



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report
Southville Primary School

City of Bristol Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 1-2 March 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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Basic information about the school

Name of school:	Southville Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Advisory Headteacher:	Mrs S Theobald
Address of school:	Merrywood Road Southville Bristol BS3 1EB
Telephone:	0117 3772671
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr S Tims
Local education authority area:	City of Bristol
Unique reference number:	108964
Name of reporting inspector:	Mrs S Kara HMI
Dates of inspection:	1-2 March 2004

Introduction

1. Southville Primary School is situated in Southville, on the south side of Bristol. Most of the pupils are of white British heritage; the remainder are of dual heritage, other white backgrounds, or of Pakistani origin. The school is of average size, with 266 pupils on roll; of these, 54 pupils attend part-time in the nursery class. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average. At just over nine per cent, the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs has increased in the past eighteen months. There are no pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need and no pupils speak English as an additional language. Approximately 13 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is broadly average, as are the pupils' economic circumstances.

2. The school was inspected in November 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was likely to fail to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of November 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on two occasions to monitor the progress being made.

4. In March 2004 two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of November 2002.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- overall, the results in the 2003 national tests continued the school's success in achieving results that were above the national figures;
- the pupils' results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2003 were an improvement on those of 2002. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above was greater than that achieved nationally in reading and mathematics; however, in writing the proportion was below the national figure;
- at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above in English and in science was above the national figure and in mathematics the proportion was well above that achieved nationally;
- the pupils made well-above-average progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics, and in science the pupils' progress was very good and was in the top five per cent of schools nationally;
- standards in lessons were generally good with the pupils working at and sometimes above the age-related expectations;

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- the pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school were good and often very good;
 - attendance and punctuality have improved and attendance is close to the national average. The local education authority (LEA) has provided very good support to the school in this area of its work;
 - provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The care and support for pupils is good, childcare protection procedures are in place and health and safety practice is secure;
 - the quality of the teaching has improved significantly since the inspection in 2002 and is often good. However, the teachers do not always provide the pupils with sufficient opportunities to investigate and find things out for themselves;
 - the quality of the provision in the nursery is very good;
 - the school has developed a good assessment system which is well supported by informative descriptive characteristics for each National Curriculum level;
 - the leadership and management of the school have improved at all levels since the inspection in 2002. The acting headteacher has provided very good and often inspirational leadership. Her organisational skills are excellent. The senior management team is working effectively and has the confidence of the staff;
 - the co-ordinators for English and mathematics have developed their role but there is still more to be done;
 - the governing body is well led. The governing body is at full strength and is effectively engaged in the life and work of the school;
 - the school is increasingly reflective in all aspects of its work and the skills of monitoring and evaluation are practised by all of the staff;
 - links with the parents and the community have improved significantly compared to those described in the inspection of November 2002; they are now good;
 - the school has received very good support from the LEA.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to improve the quality of the teaching so that it is consistently good;

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- further develop the roles and responsibilities of the subject co-ordinators especially in the core subjects;
 - consider ways to engage the pupils more actively and independently in their own learning.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. Overall, the results in the 2003 national tests continued the school's success in achieving results that were above the national figures.

8. The pupils' results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2003 were an improvement on the 2002 results. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2 or above, rose significantly in reading to 94 per cent which places the results above the national figure and well above the average for schools in similar contexts. Ninety seven per cent of the pupils achieved Level 2 or above in mathematics; this was a small increase over the previous year but above that achieved nationally. In the writing tests the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 improved to 76 per cent but remained below the national figure. The trend in the national curriculum average points score has been above the national trend over the last three years.

9. In English, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above, the standard expected by the end of Year 6, rose to 85 per cent, which was above the national figure. In mathematics the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 fell to 88 per cent but it remained well above the national figure. In science the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 fell to 94 per cent but also remained well above the national figure. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 or above in science is noteworthy, it rose significantly from 52 per cent to 68 per cent of the pupils.

10. The results in the 2003 national tests in English and mathematics indicate the pupils in Year 6 made well-above-average progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2; in science the pupils' progress was very good and was in the top five per cent of schools nationally.

