

Southborough Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101601
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	286120
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynn Bappa

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tam Hearnden
Headteacher	Mrs Doreen Fellingham
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002
School address	Southborough Lane Bromley BR2 8AA
Telephone number	020 8467 2343
Fax number	020 8467 0072

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2008
Inspection number	286120

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school serving a socially mixed community. The percentage of pupils entering or leaving the school part way through this stage of their education is higher than average, and this was especially so in the school year 2006–2007. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, is below average. The school has gained several national awards, including Healthy Schools, Activemark, Investors in People and Artsmark Gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Southborough Primary provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. Achievement is now satisfactory. The school has succeeded in eradicating the significant levels of underachievement seen in 2006 and 2007, particularly in writing and mental mathematics. Although standards by Year 6 remain below average this represents satisfactory progress from relatively low starting points when they enter the school. The school is rightly aware that more remains to be done to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can in these areas, particularly by making more rigorous use of assessment information. Pupils, however, achieve high standards in information and communications technology (ICT) and art. During the inspection, for example, pupils took part in a lively video conference with the London Museum on life during Victorian England.

The school has good features in the way that it cares for pupils so that they enjoy school and relate well to each other. Pupils particularly appreciate features such as the 'Listening Ear' where they can talk to an adult if they are worried about something. Almost all parents speak highly of the school and make comments such as, 'I have two children who have yet to say to me that they don't want to go to school (unless they are ill!).' As a result of the school's good focus on pupils' care, their personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils make the most of the excellent range of opportunities for them to take responsibility and contribute to the community. They have to apply for jobs, for example, and are expected to fill in time sheets with payment made in the form of vouchers. Pupils' improving progress in literacy and numeracy, their high standards in ICT, coupled with their well-developed personal qualities, prepare them well for the next stage of their education. The curriculum is good, with particular strengths in creativity, the programme for personal, social and health education and enrichment activities. 'Family Grouping Day', for example, gives pupils very good opportunities to work together on a variety of interesting projects such as story telling. In the words of one parent, 'The family activity day, where children are grouped in a family model with older children mixing with the younger children is an excellent idea.'

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There are many good features in the teaching, and this matches the school's own evaluation and substantiates an improving picture. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the teaching. Relationships are good and teachers are making learning more interesting and relevant by good use of interactive technology and by creating interesting links across subjects. Although lesson plans identify well what pupils are expected to learn, the work planned for the different ability groups in each class is less clear. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low.

The headteacher has a clear focus on raising standards and ensuring that pupils do as well as they can. She is well supported by senior leaders, staff and governors. There is a real sense of determination to do better. In response to the disappointing Year 6 results in 2007, for example, the school put into place a series of intervention programmes and initiatives designed to raise standards. These are beginning to pay dividends but school leaders now need to draw breath and evaluate fully the impact of this on pupils' achievement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving. Children are happy and have trusting relationships with adults. They develop their social skills effectively and play together well. Progress is good in personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory in all other areas of learning. However, with below average starting points, particularly in communications, language and literacy, few children reach what is normally expected of this age group before they join Year 1. Teaching and support are satisfactory. Opportunities to be actively involved in their learning have improved since the last inspection, particularly in ICT, where children make confident and good use of the interactive technology to enhance their learning. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of assessment procedures and have rightly identified that the school needs to identify and target potentially underachieving children as soon as possible in order to accelerate progress rates. Induction procedures are good and enable children to settle quickly. As one parent commented, 'My child's entry to school has been very well managed in all respects.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more rigorous use of assessment information in order to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Evaluate the impact of recent interventions and initiatives on pupils' achievement.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, with a particular focus on ensuring that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high.

A small proportion of schools whose effectiveness is otherwise judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory. National test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2007 indicated serious underachievement, particularly in writing and mental mathematics, and the school fell short of its targets. Standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average, except in writing where they were well below the expected levels. Standards in Key Stage 2 declined significantly in 2007 to well below average overall. This dip can partly be explained by factors such as particularly high levels of mobility in the 2007 cohort, temporary staffing disruptions and a small group of pupils who were especially vulnerable. Nevertheless, school leaders rightly realised that, despite this set of circumstances, they needed to raise standards and accelerate progress rates, particularly in writing and mental mathematics. Its actions are beginning to bear fruit, with an improvement in both these areas. Current pupils are making better progress and reaching higher levels. Consequently, Year 6 pupils have achieved satisfactorily from their starting points. This improvement is giving the school confidence to set more challenging targets that are appropriate for the future.

