

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SOUTH GREEN INFANT SCHOOL**

Billericay

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115039

Headteacher: Mrs M. Knight

Reporting inspector: Mrs M. S. Summers  
25455

Dates of inspection: 20 – 21 November 2000

Inspection number: 224499

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ganels Road Billericay Essex
Postcode:	CM11 2TG
Telephone number:	01277 651478
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G. Galer
Date of previous inspection:	27 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

South Green Infant School caters for pupils between the ages of three and seven. There are 141 pupils in the main school and 56 children who attend the nursery part-time. The school is the only one in the town to have a nursery. Sixty-five children in the nursery and Reception classes are below five years of age. Most pupils come from the immediate area but about a fifth travel in from neighbouring towns and villages. The background of pupils is generally above average although their levels of attainment are average overall when they first start in the nursery. The percentage of families entitled to free school meals is below average and there are very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds or for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs, 11.2 per cent, is much lower than average and there are very few pupils with statements of special educational need. A new headteacher was appointed in September 1999 and the governing body split from the junior school at the beginning of this year.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school. Strong leadership and very good teaching enable pupils to reach high standards in their work by the time they leave the school. The good examples set by all adults enable pupils to develop very good relationships with one another and learn effectively about the value of hard work. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Teachers make lessons exciting and, as a result, pupils are very well motivated and work hard to do their best.
- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future and leads her staff well; she is ably supported by her deputy, subject leaders and the governing body.
- The curriculum is very well organised and pupils receive a wide range of interesting and stimulating experiences which enables them to develop their learning effectively as they move through the school.
- All members of staff work hard to make the school inviting and attractive to pupils and this helps them feel relaxed and ready to learn.

#### **What could be improved**

- The standards in reading in the national tests for seven year olds.
- The procedures for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has improved well since its last inspection in January 1997 and looks likely to continue to improve in the future. High standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been maintained, despite a sudden drop in the reading and mathematics levels reached by pupils in the national tests this year. This was because the year group contained a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs who reached lower levels in the tests. However, because of the high priority given to the teaching of writing, these children achieved very good levels for their capabilities. High standards in art and music have been maintained. National tests show that pupils are reaching higher levels in spelling and that more are reaching high levels in science. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, with most lessons observed being graded at least good and often very good. The issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed well. For example, curriculum planning is now very clear and ensures that pupils cover all subjects and areas of learning in sufficient depth. School development planning now contains better information to help governors judge the effectiveness of their spending.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	B	B	D	D
Writing	B	B	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	C	C

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E

Although there was a dip in standards in the national tests this year, the findings of this inspection are that the current pupils in Year 2 are on course to reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. School data showed that pupils last year were likely to reach lower standards than usual. The percentage of pupils in the year group with special educational needs was twice as many as usual but they had not been identified early enough for them to catch up and reach expected levels for their age in reading. Although the year group reached average standards in mathematics, they achieved very well in the writing test because writing is particularly well taught.

Pupils in Year 2 this year read simple texts confidently, showing good expression and understanding. Their writing shows confident use of vocabulary to add interest to their stories. They are all aware of simple punctuation and many are already using this accurately in their work. In mathematics, most pupils are able to add and subtract to twenty easily and many can work confidently with numbers to a hundred. Art work is above average and pupils achieve high standards in music, with most Year 2 pupils able to play simple tunes on the recorder and respond to basic musical notation.

Children aged under five make very good progress in the nursery and Reception classes, and, by the time they are five are above average in all areas of their learning.

Pupils achieve well in relation to the average levels at which they started in the nursery. However, the progress of pupils with special educational needs is affected by the school's reluctance to identify them early enough to ensure they receive enough support.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils in most classes are keen and ready to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils show good behaviour in class, in the playground and in the dining hall but in the assemblies seen during the inspection pupils did not always listen well enough and chattered.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are confident and take on responsibility well. They show consideration for one another in lessons and in the playground.
Attendance	Satisfactory although slightly below the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Of the 23 lessons observed during the inspection, more than half were very good or excellent, about a quarter were good and the rest were satisfactory. The quality of teaching in the nursery and Reception classes was never less than good and, in most cases, was very good. In these classes, the teachers have very good knowledge of the needs of young children and how to help them learn. They plan stimulating activities which cover all the necessary areas of learning, and, in the Reception class, move children on appropriately to National Curriculum work.

