



# Southdown Junior School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 109004  
**LEA** Bath and North East Somerset  
**Inspection number** 278097  
**Inspection dates** 24 May 2006 to 25 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Wiola Hola HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Mount Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Southdown
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11		Bath BA2 1LG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 424761
<b>Number on roll</b>	170	<b>Fax number</b>	01225 334181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr J F Bailey
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 February 2004	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Teresa Austin

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Southdown Junior School is smaller than average. Most pupils are White British. A few are from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds. Three pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is roughly twice the national average. Attainment on entry for pupils currently in the school was broadly average. Attainment on entry for the Year 6 pupils that left in 2005 was below average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

This is an improving school but one where improvements have yet to make a full impact on raising pupils' standards and achievements. Inspectors and the school agree that the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

The rate of pupils' progress has been speeded up since the last inspection so that pupils now make adequate progress in lessons because teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although standards are beginning to rise, the increased rate of progress has not yet overcome the underachievement of previous years, and pupils' overall achievement is inadequate. Standards are still well below average when pupils leave the school. Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good. Pupils have positive attitudes to work and school although rarely express great excitement or enjoyment in learning. Their personal development is satisfactory.

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. The school is clear about what needs to be improved and has the capacity to do it. There is a shared understanding of the need to raise standards. Many teachers are new to the school this year and all staff have risen to the challenge of improving it. Subject leaders have yet to become fully adept at using attainment data to keep a close check on pupils' progress. The curriculum is satisfactory with a heavy emphasis on English and mathematics although pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not routinely developed or applied well in other subjects. Pupils are well cared for and supported. They receive satisfactory guidance about how to improve their work.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics and ensure that pupils use and develop their literacy and numeracy skills well in other subjects.
- Develop a more balanced curriculum to cover subjects other than English and mathematics to greater depth and to enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Develop further the use of attainment data by subject leaders so that they all keep a close check on pupils' progress and promote it.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Standards are significantly below the national average and pupils' achievements, whilst improving, are still inadequate. In recent years, results in national tests have been exceptionally low in English, and significantly below average in mathematics but

showing a rising trend. Science results have fluctuated and were significantly below average in 2005. Results show pupils made poor progress, considerably less than could be expected.

There are signs of improvement. In the last two years, pupils' rates of progress have been increased because the school has made considerable effort to improve teaching and the use of assessment information. The current pupils in Year 6 have been helped to catch up on some previously lost ground and standards are going up. There is still, however, more ground to make up. Targets were not met in 2005 but school predictions show that they should be for 2006. Targets vary in the extent to which they are challenging; the 2006 mathematics targets are not demanding.

The school analyses pupils' performance carefully and provides additional support for specific pupils who are most underachieving. The progress of such pupils has been good and shows that the school's interventions are successful. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress because great care is taken to meet their needs, academic and personal. In 2005, girls' results in Year 6 tests were lower than boys' and the school is seeking to narrow the gap in performance.

The school is rightly working to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills which are not well developed for their ages. Many pupils lack fluency, have limited vocabulary or are reluctant to speak at length. Although the presentation of pupils' work is good in many displays around the school, presentation in many exercise books lacks care.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Social and moral development is good and evident in pupils' good behaviour, positive relationships with others, and in their willingness to take on responsibilities, although there are limited opportunities for them to do so. Pupils are courteous and polite, holding doors open for others and greeting adults with a smile. Younger pupils enjoy school more than the older ones who decry the lack of variety because of 'so many literacy and numeracy lessons'. Whilst attitudes are satisfactory, many pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils feel they have a voice in the school through the school council.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. The school states, however, that pupils are slow to adopt a healthy eating way of life. Pupils show good awareness of safety. Skills important for their future success, such as collaborating on tasks and concentrating on work in lessons, develop satisfactorily, but standards in literacy and numeracy are not yet high enough. The attendance rate is close to the national average.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and include instances of good work but not enough of it yet. Teaching and learning are underpinned by warm relationships and good classroom organisation and management. Teachers employ many good strategies to keep pupils focused on their work. Instances of pupils' losing concentration or misbehaving in lessons are rare and dealt with very effectively. Pupils are generally diligent but rarely enthusiastic. They respond to questions, sometimes a little shyly, but rarely pose their own, or set up and follow lines of enquiry.

