

# Avenue Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102960
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sutton
<b>Inspection number</b>	286535
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nicola Davies

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	671
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Randall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs D C Middlemass
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 June 2001
<b>School address</b>	Avenue Road Belmont Sutton SM2 6JE
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8642 5138
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8643 6716

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is the largest primary school in Sutton having grown from two forms of entry to three over the last six years. Overall, the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average. A high proportion is of White British heritage and around 30% is from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. Approximately one in ten is learning English as an additional language and a few are at early stages in this. Due to the expansion of the school, a higher than average proportion of pupils has joined at other than the normal time.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with many outstanding features. Pupils thrive on a diet of good teaching, extremely good relationships and care. An outstanding curriculum includes very many extra curricular activities, which enthusiastic parents and pupils agree are 'fantastic'. 'Preparing and educating pupils for the wider world' is what the chair of governors rightly sees as the impact of the excellent links and partnerships the school has developed over the years. The school takes the wider world to heart, making the most of opportunities to work with organisations locally, across England and much further afield. As a result, it has formed excellent partnerships which support the good progress and excellent personal development and well being of its pupils. For example, sporting partnerships are reflected in pupils' excellent adoption of healthy lifestyles. Similarly, long standing links with schools in Zimbabwe and Hong Kong help to develop pupils' excellent understanding of cultural difference and of their responsibilities in the world beyond the school gates.

The school's continuing quest for excellence and the outstanding leadership of the headteacher have steered the school extremely well through a period of expansion. Throughout this period, the school has maintained the high quality of care and support it provides for pupils. For example, despite its size, the school communicates very well with parents. Coffee mornings and regular newsletters complement the informative and interesting website. These, along with other initiatives are praised by parents and help ensure their continuing and overwhelming support for the school.

Pupils make good progress and achievement is good overall. Although standards dipped slightly in 2005, they are now firmly back on track and are consistently above average. Children enter the nursery and reception classes with skills which are broadly similar to those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, benefiting from the much improved curriculum. The school has adopted a new system to enhance the already good teaching and learning across the school. However, these relatively new arrangements have not yet had the chance to be fully effective in ensuring good or better teaching and learning in every lesson. For example, occasionally teachers do not pitch classroom tasks at the appropriate level for different groups of pupils.

The successes so far, such as the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), contribute to the school's excellent capacity to continue to improve. Teachers use ICT very well. The school is partway through developing its ambitious plans to expand further the way that pupils can access and use newer technologies in their learning. Pupils, staff and governors share a common vision and are dedicated to being 'the best we can be'. The school is well on the way to getting there.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching to ensure that all teaching is good or better.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Overall, pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6 standards are well above average. Termly monitoring of each pupil's progress shows that all groups of pupils are making good progress. The results of boys have generally lagged behind those of girls, reflecting their attainment on

entry to the school. However, the school has successfully raised the achievement of boys further by introducing specific topics that interest and motivate them. This means that by the end of Year 6, standards are now well above average in English, mathematics and science for both girls and boys. Standards of writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are above average and are well above average in reading.

The trend in achievement over the past three years has been variable. In 2005, test results in Year 6 showed a significant dip. However, in 2006 results were exceptionally high because Year 6 teachers used assessment data more effectively to identify and successfully tackle slower achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well, as do pupils who are learning English as an additional language. This is because the school caters well for their needs.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is excellent. The youngest children learn to respond well to teachers and to each other. Pupils behave very well in classes and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop self-confidence and a very good understanding of moral and social issues through the wide range of activities provided for them. Almost all parents say that their children like school. As one parent commented 'From the first moment my child walked through the door, he loved it'. Attendance is good.

Pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and the need for exercise to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They feel safe and know that if they are troubled in any way, staff, pupils or 'playground friends' will help with their concerns. For example, pupils in Year 2 happily share their worries with classmates through their writing on how to beat the 'Worry Monster'. Pupils take their responsibilities on the school council very seriously and are pleased with the improvements in the school which they have contributed to. Community links are strong through pupils' sporting activities, their work for charities and work to improve the local environment. Pupils develop a very good grasp of basic skills and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage. They develop confidence in selecting and choosing from a well planned and stimulating range of activities which leads to their good progress. In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan their teaching of literacy and numeracy well and have good management strategies which effectively encourage good learning. New resources such as interactive whiteboards further enliven pupils' learning. Pupils are eager learners, concentrate well and respond enthusiastically when presented with challenging opportunities to learn by themselves. For example, Year 6 pupils significantly improved their mathematical knowledge and understanding when they worked independently on computer programs which were specifically pitched to their personal attainment levels.