Literacy and numeracy are very well taught, with teachers planning carefully to provide interesting work which enables pupils to learn effectively. Brisk introductory sessions catch pupils' attention quickly and most are eager to answer the teachers' questions and complete their work to a high standard. Teachers manage their pupils very well and make lessons interesting and exciting which means that pupils concentrate well and work hard. Lessons are well organised and teachers assess what pupils have learned by asking questions or checking through their work with pupils beside them. In this way they are able to tell pupils how to improve and the pupils respond well to this advice. Good links between subjects and the emphasis on practical work mean that pupils are interested and eager to learn. Teachers provide well for higher attaining pupils and those who have been identified as gifted or talented. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good provision in the nursery, where the new teacher is identifying their needs quickly and providing good opportunities for them to develop those aspects which have been identified as being weak. Those pupils identified with special educational needs in Year 2 also make very good progress because of the well-organised and focused provision made by their class teachers and by additional teaching staff. However, a few pupils in the Reception and Year 1 classes have either not been identified as having special educational needs or have not had their needs assessed accurately enough and are not making enough progress in literacy and numeracy.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is very well organised and ensures pupils develop their knowledge and skills in all subjects as they move through the school. Very effective links between subjects make learning relevant and interesting for pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Systems to identify these pupils and assess their needs are unsatisfactory. Most teachers are not involved enough in assessing and planning for these pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school plans effectively to help pupils make progress and take part in the full range of learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good opportunities for pupils' cultural development through work in subjects such as art and geography. Pupils learn good moral values and social skills, often through the good examples provided by adults in the school. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a safe and caring environment for its pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has clear ideas about how the school needs to develop and shares these effectively with her staff. The deputy is performing an effective role and provides a very good example for her colleagues. Subject leaders are carrying out their duties well and ensuring that the curriculum continues to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The new governing body has set up good systems which help it carry out its responsibilities effectively. Governors visit regularly to monitor the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school collects and analyses data well to evaluate its performance in comparison with other schools. The quality of teaching is monitored rigorously and regular feedback given to teachers to help them refine their performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans well for its development and uses its funds effectively to improve provision for the pupils. Governors monitor school spending regularly and consider a range of different spending options in order to achieve the best value for their money.

The school is well staffed with experienced teachers and a good number of teaching assistants. The accommodation is spacious and well maintained and used very effectively. The school is very well resourced with a good range and number of books and equipment to support teaching and learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with any concerns.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of their children.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become responsible.</li> <li>• They receive good information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities on offer to children outside school time.</li> </ul>

The inspection agrees with the positive views expressed by parents, although a few pupils with special educational needs are not being identified early enough and making sufficient progress. The school provides recorder and orchestra clubs and a cooking club, all of which take place at lunchtime and the inspection finds that this provision is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Teachers make lessons exciting and, as a result, pupils are very well motivated and work hard to do their best.**

1. Teachers in the nursery and Reception classes have very clear understanding of how young children learn and plan a range of experiences which cover all the nationally recommended areas of learning for these children. In a lesson in the nursery, the teacher focused on the children's language and literacy skills effectively when she shared a 'Big Book' with them, asking questions to encourage them to observe the pictures and listen carefully. Young children in the Reception class continue to receive exciting opportunities to engage them in their learning. For example, the teacher used their experience of a walk in the woods to encourage them to find out about hedgehogs using reference books, to sort out leaves they had collected and to make homes for their clay hedgehogs. These children were keen and interested in the activities and produced work of a high standard.

2. In other classes in the school, teachers show a wealth of ideas and experience in the opportunities which they provide for their pupils. In a very good Year 1 design and technology lesson, for example, the pupils used skills which they had learned previously to design and make a model with a moving part. The teacher focused on animals, as this was the class topic, and encouraged pupils to look at pictures and books and use their existing knowledge to help them. One pupil made a crocodile with a mouth which opened, one made a zebra with a wagging tail and another made an ostrich with a nodding head. The way the teacher had prepared for and planned the lesson meant that the pupils could concentrate on the learning objective of joining materials using split pins, but at the same time practise all the skills which they had learned previously. Literacy lessons on the use of direct language were brought to life by both Year 2 teachers who used the well-loved story of 'The Jolly Postman' to interest and motivate their pupils. Pupils extended their vocabulary well and developed their understanding of capital letters and full stops when they wrote advertisements to try and persuade the giant to buy items from their shop. The teachers' skilled questioning and lively presentation ensured that all pupils were concentrating and benefited from the lesson. They were all anxious to read out their work at the end of the lesson to try to persuade the teacher, who had donned large boots and become the giant, to buy their produce.