In the best lessons, very well established routines mean that pupils enter the classroom calmly, get on with work quickly, work very well individually, in pairs or groups, and see for themselves what they have achieved. In some lessons, teachers do not check the extent of pupils' understanding soon enough so that pupils either engage in tasks they have already mastered, or perform tasks mechanically and correctly, but without a secure understanding of underlying concepts. Teaching assistants are effective and provide much valuable support to pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Teachers have a reasonable knowledge of what their pupils' have achieved in previous years. They conduct assessments routinely and know what they should expect from pupils by the end of the year in English and mathematics. Teaching emphasises the good use of literacy and numeracy skills in English and mathematics lessons but less so in other subjects

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Very good attention is paid to the learning of skills in English and mathematics. This means that other subjects and aspects are covered but not at great depth. Whilst it is clear that this emphasis is improving standards in English and mathematics, the current curriculum neither creates coherence across subjects nor makes for pupils' great enjoyment throughout the year. Pupils enjoy the time after tests have taken place in May because 'we do some fun things' either as special events or as topics linking various subjects.

Opportunities to widen pupils' experiences within the local community are readily taken and useful links exist with schools locally and internationally, in three other European countries. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory but not as strong as for pupils' social and moral development which is good and promoted more overtly in lessons. School clubs currently operate mostly for sports enthusiasts and pupils say they would welcome a wider variety on a regular basis.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Care for pupils is good and ensures that they are safe and well looked after. Pupils find staff approachable and know that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise. Sensitive support is provided for pupils with social or learning difficulties. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's systems for dealing with good or poor behaviour and staff apply rewards and sanctions to positive effect. Attention to pupils' health and safety is good. Child protection arrangements are secure.

Pupils receive satisfactory guidance about how to improve their work. Marking is praised by older pupils as being helpful although, across the school, its quality is inconsistent. Pupils like the way learning objectives are highlighted at the starts of lessons and again later when they have achieved them. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans but these are not generally helpful in tracking these pupils' progress because targets are not specific enough. The headteacher and deputy headteacher gather attainment information well and are beginning to analyse pupils' progress effectively using a recently purchased computer based system. Through this and other means, class teachers and teaching assistants are enabled to target their efforts to specific pupils or groups of pupils to make sure they receive appropriate support and guidance in their learning. This arrangement is working well as seen in improved rates of pupils' progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school runs smoothly and is a safe and orderly place for pupils to learn in. The headteacher has very positive relationships with pupils and a good understanding of how the school should move forward. She has set out clear expectations for teachers, many of whom are new this year, about what constitutes good teaching and is uncompromising about staff meeting them. Teaching is adequately monitored but learning is not given the same sharp attention so that lesson quality is not always judged primarily in terms of pupils' progress or depth of understanding.

The headteacher is supported well by a fairly new senior management team in which roles and responsibilities have yet to be fully determined. Whilst teaching staff are working with determination to raise standards, they are not entirely clear about the strands of school improvement currently contained in various planning documents. Subject leaders are mostly new to their roles and have not had the opportunity to monitor their subjects in any great depth. Subject development plans are heavily focused on improving provision and require more detail about intended outcomes for pupils' academic and personal development. Subject leaders have yet to become fully familiar with the school's relatively new system for compiling attainment data to track pupils' progress and remedy underachievement at an early stage.

School self-evaluation is accurate and takes account of the views of parents. The school is using its resources appropriately to improve pupils' achievement. Governors are supportive and act as critical friends to the school. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has demonstrated its capacity for further improvement because pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection and the rate of pupils' progress has increased.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you all for being so helpful. We were glad to talk with some of you in lessons and in break times. Thank you to those members of the School Council who told us about the school. I would like to tell you what we found out about your school.

These are the best things about your school:

Most of you behave well and work hard in lessons.

You are polite and welcoming to visitors and to each other.

Your teachers and helpers take very good care of you and teach you how to stay safe and healthy.

The school is helping you to learn more quickly than before (but you could still be learning even more quickly).

We saw some good teaching and learning although there is not enough of it yet.

The staff and governors know what the school does well and what needs to be improved.

Although there are some good things about Southdown Junior School, it could be better. We have given the school a 'Notice to Improve' because many of you could be making faster progress and reaching higher levels in your work. This means that inspectors will come back in a year or so to see if your progress has indeed improved.

Here are three main ways we are asking the school to improve:

Teachers should help you reach higher levels in English and mathematics.

The school should make sure you get a good balance of subjects and activities that make your learning more enjoyable throughout the year.

Teachers should be helped to keep an even closer check on how well you are doing so that you all do your best in learning and growing up.

Your headteacher and teachers know what to do to help you learn faster and we ask you to carry on working hard so that you all achieve well.

We wish you all the very best for the future.