11. Pupils enter the school with above average attainment and pupils who enter from the school's nursery class begin the reception year with well above average attainment.

12. Standards in lessons were generally good with the pupils working at and sometimes above the age-related expectations. The school has carefully analysed the 2003 national test results as well as the optional test papers taken by some of the pupils. Clear and well-structured plans to support the progress of individuals as well as whole year groups have been drawn up.

13. Standards in English are good. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils develop their ideas in sentences using descriptions and connectives. The pupils write for a variety of purposes and audiences. For example, a letter written by Year 2 pupils to a fictional character living in the Isle of Struay was developed in detail, and included a geographical study of the area. The pupils' handwriting is correctly formed with some consistency in joining letters. The pupils spell common words accurately and punctuate sentences correctly. The more able

pupils use the apostrophe correctly to show omission and possession. Year 2 pupils read aloud expressively and with comprehension.

14. At the end of Key Stage 2, Year 6 pupils write in a range of styles and describe characters and settings imaginatively. The pupils write in paragraphs, structure autobiographies and stories well and sustain ideas. Their handwriting is joined and legible and some pupils are beginning to develop personal styles. Much of the pupils' writing is grammatically correct and spellings are usually accurate. The pupils read confidently with expression and extend their reading through personal choices.

15. Standards in mathematics are good. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils recognise and order numbers to 100. They solve simple problems involving money and add and subtract two-digit numbers confidently. The pupils recognise a variety of two-dimensional shapes and describe their properties. They use a good selection of methods of handling data to record investigations.

16. At the end of Key Stage 2, Year 6 pupils choose appropriate methods to solve problems and know different strategies to multiply two-digit numbers by another two-digit number; some pupils calculate using three-digit numbers. The pupils use multiplication and division accurately and express remainders as fractions; they add and subtract decimals to two places. The pupils check the reasonableness of their answers using their knowledge of number.

17. Standards in science are generally good. The pupils know a good range of scientific vocabulary. At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils were able to decide on a suitable method to test their hypotheses. They described the differences between the properties of various materials and classified solids, liquids and gases; they also identified various situations in which changes occur.

18. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are improving rapidly and are satisfactory. The pupils in Year 2 log into and out of programs, select appropriate fonts and use the mouse accurately. They use word processing to draft their writing and save their work. Year 6 pupils use the internet confidently to research a range of subjects and use word processing programs to produce journalistic styles of writing.

19. The teachers' ability to plan the teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs and for the gifted and talented pupils has improved, the teachers match the level of work to individual pupils' needs well.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school were good and often very good. The pupils were enthusiastic about their learning and showed pride and loyalty to their school. They were friendly and courteous in their response to adults and thoughtful towards each other. The members of the school council are excellent ambassadors for the school and take seriously their responsibilities in representing their peers.

21. All of the staff use effective strategies to promote good attitudes and behaviour. The use of rewards and sanctions is understood by everyone and while the rewards are frequently used the sanctions are rarely called upon. The school has not excluded any pupil in the last year.

22. The pupils worked hard in their lessons and concentrated well. They answered the teachers' questions enthusiastically. Homework is set appropriately and the Year 6 pupils were keen to show the research they had carried out on mountains. The pupils worked well independently and were equally good when working in pairs or in groups. From the youngest to the oldest pupils they are taught to share resources and ideas and to value each others' contributions. The very good quality of the relationships in the school is one of its great strengths. The pupils in Year 6 undertake the role of play leaders in the playground and also check for younger pupils who are sitting on the 'friendship bench' which indicates that they would like someone to talk to.

23. The personal, social and health education programme is good. It includes 'circle time' when the pupils talk about the issues that are affecting or concerning them. Themes and issues connected to personal, social and health education are often referred to in other areas of the curriculum.

24. Attendance and punctuality have improved and levels of attendance are close to the national average. The school has received very good support from the LEA in its efforts to improve attendance. The clear policy on when absence will be authorised, the very strong message to the parents and pupils about the importance of good attendance, and the clear registration procedures have helped improve attendance and reduce unauthorised absence. The families of pupils with an attendance level of less than 80 per cent have been both supported and challenged.

25. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, reflecting the school's provision. Bullying is a rare occurrence and when it does arise the majority of the pupils recognise that both the victim and the bully may need support. The school meets daily for an act of collective worship. A theme is chosen for the week and it is introduced by pupils from a particular year group. Visiting speakers are a regular part of the weekly programme. During the inspection, the assemblies were satisfactory with some good features. The pupils came into the hall to taped music. The teacher who had chosen the music explained his choice and described how he and his class had felt when they listened to it. The headteacher and members of Year 6 introduced the theme of 'finding out'. The local vicar continued the theme on the second day. Pupils of all ages contributed to the assemblies, and the worship concluded with a prayer that was broadly Christian but could be echoed by pupils of all faiths or no faith. The local church is increasingly being used as an additional resource, not only for religious education but, for example, as a venue to measure angles as part of work in mathematics. Members of Year 6 were very proud that they had been selected to read for the Lord Mayor's carol service in Bristol Cathedral.

26. The school council is an important group and all of the members take their responsibilities seriously. They played a key role in the recent appointment of the new headteacher. Their understanding of the task was at a sophisticated level as they looked to see how the candidates conducted themselves as well as judging the quality of their comments. Year 3 pupils showed a video that they had made themselves to inform parents that their school is a good place to learn. On a previous monitoring inspection the Year 6 pupils had used a computer program to make a presentation to explain how their school had improved in the last year.

27. The number and variety of extracurricular activities has increased. School visits, including a residential trip for the older pupils are a regular part of the school's programme. Displays and resources celebrate and show respect for multicultural Britain.

The quality of education

28. The quality of the teaching has improved significantly since the inspection in 2002. The quality of the teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in two lessons, satisfactory in nine, good in six and very good in one. The features of the most successful lessons included: clear objectives which focused sharply on the pupils' learning; well-planned activities which met the needs of all of the pupils, including the most talented and those who have special educational needs; realistic evaluations of the lessons with notes to direct future learning; the assessment of pupils' changing needs and the adaptation of plans to ensure continued progress. Where the teaching was good, the teachers used appropriate technical vocabulary and expected the pupils to use it in order to express their understanding of new ideas. Good concluding plenary sessions extended the pupils' learning or provided evidence of the pupils' achievement. In the less effective lessons, teachers talked too much and prevented the pupils from learning for themselves. For example, in science lessons in Key Stage 2 the pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to investigate for themselves. The teachers sometimes dominated the discussions and told the pupils what the outcomes would be. Teachers in Key Stage 1 did not prevent the pupils from talking to each other or calling out and so their listening skills were not developed. Teaching assistants were well briefed and individuals and groups of pupils benefited from their expertise and support. Overall, marking is good. It provides the pupils with useful feedback and supports their future improvement.

29. The co-ordinator for ICT has provided the staff with a valuable assessment system which includes informative descriptions of attainment at each National Curriculum level. The recording system enables the teachers to assess the pupils' attainment accurately and track their progress. Training has enabled the teachers to assess the pupils' levels of attainment with increasing accuracy.

30. With the help of the senior management team, the co-ordinator for English identified weaknesses in writing and devised a comprehensive action plan to address the issues. The teachers have been trained and resources have been improved. As a result, writing has significantly improved since last year. The co-ordinator has received training in monitoring teaching and learning in English but has yet to use these skills independently. Groups of pupils requiring extra support in reading and writing are guided through 'catch up' programmes taught by trained teaching assistants.

31. The co-ordinator for ICT has a clear vision of where improvement is needed and drew up a comprehensive action plan to address the weaknesses. The purchase of lap-top computers has enabled the teachers and pupils to develop their skills rapidly. The staff have appropriate expectations of the pupils and computers are in regular use in all subjects.

32. The provision in the nursery class is very good. The pupils settle quickly into routines and the adults have high expectations of them. The pupils listen attentively and with interest and as a result of meticulous planning, the pupils quickly acquire a solid foundation for future learning.

