



Southfield Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126197
LEA Swindon
Inspection number 282073
Inspection dates 20 October 2005 to 21 October 2005
Reporting inspector Kevin Hodge RISP

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Shrivenham Road
School category	Community		Highworth
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 7BZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01793 762210
Number on roll	246	Fax number	01793 762210
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John Mackey
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr Paul White

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Southfield school is an average-sized junior school in the town of Highworth, north-east of Swindon. The school has a below-average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, although approximately thirty per cent of pupils come from less favourable socio-economic backgrounds. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average. There is a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Pupils come to the school with different levels of ability and are generally average. It had its 'Basic Skills' and Healthy Schools' award reaccredited this year and also gained the 'Investors in People' accreditation in the spring of this year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school that it provides a good standard of education. Pupils behave well and enjoy school. They reach good standards in some subjects. Test results in past years in English and mathematics have been slightly better than the national picture and have generally improved each year. The pupils make satisfactory progress in all subjects, and in mathematics make particularly good progress. Pupils' advanced writing skills develop more slowly. The vast majority of parents comment favourably upon the caring atmosphere within the school.

Teaching is good, including the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils enjoy their lessons as teachers are enthusiastic and plan interesting activities. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are well supported. Marking is regular but it is not consistently helpful in all classes or subjects. The curriculum is well organised in most areas and provides relevant links between subjects to aid pupils' learning. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which the pupils enjoy.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted but their multicultural awareness is weak. The school gives high priority to developing pupils' well-being and community involvement. The school council and prefects, aided by fellow playground helpers, are highly valued. This highlights the school's distinctive, caring ethos.

The school is well led by the headteacher, supported by well motivated senior staff. They have successfully raised standards since the last inspection, particularly in computer-related work. Senior staff monitor teaching effectively, and the school's self-evaluation is largely correct. It accurately identifies areas still needing improvement. The school gives good value for money and the rate of improvement since the last inspection indicates the school has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue the good rate of progress in developing pupils' advanced writing skills
- improve the consistency of marking between subjects and classes to help pupils improve more quickly
- improve the pupils' multicultural awareness by planning more activities and relevant experiences

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in 2004, as indicated by test results for the oldest pupils, were just ahead of schools nationally, but fewer pupils than average attained the higher levels in writing. In past years progress has been significantly above average, but wasn't as high in 2004. In the latest tests, results have risen and they exceeded the challenging targets set for the school in English and mathematics. In speaking, listening, and mathematics, pupils reach good standards. Pupils' advanced writing skills are weaker, but improving. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT)

is now in line with the expected standards. The small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups reach the appropriate levels set for them. The differences between boys' and girls' attainment, highlighted in past tests, have narrowed.

Given their average starting point, the achievement and progress of pupils are satisfactory, although have varied in past years. In some subjects, such as mathematics, speaking and listening, their progress is good. The school's emphasis on improving pupils' writing is beginning to pay off. In ICT, activities develop their skills systematically and pupils often achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. The activities within lessons develop their basic skills well. The pupils from minority ethnic groups are supported well, both by the school and from outside agencies, so they make good gains in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils like school, behave very well and they share a strong sense of pride and belonging. Pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Attendance is above the national average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies contribute well to pupils' sense of belonging. Pupils' awareness of multicultural issues and dimensions is limited. School council members feel very useful and listened to seriously. Pupils' commitment, pride and desire to help others make an excellent contribution to the school's community. One proud prefect said, 'We make the school better' and a 'playground buddy' explained, 'We try and help to sort out problems and not waste fun time.' Money from a 'non-uniform' day and harvest festival went to support a child and an orphanage overseas. Pupils' awareness of healthy living is good, supported by work in science, physical education and other activities.