**The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future and leads her staff well; she is ably supported by her deputy, subject leaders and the governing body.**

3. It is clear from the developments which have taken place over the last year that the headteacher has firm knowledge of what makes an effective school. In the last year, the curriculum has been completely reviewed. This has involved subject leaders taking a more active part in identifying weaknesses and planning for improvement. Their roles have had to be extended considerably and the headteacher has accomplished this successfully. Subject leaders have welcomed these opportunities and are carrying out their duties well. The role of the deputy headteacher has been extended to give her overall responsibility for the curriculum and she has assumed this very well, showing great enthusiasm and expertise.

4. A school policy on monitoring and evaluation has been implemented after close liaison and discussion between all members of staff and governors. This now ensures that the quality of teaching is monitored carefully through a series of observations by the headteacher, deputy and subject leaders and that useful feedback is given to teachers to help them improve aspects of their work. The curriculum is monitored by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, all subject leaders and by the governors, whose system of regular visits ensures that they are developing a clear knowledge of how the curriculum is taught. Governors are able to see how teachers are implementing school policies and can see the effects of these on the children's learning. The

interest that governors take in school life provides encouragement for the headteacher, teachers and pupils. The results of national tests are analysed in depth to identify where there are weaknesses and the headteacher and staff try to put these right as quickly as possible.

5. The school development plan is mapped out clearly and includes costings and success criteria to help governors judge how effectively they have spent their money. The finance committee monitors school spending regularly. The school's system for performance management is in place and all teachers and the headteacher have agreed targets by which governors can judge their performance.

6. The clear and focused way in which the headteacher has identified and planned for these developments over a relatively short space of time, whilst forming very effective relationships with the whole school community, shows very effective leadership and management skills.

**The curriculum is very well organised and pupils receive a wide range of interesting and stimulating experiences which enables them to develop their learning effectively as they move through the school.**

7. Over the last year, the curriculum has been reviewed to take account of new national guidelines, as well as to map out how all the different subjects can be linked to make the learning experience useful and interesting for the pupils.

8. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented very effectively; teachers are planning for these aspects well and also providing many valuable opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in other subjects. For example, work on display in Year 2 showed sensitive use of language and a good range of vocabulary as pupils wrote about how they might feel as soldiers in the trenches during the First World War. Although the lesson encompassed history as well as aspects of personal and social education, the teachers had seized upon the opportunity to encourage their pupils to improve aspects of literacy.

9. The school curriculum plan shows clearly when and how each subject will be taught to pupils as they move through the school. It means that new staff can see what the school expects them to teach but also reassures teachers that, by following the plans, they are covering the whole curriculum. The school is currently reviewing the plans to see how aspects of personal and social education can be included.

10. A significant feature of the school is the emphasis it places upon multi-cultural education. This is observed in displays and children's work throughout the whole school - in classrooms, in corridors and in the hall. This emphasis is particularly important in a school which is predominantly white. Work in geography and art on display shows pupils learning to appreciate a wide variety of cultures and traditions and displays of fabrics, musical instruments and books in prominent places around the school ensures that pupils' attention is constantly engaged in this aspect of their learning.

11. Visits into the local community as well as visitors to the school make learning come further alive for the pupils and develop their understanding of the community at large.

12. The emphasis on music and art in the school ensures that pupils gain a very good understanding of the creative and imaginative elements of the curriculum. Nearly all the Year 2 pupils attend recorder club at lunchtime, taken by three members of staff and many attend the school orchestra, where they learn to play tuned percussion to accompany the singing in assembly.

**All members of staff work hard to make the school inviting and attractive to pupils and this helps them feel relaxed and ready to learn.**

13. Pupils enjoy a very positive start to the school day when they are welcomed by the headteacher each morning as they come into school. She is on hand at the front door to greet them and speak to parents should they have any concerns. Pupils in Year 2 with special educational needs gather in the entrance hall area where they begin their day with reading practice with the teacher who provides additional support for these children.

