



Southwood Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116246
LEA Hampshire LEA
Inspection number 279776
Inspection dates 28 June 2006 to 29 June 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Marfleet AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Southwood Lane
School category	Community		Southwood
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Farnborough GU14 0NE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01252375420
Number on roll	133	Fax number	01252517941
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Tony Andrews
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Vivienne Favell

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 28 June 2006 - 29 June 2006	Inspection number 279776
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The children at this smaller than average school are mostly White British. A few whose first language is not English are from other countries in Europe. Very few are entitled to free school meals and mobility rates are very low. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is close to average, but only one child has a statement of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school and parents that this is an effective school. It provides good value for money.

Children join the Foundation Stage with standards that are above average, overall. The provision at this stage is good, and leads to good progress. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards, as reflected in the Year 2 tests in recent years, are significantly above average. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve very well.

Good teaching and learning lead to this good achievement. Knowledgeable teachers plan well and use resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), very effectively. The high quality support they receive from teaching assistants ensures that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, make good progress.

Care, support and guidance are excellent, leading to outstanding personal development. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is excellent. They know how to stay fit and healthy, behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are prepared extremely well for their next stage of education. The curriculum, including that in the Foundation Stage, is well thought out, with a rich range of experiences being made available to the children, although insufficient attention is paid to increasing their knowledge of cultural diversity.

Good leadership and management lie behind the positive outcomes. The very able headteacher and deputy receive the support of an excellent governing body and of staff who share management responsibilities well. Effective monitoring, along with thorough assessment and tracking of progress have improved the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning and have led to the good achievement. However, self-evaluation and strategic planning documents sometimes lack the detail, clarity and focus that would enable staff to address key priorities and raise standards even further.

Changes made since the last inspection, particularly some of the recent improvements, show the school's capacity to improve yet further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school's development plan contains sufficient precise detail about its key priorities to enable staff to raise standards even further.
- Improve pupils' awareness of other cultures.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 2, they have made good progress, meeting the challenging targets set for them. They reach standards significantly above the national average.

When pupils join the Reception class, their attainment levels are above average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, and continue to progress well in Years 1 and 2. The school's assessments show that their progress is better than average. Year 2 test scores in recent years also demonstrate good progress: they are significantly above average, although there are variations between subjects from year to year which the school responds to. The relative under-achievement in mathematics last year, for instance, was corrected this year by an increased focus on the subject. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, and very good progress is made by the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

The school's intervention strategies and support ensure that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make at least as much progress as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, although their awareness of cultures other than their own is limited. This said, pupils from different backgrounds get on very well together and relationships are excellent.

Behaviour is good, notwithstanding a few lively boys who teachers manage effectively, and attendance is well above average. Pupils say how much they enjoy school and they know how to stay safe and healthy. School council members explained why they wanted a tougher 'Trim Trail', and extolled the virtues of eating fruit: 'Five pieces a day!' they insisted.

Participating in the school council is just one of the ways they experience responsibility. The pupils' voice is strong in the school and a strong focus on learning to become independent means that it is more than just an ideal. Lessons, such as those which featured buying things with real or pretend money, show that they are being prepared well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, and consistently so across the school. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement and their personal development.

Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan thoroughly and employ an excellent range of resources, including ICT. Able and experienced support staff are deployed effectively to enhance learning, including that of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Extra support is also given to more able pupils and to the few for whom English is not their first language. Parents come in to help in lessons, support individuals and join in the school visits.

Marking is thorough and helpful to pupils. Teachers' assessments are used effectively to organise learning groups in lessons so that differing needs are all met appropriately. Activities are skilfully organised around topics such as 'buying fruit' or 'sand and water'. In the Foundation Stage, teachers provide ample opportunities for children to initiate their own learning as well as being directed by adults. The principle of taking responsibility for one's own learning is also continued throughout Years 1 and 2.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum which is adapted effectively for classes that cover more than one age group. A two-year rolling programme of topics in these classes ensures variety and progression and is a stimulus to teachers to organise activities with different needs in mind.

There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but all curriculum areas, including those required in the Foundation Stage, are well covered. ICT is well provided for, with pupils using computers and interactive white boards confidently. The curriculum is clearly planned to address the need for awareness about health, fitness, safety and economic enterprise, as well as being enjoyable. Spirituality is a core value in the school, and was demonstrated powerfully in a religious education class which allowed pupils to share their ideas about God, as well as to develop their literacy by writing some of these ideas down. Music, dance, story and art contribute to cultural awareness, although there is an under-emphasis on non-European cultures.

The curriculum is very well enriched, with sports clubs, activities such as discos, and even a Year 2 'sleepover' that concluded with breakfast at a nearby supermarket. Victorian days, school visits and a grandparents' day all enhance the provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support, which is recognised and applauded by parents. It clearly has an impact on the personal development of their children, who are all valued and included, as well as shaping the ethos of the school and creating a culture of learning.

The school has effective systems for child protection. Health and safety procedures and risk assessments are thorough. Pupils themselves are given a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and how to behave responsibly.

Teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of their pupils, and, with excellent support from classroom assistants, are able to give specialised support to children with learning difficulties or disabilities, to the more able, or to those who are just starting to learn English. Thorough assessment of the progress of every pupil enables staff to provide appropriate challenges for them. Their progress is enhanced by very good opportunities for pupils to assess their own work by, for example, completing 'assessment stars' to show how much they believe they have learned.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is good leadership and management at this school. A strong leadership team led by an experienced headteacher and her able deputy have been joined by a special needs co-ordinator who is already improving the provision in this area. All teachers have subject responsibilities: they exercise these well, and contribute to a thorough system of monitoring and evaluation.

Knowing about the quality of teaching and learning and about how pupils are progressing leads to good planning; the structure of classes encourages team work in this and a sense of direction. The school knows itself well, as do the parents, who speak of 'a personal school'. Being a small school, everyone is aware of how the curriculum is shaped around the core values - 'independence' is not just a slogan, it really affects how children are expected to learn. These values underpin the school's evaluation of its performance and identification of what needs to improve, although the documents in which these are recorded lack clarity and are not organised in a way that helps all staff identify and tackle key priorities. The school recognises that a sharper focus is needed if teaching and learning are to become even more effective.

The governing body provide excellent support and are not afraid to ask difficult questions or challenge the school. They are very active, whether in individual visits or on committees, and know the school very well. Finances are sound and the school is well staffed and resourced.

The school has improved since the last inspection, in 2000. But recent developments, whether in raising standards in mathematics, focusing the core values or making strategic appointments, are the real indication of its capacity to improve further.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	1	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	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Children

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school and a special thank you to those who talked to me. I really enjoyed looking at your work and watching you in lessons and assembly. I think Southwood Infant School is a good school, and it helps you to become very special young people.

Why I think your school is good • You make good progress in your work • You behave well, and really enjoy being at school • You have a very good headteacher and she has a great team to help her • You are taught plenty of useful and interesting things • The teachers and other staff help you to learn well • They support and look after you really well, too • You know how to stay fit and healthy • Your parents are very happy with the school.

What I have asked your school to do now • Share their ideas about how the school might improve more clearly with everyone who works here • Help you to discover more about people who live different lives from you. I want to wish you well in the future and hope that you will always be as happy as you are at Southwood Infant School.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Marfleet

Lead Inspector