33. The classrooms are cramped and the building is dilapidated. There are many good examples of lively displays which improve the learning environment, both in classrooms and

corridors. The displays cover a good range of subjects, celebrate the pupils' achievements and are frequently used as teaching aids. The school has no grassed playing space and comparatively small hard play areas. The use of the outdoor space has been maximised with the support of the Parent and Teacher Association. Additional seating, raised flower beds, a small garden, a climbing wall, chalk boards, a wooden replica boat and, for the younger pupils, a suitable range of large play equipment have all greatly enhanced the potential for play and socialising outdoors.

34. Pupils are well cared for and supported by all of the adults and the pupils feel valued and proud of their school. Child protection procedures are in place and health and safety practice is secure.

35. Links with the parents and the community are good. They have improved significantly since the inspection of November 2002. Parents have good relationships with the teachers and the senior management team, they are able to speak to teachers at the beginning and the end of the day and are actively involved in the school's governance and fundraising activities. The acting headteacher has been central to the restoration of the climate of trust and confidence. The governing body continues to hold regular surgeries for parents but they have decreased in frequency and are more likely to be a discussion of how the school can be further improved rather than a forum for complaint or criticism.

Leadership and management

36. The leadership and management of the school have improved at all levels since the inspection in 2002. An advisory teacher from the LEA was appointed to the post of acting headteacher for the period that the school was likely to be subject to special measures. A substantive headteacher has recently been appointed and will take up post in September 2004. The acting headteacher has provided very good and often inspirational leadership. Her organisational skills are excellent. She has devised careful and thoughtful plans to develop the roles of the subject co-ordinators. The senior management team is working effectively and has the confidence of the staff.

37. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have checked the teacher's planning, looked at pupils' work and have begun to observe lessons. There is still much to be done in developing their role before they can be fully accountable for their subjects in the school. The subject co-ordinators have all been introduced to the principles of best value and they have written and costed development plans for the next financial year.

38. The school is increasingly reflective in all aspects of its work and the skills of monitoring and evaluation are practised by all of the staff.

39. The governors and the acting headteacher are working together on the strategic plan for the school. Sensibly the acting headteacher has included all members of the school community in agreeing a new vision and set of aims. This is a necessary precursor to the more detailed thinking that is needed to construct the school improvement plan.

40. The LEA has given very good support to the school in providing an acting headteacher and in the variety of its support from the education and finance divisions. The link adviser has co-ordinated regular reviews of the teaching with detailed and helpful feedback to the teachers. In consultation with the governors the LEA wrote a sensible strategy for the phased withdrawal of support, as part of its original action plan for the school.

Programmes have been drawn up to transfer the school's leadership to the substantive headteacher and to provide appropriate induction.

41. The LEA and the acting headteacher have scrutinised the school's financial position and the governors have set an appropriate budget which allows for a higher level of spending on resources. A good example of the use of the principles of best value was evident in the recent purchase of ICT equipment.

42. The governing body is led enthusiastically and well. The governing body is at full strength and performs all aspects of its role well.

Implementation of the action plan

43. The inspection report of November 2002 required the school to address five key issues. These related to improving the leadership and management of the school, raising the quality of teaching, raising standards in ICT and improving the school's relationship with parents. The school has made good progress in addressing all of the key issues.

44. There were a number of changes in the staffing following the inspection in November 2002 and some change of roles. The leadership and management of the school are much improved and are good at the senior level. The work of the subject co-ordinators is slowly developing but there is more to do in strengthening their role.

45. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the inspection of 2002 and it is now good overall. There were a number staff changes following the inspection which helped to improve the quality of the teaching.

46. The purchase of a set of wireless lap-top computers has enabled the school to teach the programmes of study for ICT. The effective leadership of the co-ordinator has helped teachers to quickly gain confidence in their teaching and the pupils are rapidly reaching the standards expected nationally.

47. The school's relationships with the parents and the community have been transformed. The governing body and the parent teacher association is effectively engaged in the life and work of the school. The governing body has a waiting list of people who want to join.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in November 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was likely to fail to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in July and November 2003 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of November 2002.

In March 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Eighteen lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies and six registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics, and the chair of the governing body; informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of November 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

Notes