14. The school building is clean and well maintained and visual displays on the walls provide interest as well as valuing the pupils' work. In each classroom, most subjects are represented in the displays, from maps of pupils' journeys to school in geography, to graphs and pictures of themselves drawn using computers. Pupils are encouraged to develop their learning through interactive displays, for example in the library, where mathematical equipment is provided for pupils to answer questions about animals they saw on a recent visit to Marsh Farm. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to ensure that pupils' work is displayed extremely attractively and pupils value this and are proud to point out their work to visitors. This encourages them to develop self-confidence and a sense of pride in the school.

15. The outdoor areas are well organised and provide a range of opportunities for pupils to play and learn. The play house is currently being used as a 'Fire Station' and encourages children in the nursery to play imaginatively and develop good personal and social skills. There are good levels of playground supervision at lunchtime and pupils generally play happily together, with positive encouragement from the midday assistants.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The standards that pupils gained in the national tests in reading in 2000, which were below average.**

16. Between 1996 and 1999 standards in reading were above average but they fell to below average in the 2000 national tests. The school had predicted this drop by analysing the results of assessments made when the children began in the Reception class as well as tracking their progress through Reception and Year 1. The year group had more than double the number of pupils identified with special educational needs than that normally expected and almost half of the pupils were summer born and had been in the Reception class for only one term. Additional support was given to those pupils in Year 2 with special educational needs and to lower attaining pupils, but this was not enough to enable them to reach nationally expected levels.

17. In contrast, standards in mathematics were average and were high in writing. This was because class teachers were teaching these areas very well, whereas individual reading difficulties had not been identified early enough further down the school to enable extra support to be given in time for pupils to catch up. The school also identified that the group reading session was not being delivered as well as other aspects of the literacy hour.

18. The school has analysed the results of the tests carefully and has already put a number of strategies into place to improve provision. Teachers have reviewed the use of the group reading session during the literacy hour and are now using assessment sheets to track pupils' progress and identify any individual difficulties. Teaching assistants are now providing extra support in reading, enabling pupils to practise regularly with an adult. Parents are being encouraged to support their children more by reading with them at home and by helping in class if they are available. A recent meeting for the parents of Year 2 pupils showed them how they could help their children at home and a booklet of useful advice was sent to those who were unable to attend. A further meeting for parents of children in other classes is planned.

19. However, the reluctance to identify pupils with reading difficulties in the Reception and Year 1 classes still means that these pupils are not yet having their needs properly met.

## **The procedures for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs**

20. There have been no clear systems in place in the school to identify pupils with special educational needs and place them on the special educational needs register. There is a reluctance to identify pupils early and involve their parents in supporting the school's work to help them. The results of assessments made when children enter the Reception class are not yet being used effectively to identify any areas of learning difficulties and make careful provision for the children. These weaknesses mean that some pupils are making insufficient progress in Reception and Year 1.

21. Pupils in Year 2 who are identified with special educational needs make very good progress because of the carefully planned provision, which includes additional teaching in literacy and numeracy from a support teacher. Records of their progress against agreed targets are kept meticulously and parents are kept fully informed and their support requested. However, because their needs have been identified late, many will find it difficult to reach nationally expected levels by the end of the year.

22. The school has identified many of these weaknesses already and has recently reviewed its policy for special educational needs. Practice has been improved in the nursery, where the teacher is identifying such children quickly and agreeing targets for development with parents. Careful observations are made by all the adults in the nursery to measure the children's progress. There are plans in hand to use the results of teachers' assessments in the Reception and Year 1 classes to identify pupils' needs more quickly. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is reporting regularly to the full governing body on the success of the provision and has agreed with the headteacher a basic action plan for development.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) improve standards in reading in the national tests for seven-year-olds by continuing the good strategies already being implemented;
- (2) improve the identification and assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	4

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	52	26	13	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	28	141
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	15

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	38	26	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	37	38
	Girls	21	25	24
	Total	49	62	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (86)	97(86)	97 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	38	38
	Girls	23	24	24
	Total	59	62	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (88)	97 (95)	97 (98)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 7(87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	118
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.



## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	28.2

### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	114

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	460,669
Total expenditure	460,071
Expenditure per pupil	1,984
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,070
Balance carried forward to next year	35,668

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	169
Number of questionnaires returned	65

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	26	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	37	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	60	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	46	3	2	12
The teaching is good.	57	42	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	52	8	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	34	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	45	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	29	60	8	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	45	51	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	40	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	43	14	3	23