



# Somersham Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110689  
**LEA** CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278488  
**Inspection dates** 24 November 2005 to 25 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Jackie Cousins LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Parkhall Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		PE28 3EU
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01487840412
<b>Number on roll</b>	321	<b>Fax number</b>	01487741194
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Michael Payne
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Graham McArthur

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24 November 2005 - 25 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278488
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This large primary school is in the village of Somersham near Cambridge. Most year groups contain approximately forty-five pupils. The majority of pupils live in privately owned houses, and some live in rented homes or temporary accommodation. A considerable proportion of pupils join the school part way through the school year. Levels of free school meals are below average. When the youngest pupils start school their levels of knowledge and understanding are below those expected for 4-year-olds. Overall, the school has a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Nine out of ten pupils are from White British families. A few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or from travelling communities.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Somersham Primary is a good school and this inspection confirms the school's evaluation. The leadership and management of the school are effective. The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's leadership are good. Teaching is effective so pupils achieve well. Teachers and teaching assistants are dedicated and care effectively for pupils. The partnership with parents is effective. One parent says, 'I would have no hesitation in recommending Somersham Primary School to any of my friends and colleagues. It is a pleasant, well run school which my children love attending.' The pupils are given a good start in the reception classes because of effective teaching and leadership. Standards by the start of Year 1 are in line with national expectations. However, standards of reading are currently below average by Year 2. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked in all classes. Assessment activities are used satisfactorily but pupils could be more involved in checking how well they are doing to gain a clearer idea of how to improve. The attendance of pupils is above average. Pupils behave well. Interesting activities are planned and pupils enjoy special days, for example, on topics such as multi-cultural awareness. Many pupils have opportunities to attend a wide range of after-school and lunchtime clubs. A few governors keep a watchful eye on the school but the workload could be shared more effectively. The school offers good value for money. The inspection confirms the school's judgement that the improvement since the last inspection has been effective. For example, standards for more able pupils are higher than at the time of the last inspection. Standards in Year 6 are above average in mathematics and science and have been for several years. Standards in English have been above average in recent years but dipped to average in 2005. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 6 are above expectations because of the good use of the ICT suite, interactive whiteboards and teachers' expertise. The school is in a good position to improve in the future.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improving standards of reading by Year 2. - Continuing to develop pupils' skills in self-evaluation so that they are even clearer about what they need to do to improve their work. - Improving the role of the governors so that their responsibilities are shared more evenly.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' standards and achievement are good. When pupils enter the school their levels of knowledge and understanding are below national expectations, particularly in literacy skills. They get off to a good start in the reception classes and attain standards expected nationally by the beginning of Year 1 in most areas of learning. The majority of pupils make effective progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards are average overall. The standards in writing, mathematics and science are average. However, standards of reading are below average. Overall standards for boys and girls are similar. School data

demonstrate that pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to achieve well and attain above average standards overall. Standards in the 2005 tests in science and mathematics are above average. This is because teachers develop basic skills, and structure pupils' learning effectively. Standards of English have gone down this year and are average. Standards are lower in English tests because an above average proportion of pupils with rather limited literacy skills entered the school part way through Years 3 to 6. The school is in line to meet its challenging targets for 2006. Standards in ICT are above expectations. For instance, many Year 6 pupils use computers effectively to carry out complex calculations in spreadsheets. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make effective progress with regard to their specific targets.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. Effective opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are incorporated into many topics. At present, one project is generating a great deal of excitement. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 have created some stunning copper works with a local artist. These are on display in their own 'People with Wings' exhibition. This has really encouraged pupils to use their imagination and develop their creativity. One pupil said, 'If my sculpture was alive it would say don't cage me in.' Pupils are interested in their lessons, they are keen and well motivated and behave well. Occasionally behaviour in lessons slows the pace of pupils' learning. They come to school regularly and attendance is high. Pupils work effectively with the community, particularly through environmental work. The school strongly encourages this approach. Pupils are currently evaluating how well they are doing, in order to gain the bronze Eco schools award. They are encouraged to take a fit and healthy approach to life, for example, the number of swimming lessons has been increased in some year groups. Safe practices are discussed with pupils as part of day-to-day life. The school council has a good understanding of why pupils are not allowed to bring bikes into school because it has been a topic for debate. A cycling proficiency course at the end of Year 6 gives pupils a basic grounding in road safety. Children are well prepared for secondary school when they leave Somersham Primary. They develop good basic skills, including an effective understanding of ICT, which will make their future economic well-being more likely. Year 6 pupils have already started to think about possible careers because of the good level of preparation.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Significant strengths of teaching include teachers' level of expertise in how to develop key skills in mathematics and science. For example, the first part of a Year 5 lesson was effectively used to develop quick mental recall to encourage pupils to round up numbers accurately. Teachers have a good rapport with