Pupils with statements of special educational need and those with moderate learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress because teachers are getting better at identifying their needs promptly and ensuring that they receive effective support. Vulnerable pupils achieve satisfactorily because they are settled and fully included in every aspect of school life.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and pupils say that bullying, if it occurs, is dealt with swiftly. They have a good understanding of healthy eating, enjoy lunchtimes and the opportunity to socialise over a meal with each other and with their teachers. They also participate eagerly in exercise. They like school and have positive attitudes to adults and to each other. The school council is active and its views are valued. The school works hard with parents to ensure that their children come to school regularly and on time and, as a result, attendance has improved and is now just above average. Pupils show good levels of self-esteem generally but sometimes lack confidence when expected to work independently.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although satisfactory overall, some good lessons were seen during the inspection. Teachers plan together well. They have worked hard to improve standards in writing and mental mathematics. Although these improvements have not yet had time to have an impact on national test results, work in pupils' exercise books shows that more pupils are achieving at the expected levels. In many lessons, teachers motivate pupils to do their best by the creative use of techniques such as drama, role-play and interactive technology. As one pupil commented, 'We have fun, interactive lessons.' Very good displays of work and other materials in classrooms and around the school enhance the learning environment well. Marking is up-to-date and often constructive but does not consistently show pupils what they need to do to improve their levels. Occasionally pupils do not listen well enough to teachers' instructions and lose some concentration.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Recent improvements to planning in mathematics and writing are beginning to be reflected in rising standards although there is some way to go. The school's inclusive approach means that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported. Increasingly, more able pupils are given challenging work. There are good links with local secondary schools and with the neighbouring nursery. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Regular visits provide first hand learning experiences and promote pupils' social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school makes very strong provision for pupils' pastoral care and has a clear caring ethos. It is a very welcoming place for children and their parents. Vulnerable pupils are given sensitive support, enabling them to address personal and emotional difficulties well. There are good arrangements for child protection. Support initiatives such as the 'Galaxy' breakfast and after-school club and the 'Moving On' project for pupils in Year 6 enable them to make good progress in their personal development.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Procedures for keeping track of pupils' progress have improved. However, some of these procedures are recent and are only just beginning to have an impact on raising standards. Pupils' targets are often too broad to show them clearly enough how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's effective leadership has steered the school well through a difficult period that included staffing difficulties and declining standards. While it is still too early to see the full impact of all the initiatives put into place to raise standards, there are clear signs of improvement. The school has improved its procedures for monitoring and evaluating its work. The drive to raise standards is supported by subject leaders and they are playing an increasingly effective role in checking and evaluating work in their areas. Governors are supportive and their role in challenging the school is developing as they improve their understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school takes good account of parental opinion and responds well to suggestions made by them. Issues raised in the previous inspection report have been tackled satisfactorily overall, although the rate of improvement has accelerated recently. The success of the drive to eradicate the significant underachievement in writing and mental mathematics provides a clear indication of the school's good capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	3
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?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

08 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southborough Primary School, Bromley, BR2 8AA

Thank you for making us so welcome and sharing with us your thoughts about your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to the school council members and those pupils who brought their work to show us. Well done! You obviously enjoy lessons and activities, and help a lot to make the school an enjoyable place to be. We think that Southborough is a satisfactory school that is getting better. Your behaviour, positive attitudes to work and play and the ways in which you care for one another are good. The headteacher and all the staff have obviously worked hard to improve the school. They certainly believe that all of you can achieve well, so it's up to you to prove them right and help the school move from being satisfactory to good in all parts of its work.

We have asked your teachers to make a few improvements to make the school better. We think your teachers have worked hard to make lessons better so that you learn more quickly. We have asked them to carry on doing this so that you achieve well in all subjects, particularly in writing and mental maths. Your teachers have introduced lots of new ideas to help you learn better. We think they need to spend time now on looking carefully at whether these new ideas have worked. You may have some good ideas to help your teachers with this. The third thing we have asked them to do is to improve the way in which they check on your progress to make sure all of you do as well as you possibly can.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Lynn Bappa

Lead Inspector