



Somerville Primary (NC) School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103256
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286609
Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006
Reporting inspector Mark Mumby HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Somerville Road
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	3–11		B10 9EN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 6750956
Number on roll (school)	758	Fax number	0121 7733890
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Zualfqar Hussain
		Headteacher	Richard Hornsby
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006	Inspection number 286609
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Somerville is a much larger than average primary school. It serves a disadvantaged area of Birmingham. All of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups, which increasing numbers over the past three years having Somalian heritage. Most do not speak English as their first language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly higher than that found nationally, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is slightly lower.

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 of which the pupils are proud. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about the good range of activities that it provides. Their individuality is valued and they make a good contribution to the life of the school. It is a happy school because, in the words of a pupil, 'teachers make learning fun'. They make a positive contribution to the school community by acting as 'caring buddies' and 'cool friends' which complements the caring attitudes of the staff. The very caring environment and good teaching ensure that pupils make good progress. Although pupils achieve well, teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve are not always as high as they could be, especially in mathematics. Pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their work through very helpful marking and clear targets for improvement. The support for pupils at an early stage of learning English is very good. Despite their very low starting points, standards in English, mathematics and science are similar to the national average by the time pupils leave the school. They want to do well and their work is always carefully presented. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress because teachers know them well and plan activities carefully to meet their needs. The personal development of pupils is good. They are cooperative and polite, always doing their best to achieve well. Pupils are proud to receive the many awards given for good behaviour, hard work and good attendance. They know how to stay safe and have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The school has planned its curriculum and activities well to meet the needs of its culturally diverse family of pupils. Good use is made of the new resources for information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils enjoy using the new equipment and it is helping them to develop skills and learn more quickly in different subject areas. The headteacher has set high expectations and the school has a clear vision to value each pupil and enable them to reach their potential. Leadership is sensibly shared through the staff team who work well together to enable all pupils to achieve their best. The school has a very effective and rigorous system in place to monitor and develop teaching. However, the school's records about the monitoring and evaluation of planning and pupils' work are less robust. The progress made by pupils is tracked systematically and this information is used effectively to plan work which meets the pupils' needs. These systems have helped the school to make significant improvements since the last inspection and to raise standards. Attendance is now similar to the national average because of the very effective improvement strategies implemented by the school. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise expectations of what pupils are able to achieve, especially in mathematics, by making more effective use of ongoing assessment and questioning.
- Make the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' planning and pupils' work more effective in bringing about school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' progress, from exceptionally low standards on entry to standards which are broadly in line with national averages by Year 6, is good. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who are vulnerable, make good progress. Due to significant language barriers, on entry to the Nursery the level of attainment of the great majority of the children is exceptionally low. There are particularly significant weaknesses in language development, mathematical skills and personal and social skills. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception, particularly in the development of their social skills. By the end of the Reception Year, physical, creative, and personal and social skills are in line with those typically expected. However, mathematical, communication and language skills remain well below average. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, two thirds of pupils are achieving standards in reading, writing and mathematics in line with the national average. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is good and by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with the national average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their social and moral development is good and is reflected in the good relationships between the pupils and with the adults that look after them. They understand how to keep healthy and stay safe, although some pupils still choose less healthy eating options. They develop good skills for their future economic well-being through a wide range of opportunities, such as mini-enterprise projects and designing and marketing cards for the Muslim celebration of Eid. Pupils' cultural development is good because the school has skilfully integrated the broad range of ethnic groups represented in the school with pupils from other schools. Assemblies are carefully planned to meet the pupils' needs and contribute to their good spiritual development. The school has appointed an attendance manager who has very effectively implemented rigorous strategies to improve attendance. As a result, attendance has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection and is currently in line with the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well in lessons. As a result, they respond well and most lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers use praise well to develop pupils' self-esteem and additional staff are well deployed to support pupils at an early stage of learning English and those with learning difficulties. In many classrooms, informative classroom displays further develop skills and

confidence. As a result of teachers' high expectations, presentation of work is good. Teachers make effective use of the frequent opportunities they give pupils to discuss their answers with a partner, to develop understanding as well as improve speaking and listening skills. At times, however, they could be more insistent on pupils answering more fully and could better use their questioning skills to further extend pupils' thinking.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned and meets the needs and interests of all pupils. 'I can't imagine how much I can learn in one day,' was the comment made by one pupil when discussing what he most enjoyed in school. There is rightly a strong emphasis on literacy which is incorporated into all curriculum areas. The school has recently improved the overall plan by including thinking skills and Brain Gym which are helping pupils to learn more effectively. The new ICT resources, including 90 portable computers, are used well by pupils in all classes to help in their learning. In one lesson, they were used very effectively by pupils to carry out a 'virtual experiment' to find out about the melting and freezing points of liquids and solids. A good range of visits is used to bring to life work that pupils have been doing in school. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities to develop pupils' social and cultural skills. For example, the school has an Islamic Club, dance and drama, and has recently started the first all-Muslim scout group at a school in Britain.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. All pupils feel very safe and valued within the school's new building which has been carefully designed with their safety and security a top priority. In this bright and cheerful environment, they are able to make good progress. All aspects of health and safety are handled rigorously, ensuring that the school takes the best possible care of its pupils. Work is marked carefully and teachers provide clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Pupils are given very helpful targets for improvement in English which help them to make good progress. However, the setting of targets in mathematics is not consistent throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because the headteacher provides a clear educational direction and staff and governors work together as an effective team to achieve this. Despite the challenges of a major building programme and inadequate facilities until this term, the school has very successfully raised standards in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. The school's procedures for self-evaluation are good. Key staff monitor and evaluate the work of the school

systematically. There is a regular and rigorous programme to assess the quality of teaching. Judgements about the quality of teaching and learning are accurate and teachers are given clear feedback with additional support being provided when it is needed. Pupils' work is checked, although the written records retained by the school are insufficiently detailed to enable progress to be monitored effectively. The governing body is well informed about the work of the school through detailed reports from the headteacher. It carries out its responsibilities effectively.

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.

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?	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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?	1

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	2
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

Thank you for making Mrs Considine, Ms Robertson, Mr Lewis and me so welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed our visit and really appreciated the way you all looked after us so well. Your school is a good school and we were pleased to hear how much you enjoy it. You are very fortunate to be part of such a caring school family. The new building is very impressive; a lot of care must have been taken to make it so smart and safe. This is just one of the ways in which the adults in school have worked very hard to make sure you are always very safe and well cared for. You all understand how to keep healthy and safe, but some of you need to think carefully about how healthy some of the snacks you eat are. Your teachers make your lessons interesting and expect you to work hard ... which you do! We were very pleased to see how much care you take to make your work neat and tidy. The way your work is marked and the targets you are set help you to make good progress in your work. We think that you could do even better in mathematics. We have asked your teachers to help you with this by making some of your work a little bit harder – we're sure you'll be able to meet the challenge! We have also asked them to keep a careful check on all the work you do to make sure you are all doing as well as you can. You are very fortunate to have so many exciting activities in school. The scouts must have been really proud to have had their photograph in the newspaper. We were also very pleased to see how well your new computers are being used in so many different lessons. Good luck and keep up all that good work!