Marking, record-keeping and homework contribute constructively to raising individual achievement of pupils. Teachers generally make good use of the tracking procedures for monitoring pupils' progress; the best practice is outstanding. However, not all teachers make

the best use of this information to pitch classroom tasks at the appropriate level for different groups of pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The excellent curriculum is well planned in each year group and enables most pupils to build on their prior experiences. Pupils speak very highly of themed events and the interest and enjoyment they bring to learning. For example, the school held a Roman theme day when pupils dressed up and sampled Roman food. The curriculum in the Foundation stage is good, with an exciting mix of child and teacher-led activities. The very good use of ICT around the school has contributed very well to high standards in the subject. It has also played a positive role in improving the teaching of phonics.

Termly 'team challenges' and a very good range of residential experiences for older pupils contribute very well to pupils' personal development. Overall, the range of enrichment activities is outstanding. Many pupils are involved in team games and the school is rightly proud of its successes in competitions. As one parent commented 'The school offers a fantastic variety of extra-curricular experiences for the children...the achievements of the sports clubs are a credit to the children and the hard work of staff'.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care guidance and support is excellent overall. The school is extremely careful to provide a safe and secure environment for its pupils. Pupils support each other during lessons by helping each other and taking part in paired and group work. For example, 'team challenges' give all pupils the opportunity to experience working on challenging activities as a team. The school also works successfully to help parents access help and advice to support their children's learning and well-being. Successful initiatives include regular 'drop ins' with the school nurse, or classes for parents to learn English as an additional language through a link with a local college.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and they receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. Links with outside agencies are strong so that pupils with particular difficulties can receive specialist support. Successful examples include a small nurture group to help the youngest children with most difficulties. Improvements to the assessment procedures and target setting means that almost all pupils know how well they are doing and understand how to do even better.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher and her able deputy have had an outstanding impact on many areas of school life. For example, the excellent care, curriculum and partnerships, are a testament to their influence on the school. In addition, the headteacher has steered the school very well through the period of expansion. To continue to provide a high quality education, the school has put in place a new system for leading and managing groups of staff which is having a very good impact on pupils' achievement. This system helps staff to share good or outstanding practice and identify areas where the school could do better still. This approach has already led, for example, to significant improvements in the Foundation Stage, and can be seen to be having

an impact on raising the standard of teaching throughout the school. This means that the school is well on the way to achieving its ambitious target of consistently good or better teaching and learning in every classroom. This demonstrates the outstanding impact of the school's searching self-evaluation which involves the views of staff, parents and governors.

Governors are very well involved in school life and help the school continue to improve by holding it to account. The school makes very good use of its attractive space and parents comment positively on the efficiency and support they receive from administrative and other staff.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

21 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Avenue Primary School, Sutton, SM2 6JE

It was lovely for our team of inspectors to meet you recently and to share in some of the things you were doing. It was very interesting to see how your teachers provide you with exciting opportunities to learn and to become responsible young people. I was very interested to hear over lunch about all your successes on the sports field. Our team particularly enjoyed seeing you at work on computers and were very impressed by the opportunities you get to use ICT. Learning new things in interesting ways is one of the reasons you enjoy school so much and do so well. The 'fantastic' opportunities you have to take part in all sorts of activities and sports at lunchtimes and after school is another. We were sorry we couldn't see one of your 'Team Challenge' days, but we were glad we were able to talk to you about it.

We agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school. You work hard, behave very well and make good progress. One of the challenges the school has set itself is to ensure that your learning will be good in every class, every day throughout the school. This is quite a challenge but they are well on the way and some of your lessons are outstanding. Where this is not the case, it is because your activities are not quite well matched enough to what you need to learn next. So we have asked the school to carry on working at this. Your headteacher and your teachers are very good at sharing ideas with each other and supporting other schools, so it should not take very long.

We hope that the weather stays sunny for the rest of the summer so that you can continue to enjoy your outdoor swimming. It looked great fun, even in the wind.

With best wishes for the future,

Nicola Davies Lead inspector