



South End Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121861
LEA Northamptonshire
Inspection number 281118
Inspection dates 22 May 2006 to 23 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Capper AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Wymington Road
School category	Community		Rushden
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Northamptonshire NN10 9JU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01933 356571
Number on roll	268	Fax number	01933 356571
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Claridge

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 22 May 2006 - 23 May 2006	Inspection number 281118
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large infant school is located in the town of Rushden in east Northamptonshire. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are none at the early stages of learning English. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception Year is broadly average. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that very successfully meets its aim of teaching pupils that 'if you work hard, you will get better and better'. Teaching is excellent throughout the school and, consequently, pupils' achievement is outstanding. Provision in the Reception Year is outstanding and children make excellent progress. By the start of Year 1, most children are comfortably exceeding the expected standards for their age. Pupils continue to make excellent progress in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, standards are exceptionally high. Pupils are very well cared for. They are very happy at school and behave well. They enjoy taking responsibility and are very polite to visitors. There is a good curriculum and teachers make learning fun by linking different subjects together. However, opportunities for pupils to develop and use information and communication technology (ICT) skills in lessons are limited because although there have been recent improvements in resources, there are still not enough computers for the size of school.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher knows the school very well and her calm and purposeful leadership has been pivotal in its success over the last three years. All members of staff have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, though they have a slightly more modest view of the school's effectiveness than that of the inspectors. There is a continual drive for improvement in all areas of school life and progress since the last inspection has been outstanding. The school is well placed to improve even further and provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve resources for ICT and plan more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards are exceptionally high. Outstanding teaching ensures that all groups of pupils make excellent progress as they move up through the school and nearly all reach the challenging targets that have been set for them. By the end of the Reception Year, most children exceed the expected standards for their age in all areas of learning, with progress being especially strong in personal, social and emotional development.

Standards by the end of Year 2 have risen significantly since the last inspection and were exceptionally high overall in national tests in 2005. The current Year 2 is on target to reach similar standards by the end of the year. In 2005, nearly all pupils reached the expected levels for their age in English, mathematics and science and a very high percentage of them reached the higher Level 3, reflecting the very good level of challenge for more able pupils in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities

are also supported very well, enabling them to make excellent progress towards their individual targets. In ICT, pupils have generally secure basic skills, but the lack of resources slows progress over time.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and are an important factor in their outstanding achievement. Pupils are very happy at school and they enjoy learning. They are extremely positive about all aspects of school life, especially the opportunities to play with their friends. Most pupils behave well and take care to follow the class rules. A very small number of pupils who occasionally display more challenging behaviour are managed very well by teachers and teaching assistants. Attendance is satisfactory and there is no unauthorised absence.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are very sensitive to the needs of others and have a very clear sense of right and wrong. They show great independence both in and out of lessons and they work together well. For example, pupils in Year 2 collaborated very successfully when designing and making model lighthouses. They are very confident and considerate and very readily take on responsibilities such as the school council, which has been instrumental in ordering new playground equipment. Pupils contribute very well to the wider community by fundraising and supporting a child in Benin and they have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. These activities, as well as pupils' excellent basic skills, prepare them very effectively for the next stage of their education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Consequently, pupils get off to a flying start and they develop skills, knowledge and understanding that will provide a firm basis for learning in their next school. There are some significant strengths in teaching. These include very good quality planning and the way that pupils are grouped by ability for some lessons. This helps to ensure that work builds on their different starting points. Another very positive aspect is the very good relationships between staff and pupils, which enable pupils to tackle work with confidence. The teachers' very high expectations of pupils' hard work and good behaviour mean that pupils are keen to do their best in lessons. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to learning, especially in the sensitive way that they work with pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. As a result, these pupils achieve very well.

Children's progress in the Reception classes is checked very carefully and the information is used very well to plan subsequent work for them. Very good quality assessment is also evident in Years 1 and 2, where teachers are very clear about how

well pupils are doing and use this information very effectively to set challenging targets for individual pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because the work planned for pupils is exciting and interesting and successfully meets their individual learning needs. For example, in the Reception classes, members of staff are very good at taking into account the needs of the high number of boys currently in the year group. Throughout the school, teachers make very good links between different subjects and this helps to make learning purposeful. In Year 1, 'group times' provide wonderful opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in subjects such as music and art. However, work in ICT is restricted by a limited number of computers. This slows the pace at which pupils learn new skills and is the only thing that prevents the curriculum from being outstanding.

The school provides a very wide range of stimulating activities outside lessons. These include an interesting variety of visits and visitors, such as trips to farms and visits from a children's book illustrator, as well as a good number of clubs. These activities bring subjects alive and contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care guidance and support are outstanding. The school places great emphasis on ensuring that all pupils learn and thrive in a safe and caring environment. Child protection arrangements are robust and the school is outstanding in the way it promotes its links with other agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being and to ensure that those who may be vulnerable or at risk are properly supported. Attendance is monitored carefully to ensure that all absences are legitimate.

Systems to monitor pupils' progress are very thorough and pupils with differing needs are supported very well. Inspectors agree with the views of one parent who wrote, 'The school has taken on board my child's individuality and has made the most of his abilities whilst encouraging him with aspects he has struggled with'. All pupils are set challenging targets to work towards, helping to ensure that they excel in their learning. Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities set clear and realistic targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher knows how to get the best out of the children and her staff and this has been the main reason why the school has improved so much over the last three years. Her high aspirations for the school are shared by all members of staff, and at all levels, leadership is reflective, purposeful

and rigorous. Systems for finding out how well the school is doing are very thorough and this means that senior managers and subject co-ordinators are able to deal with minor problems as soon as they arise.

Members of staff share a common purpose and there is a strong drive for continual improvement, based on a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school takes very good account of pupils' and parents' views through questionnaires and an annual 'parents' forum'. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school.

The school uses its budget wisely. Over the last three years, senior managers have rightly concentrated on improving standards in English and mathematics and the school has only recently begun to focus on improving provision in ICT. Nevertheless, there have already been some good recent improvements in ICT, including the purchase of interactive whiteboards for some of the classrooms. There is a very good understanding of what remains to be done.

Governance is good. Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities and these are taken seriously for the benefit of the pupils. They make a good contribution to planning for improvement and have good systems for finding out how well the school is doing. The school has successfully dealt with the weaknesses from the last inspection and over the last three years, progress has been outstanding. Nonetheless, there is no complacency and the continued drive and commitment of senior managers and governors mean that the school is in a strong position 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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	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	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	2	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?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly and we think you are very lucky to come to this school.

What we liked most about your school:

teachers help you to learn new things very quickly

you really enjoy school and behave well

the school is good at teaching you how to stay safe and healthy

your teachers are very kind and caring. They look after you very well and make lessons fun

your headteacher, teachers and governors lead the school very well and they are working very hard to make the school even better

your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- provide more computers so that you are able to learn ICT skills more quickly.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and we wish you all well for the future.