 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 227 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	66	29	32	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	60	66	31	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	37	41	41	45	12	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	37	48	53	6	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	38	42	48	53	3	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	28	31	51	56	10	11	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	32	59	65	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	34	52	57	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	38	42	42	46	7	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	33	46	51	8	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	29	43	47	11	12	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	47	33	36	4	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	50	55	30	33	3	3	2	2

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.

14 November 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Southfield Junior School, Highworth SN6 7BZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. You were helpful and shared your ideas about the school willingly. We have written a report to show how well the school is doing. In it, you will read about a number of strengths. The main ones are:

- Southfield Junior is a good school.
- You do well in your work and make good progress.
- You are well behaved, take good care of each other and enjoy school.
- You are well taught.
- You feel safe in school because you are well looked after.
- Your new headteacher and deputy headteacher have made a good start to improving the school further.
- All the adults in school want to help you do even better.

To help the school improve your education, we have identified two things for your teachers to work on now.

- Make your curriculum more exciting so you always learn new things in an interesting way.
- Give you more chances to find out about the beliefs, culture and lives of children in other countries.

We know you will help make these improvements. All of you can start by making a list of what makes the best lesson. Share it with your parents, carers and teachers.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington
Lead Inspector

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