



Southwood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131845
Local Authority Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number 282269
Inspection dates 14–15 September 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Marfleet

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Keppel Road
School category	Community		Dagenham
Age range of pupils	3–11		RM9 5LT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8270 4915
Number on roll (school)	396	Fax number	020 8270 4914
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Miss Paula Bosanquet
		Headteacher	Miss Margaret Pease
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	14–15 September 2006	282269

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school in an area of much deprivation. Many children are from homes where parents' own education has been limited. An above average number are entitled to free school meals. 72% of the pupils are described as White British; 11% are Black African, and there are small numbers from several other ethnic groups. One in seven pupils does not speak English as their first language. A larger proportion of pupils than is normally the case join or leave the school at other than the recognised times. The school operates a nursery unit for over 50 children, but this had not yet recommenced after the summer break at the time of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Southwood Primary is a good school. Pupils make good progress both academically and in their personal development.

Many pupils join the school with limited social and communication skills. In the Foundation Stage, the good provision the school makes ensures that they progress well, but most still have lower standards than can be expected when they start Year 1. The quality of the provision they continue to receive ensures that they make steady progress as they move up the school. By the time they are assessed at the end of Year 2, standards are close to the national average. By the end of Year 6, the large majority of pupils reach the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Given their attainment on entry to the school, reaching average standards by the time they leave represents good achievement for most pupils.

Teaching and learning are good. The good teaching, based on a broad and balanced curriculum, ensures that pupils progress well. Teachers insist on, and obtain high standards of behaviour from pupils. This creates the orderly atmosphere found in the school and is the firm basis for the good personal development and well-being of them all. An environment exists in which pupils are happy and know how to stay safe and healthy. They feel part of a community, but also show concern for the world outside, not least in the charities they support. The good progress they make in acquiring basic skills sets them up well for the future. Standards of care, guidance and support are good overall, although pupils below Year 6 in particular do not receive enough detail about their progress, and the quality and consistency of marking is no more than satisfactory and this limits their achievement. The progress of some pupils is hampered by excessive absence from school: in spite of the school doing all it can to encourage good attendance, some parents allow their children to stay away or take them away in term time.

Effective monitoring ensures that teaching never falls below an acceptable standard and that pupils receive a good educational experience during their time at the school. The headteacher has considerable experience of the school and knows her staff well. Her cautious self-evaluation is indicative of an attitude that is not satisfied with anything less than the best. She is strengthening her senior team and reorganising the middle management. The new structures are backed by a governing body that, although not very active previously, is beginning to be more involved in school life now. The changes that the leadership team have begun to introduce show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that they all receive good guidance about how to achieve as well as they can
- Help the governing body to become a more effective team, able to challenge as well as support the school
- Work with parents to ensure that fewer pupils are absent from school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The majority of pupils join the school with standards that are below those usually expected. By the time they leave, at the end of Year 6, they are attaining standards that are broadly similar to those found nationally. This represents good achievement. Pupils progress well in the Foundation Stage, though many still have limited communication skills when they start Year 1. The progress they make by the time they complete Year 2 is good. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6. Test results in English, mathematics and science for 11 year olds meet their challenging targets and standards are in line with the national averages, as they have been for several years. Boys reach the same standards as girls at this stage, in spite of lower attainment at the age of seven. There is no significant variation in the achievement of different groups of pupils. The small number whose first language is not English achieve well overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make as much progress as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children learn to co-operate with each other in the Foundation Stage and develop positive attitudes to their learning which are subsequently maintained across the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They value the opportunities they have to reflect upon personal values in assemblies and in lessons. They enjoy coming to school, feel safe in school and have the confidence to talk to staff if at all worried. One child commented, 'I feel very safe in school because all the adults take good care of us.' Behaviour is good. Pupils know what is right and wrong. They learn that racial abuse in any form will not be tolerated. They carry out responsibilities sensibly, for example, by acting as 'book-buddies' for the Reception children. They contribute effectively to the school community through the school council and support fund raising activities for several charities. Pupils clearly understand the importance of safe and healthy living and thoroughly enjoy a variety of physical activities. Their education helps them develop skills and qualities that prepare them well for later life. Attendance is below average despite the school's hard work to improve it. This is because some parents do not bring their children to school regularly and some take holidays during the term-time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and lessons, usually brisk in pace, are planned well to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils work co-operatively yet also develop independent skills. Relationships are very good; teachers ask challenging questions and value pupils'

contributions. Teaching assistants give good support to the pupils with learning difficulties and those at the early stages of learning English. Teachers' marking and day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good as adults have a good understanding of the needs of the children.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' academic progress, personal development and well-being. Good provision for physical education helps them stay fit and healthy. The curriculum builds on the good provision in the Foundation Stage, where the focus is on communications and attitudes to learning, areas of relative weakness when children arrive. Music is an area the school is developing further in conjunction with the local authority. Weekly lessons in personal, social and health education contribute well to personal development. Better provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been developed since the last inspection and this area is now satisfactory. Teachers use ICT to support progress in all subjects. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils and these are well attended. Pupils benefit from instruction by external coaches and teachers in activities such as football and dance. A number of visits each year support the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's emphasis on support for personal development ensures that each individual pupil feels safe and happy. The school liaises closely with a range of service providers to ensure good care and support for all pupils including those most at risk. Pupils' academic progress is tracked effectively in order to provide them with useful guidance, but they are not given detailed information about the levels they are reaching until Year 6. There is effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and those who are at the early stages of learning English, so these pupils achieve as well as others. The induction of children into the Nursery and Reception is thoughtfully planned, as is the support given to those pupils who arrive later in their education. The vast majority of parents are very appreciative of the school's work. One parent said, 'I am really happy with the school. My children are very happy to come here.' Another said, 'If there is any problem we talk to the teachers. They listen and sort it out.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Pupils make good personal and academic progress because the school is well led and managed. The very experienced headteacher provides a strong lead, and is well supported by her deputy. Their effective monitoring of provision has ensured that the best is brought out of their staff, and pupils progress well as a result. The Foundation Stage is also well led and managed. The senior team has recently been strengthened

by the appointment of an assistant head. In the past, subject leaders have not been enabled to contribute effectively to the monitoring of teaching and learning. In order to focus on raising pupils' achievement further the school is moving towards a different model of leadership and management that will ensure more decisions are made in teams. This will incorporate existing good practice, such as having one person to supervise the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The governing body, with an effective new chair, is supporting the headteacher's introduction of these changes, and is beginning to challenge the school more effectively. The school needs the governors to be more active, and to build on their strengths, such as the thoroughness in which they have monitored the school's finances. Standards across the school have improved since the previous inspection, and changes such as those already being made to monitoring arrangements are an indication of the school's good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to thank you for making us so welcome at your school and a special thank you to those who talked to us. We really enjoyed looking at your work and watching you in lessons and assemblies. We believe that Southwood Primary is a good school.

Why we think your school is good:

- You make good progress in your work and reach standards that compare with those in other schools.
- The school is led well, and your headteacher is particularly good.
- 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 well, too.
- You behave well, and enjoy being at school.
- You know how to stay safe, fit and healthy.
- Most of your parents are very happy with the school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure that teachers always show you how you can improve your work further.
- Involve the school governors more in the day-to-day life of the school
- Get across the message that missing school in term time will prevent you from learning as much as you should.

We want to wish you well in the future and hope that you will continue to enjoy your education.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew MarfleetLead Inspector