their pupils and use the support staff well to aid learning. They make effective use of computers and interactive whiteboards in lessons to stimulate learning and interest pupils. Most pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are included in all lessons effectively and they make good progress. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they manage them well. As a result, the pupils are eager to please and most work hard to achieve challenging targets in literacy and numeracy. However, the pace of lessons is occasionally too slow and teachers' planning does not always contain specific learning intentions. Assessment procedures are good and they are used satisfactorily. Teachers mark work effectively. Pupils' progress is satisfactorily tracked in all subjects. However, not all teachers tell pupils clearly enough what they should be learning in lessons to help them to evaluate their own progress towards these learning goals.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's curriculum and other activities are good. The work pupils do is rich and varied, with effective time given to all subjects. Furthermore, the school works effectively to ensure that pupils' days are varied. For instance, design and technology projects allow pupils in Years 5 and 6 to design, make and evaluate their own candles. Good provision for the arts includes units of work on famous artists where pupils create effective collages in the style of Ben Nicholson. A very good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs is enjoyed by pupils. Apart from music and sports clubs, pupils can join chess, quilting and needlecraft, gardening and library clubs. Pupils have many opportunities to sing and perform both within and outside the school in musical productions and activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, support and guidance is good. The school is keeping faith with its role as a Health Promoting School by continuing developmental work, currently on drug education. All legal checks are completed to keep pupils safe before adults are allowed to work in the school. Child protection procedures are clearly understood and there is a good level of expertise and understanding from staff. Pupils coping with difficult circumstances outside school are well supported. Staff are keen to try new practices in order to help pupils achieve more highly. For example, older Year 5 and 6 pupils are becoming skilled in evaluating each other's work by providing constructive criticism. The next step is to involve them more in evaluating their own work by measuring their success against targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has an effective understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and works well with the deputy and the

senior managers to promote a good sense of teamwork amongst the staff. All of the issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively and the school has moved on well since June 2000. The provision for ICT and the most capable pupils has improved well so that the standards attained are now higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. Assessment procedures have been extended to include all subjects of the curriculum. The school's capacity to improve in the future is good. The school knows itself well. It has good systems for checking how well it is doing and identifying what it could do better. Governors, parents and pupils are all involved well in creating the school development plan. Procedures are used effectively by staff to ensure that all children are treated equally and fairly. This has a positive impact on their good attitudes and behaviour. The governing body meets all of its legal requirements and ensures that the school achieves good value for money. The school overspent its budget in 2005 due to particularly high staffing costs. However, by April 2006 it expects to be back to a stable position. Governors meet regularly and keep careful records of all their discussions. However, the school has several vacancies for governors and too few governors carry out all the responsibilities.

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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>	2	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	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	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>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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**

Thank you for helping us find out about your school. We enjoyed watching you learn and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers and watch two assemblies. Good things about your school include; - you work hard in lessons and behaviour is good - many of you do well, particularly in mathematics, science and ICT by Year 6 - teachers and teaching assistants care for you well and help you to do good work - your headteacher and deputy headteacher have good ideas about ways to improve the school - you are encouraged effectively to lead healthy and safe lives - lunchtime and after-school clubs are superb - computers and interactive whiteboards are helping you to improve your ICT work. We have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. We hope that you will help teachers by listening to them carefully. The most important things are: - improve your reading by Year 2 - continue to help you get better at improving your work - Ensure that governors share out their jobs more effectively. Keep up the good work at Somersham Primary School.