They know what foods are better to eat and like 'healthy snacks'. Their future economic well-being is aided by developing good basic skills, self-confidence and working constructively together.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. This is leading to good progress, seen particularly in mathematics, ICT and aspects of English. Teachers develop very good relationships with pupils, who behave well and enjoy lessons. The grouping of pupils by ability in English and mathematics helps to target activities, such as improving pupils' writing. Teachers make very good use of electronic audio-visual whiteboards. In one very well-taught mathematics lesson, the teacher developed pupils' learning energetically, making good use of the whiteboard to explain concepts and extend their knowledge. Regular specialist teaching in ICT has improved the pupils' rate of learning. Work is marked

regularly and constructively in many classes and subjects, but not all. It is sometimes too brief to be helpful. Pupils with special educational needs learn well. Teachers skilfully involve them in lessons and provide low-key but effective help. The small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups receive good, timely support, which helps them learn well. Teaching assistants provide effective support when needed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned in nearly all areas. It links subjects well to reinforce pupils' learning. Pupils' multicultural development is covered, but not in depth. Activities stimulate pupils' interests and skills creatively. For example, pupils' motivation to write increased when it was linked to a geography topic on mountains. Good use is made of visits and visitors. For example, pupils spoke excitedly about their work on Egyptians and pupils made model mummies and Egyptian jewellery after visiting a local museum. A parent, who was an archaeologist, used illustrations from a real 'dig' to make learning more relevant. Extra-curricular activities, including a residential trip, are wide ranging and liked by pupils. There are good activities to develop pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education.

For example, a 'lifestyle' bus visits the school to promote pupils' knowledge of health-related issues and older pupils follow a junior 'good citizen' course sensitively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Pupils know they can go to their teachers if they need help or advice. One pupil remarked, 'There is a nice atmosphere and there is a lot to do.' Pupils generally comment that they feel safe, knowing there are clear routines to help solve difficulties. Parents commented that they value this aspect of the school. Child protection and health and safety procedures are good and implemented well. Governors regularly review health and safety arrangements, to good effect.

Pupils understand and work towards their own long-term targets for improvement. Some comments on their day-to-day work, although positive, are too brief to tell pupils how to improve. Work for pupils with learning difficulties is well co-ordinated. Their support within class and good links with support agencies ensure they learn effectively. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are supported quickly and effectively within class, supported regularly by specialists who visit the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and senior teachers provide strong leadership. Pupils recognise the school's aim of 'striving for

the best', and understand how they help the school to become better, particularly in the care and welfare of fellow pupils.

The school evaluates its work systematically and to good effect. The improvement since the last inspection, particularly in upgrading ICT equipment and the steady rise in results, is impressive. The school development plan is thorough and concentrates on the key areas. For example, improving pupils' writing still further is rightly highlighted. Teaching is monitored regularly and to good effect. For example, extra efforts to improve pupils' mathematical skills have already worked. Governors provide committed support and helpfully contribute to improvement planning. The proposed new buildings are a significant example. Resources are well used and organised. Many classrooms have a very good range of facilities, including audio-visual teaching aids.

Staff are deployed well and the provision of specialist teaching in ICT significantly helps improve pupils' abilities.

With few exceptions, the vast majority of parents speak highly of the school. They have regular and systematic opportunities to give their views and contribute to improvement planning, through questionnaires and attendance at meetings. The school's capacity to improve is good, as shown by the rise in results in the past three years, the improvement to ICT provision and teaching, and the very good ethos that is a distinctive feature of the school.

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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	NA	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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?	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	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?	2	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	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

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

Southfield Junior School Shrivenham Road Swindon Wiltshire SN6 7BZ

25th October 2005

Dear Children,

We enjoyed our visit and the friendly way you greeted us. Here are some of the things we found out while we were with you.

What we liked most about your school

- you chat confidently to visitors and are proud of your school
- you behave well in class, which helps your teachers
- the 'peer mediators', 'scanners', and prefects help you at playtimes
- your active school council, which is liked by many of you
- you have improved a lot in mathematics and ICT
- the headteacher and staff run the school well
- the school has large grounds and well-equipped classrooms.

What we have asked the school to do now

- keep trying to help you become even more confident in your writing
- make sure that the marking of your work is helpful in every subject and class
- help you understand more about other peoples' backgrounds, cultures and beliefs.

We hope you continue to work hard and enjoy school.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Hodge (Lead inspector)