



Summerfield School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110385
Local Authority Milton Keynes
Inspection number 288653
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Alan Jarvis

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Downley Avenue
School category	Community		Bradwell Common
Age range of pupils	4–11		Milton Keynes MK13 8PG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908 662585
Number on roll (school)	316	Fax number	01908 694369
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs C Horton
		Headteacher	Mr G Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Summerfield is an above average-sized school. The intake is changing. It is mixed in terms of deprivation and prosperity with an average proportion eligible for free school meals. Most have White British heritage but a growing proportion comes from a minority ethnic background. A few are just learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is in line with most schools nationally and rising. Attainment on entry was average when older pupils joined the school. However, there has been a continuing fall and it is now below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Summerfield School provides a satisfactory education with some good features. It is a calm and happy school where the promotion of positive values and the development of pupil's self esteem are at its heart and soul. Pupils are helped to become well-rounded individuals regardless of their backgrounds. Parents are very supportive. As one said, 'My daughter enjoys school and all it offers'.

The leadership has taken good steps to ensure every child really does matter. Pupils are cared for well, receive good pastoral support and learn in an environment free from unkindness. Academic support is also good. The curriculum is enriched with many interesting activities and as a result pupils enjoy being at school and have good attitudes to learning. Stimulating assemblies make an important contribution to developing pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school works effectively with a range of arts, sports and business partners to enrich pupils' lives and broaden their horizons. For example, every year large numbers participate in a major production at a local theatre. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds settle in quickly and their needs are accurately identified and met.

Good management of the Reception classes has ensured that provision is good and children make good progress. Even though the starting point of children on entry has fallen, an increasing proportion are meeting or exceeding the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. Currently, standards are below average at Year 2 and average at Year 6. Nevertheless, the achievement is satisfactory overall and this difference in standards reflects the changes in the intake over the years. Standards in reading are average throughout the school. In contrast, standards in writing are not as high as they should be. However, there are signs that the good steps being taken to address this are starting to narrow the gap. Strengthening of the curriculum and teaching in mathematics and science are also helping to strengthen standards attained. Good standards in art are a distinctive feature of the school. All groups of pupils achieve equally well.

Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 has a satisfactory impact on pupils' achievement over time. However, the monitoring of actions taken to improve teaching and standards is not sharp enough. The school recognises that in order to bring about a step change in standards more good teaching is needed. Whilst teachers explain clearly what needs to be done in lessons, the tasks set are not always sufficiently different or challenging for different groups of pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory at all levels. The leadership team is clear about what needs to be done to improve the school. Some of its initiatives have been successful, particularly in improving the quality of learning in Reception and enhancing provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The school recognises that monitoring has not focused sufficiently sharply on raising standards in English, mathematics and science more quickly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school.

- Improve teaching so that lessons have greater challenge for pupils.
- Monitor the impact of initiatives taken to boost standards attained in English, mathematics and science more rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children currently enter Reception with below average standards, notably in language, communication and mathematics. They make good progress, particularly in their personal, emotional and creative development, because of good teaching and an exciting curriculum. Although they are now entering Year 1 with improved standards in their communication and mathematical skills these remain lower than those expected for their age.

Standards are below average at Year 2 and average at Year 6. This represents satisfactory progress from different starting points. Throughout Years 1 to 6 a regular reading programme helps pupils attain average standards. Standards in writing, including handwriting, are not as high as they should be. Initiatives to improve teaching by addressing weaknesses in sentence construction and extended writing are beginning to have an impact but there is still some way to go. A well balanced curriculum and satisfactory teaching in mathematics and science help pupils reach average standards. There are early signs that strengthening of computational skills in mathematics and investigations in science are helping them further. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress including those with learning difficulties and disabilities or at an early stage of learning English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual moral, social and cultural development, are good. They feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit. They enjoy school, want to learn, and are eager to succeed. Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils take pride in their work. Attendance has improved as a result of closer monitoring and is now average. Pupils are keen to contribute to school life, for instance as school councillors or sports captains. Strong community links help pupils develop a good understanding of their community. Their good awareness of the wider world is developed through their appreciation of art from different cultures. In assemblies, pupils pray and reflect, and show that they think deeply about moral issues.

Most pupils have average numeracy and literacy skills. Together with their good computer skills and the development of qualities such as decision-making and trust this means they are well prepared for the next stage in their life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children in the Reception classes are challenged and excited by the varied tasks which are set. In Years 1 to 6 the pitch and pace of learning is mostly satisfactory, although it is stronger in some classes. This leads to satisfactory rather than good gains in learning in English, mathematics and science. Relationships are consistently good. High expectations for good behaviour ensure pupils have good attitudes to learning. The aims of each lesson are made crystal clear. However, the tasks set are not always pitched at the right level or matched to the needs of different pupils. This often means that the expectation of what pupils can attain at the end of each lesson is not high enough. Good marking helps pupils recognise success and pinpoint where improvement is needed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum serves the needs of the different groups of pupils well and provides good opportunities for learning. It has a positive effect on their personal development. Strong stress is placed on the development of literacy and numeracy. Lessons in science and personal, social and health education help pupils develop a good understanding of how to live healthily. The curriculum is enriched by a very wide range of well-attended clubs. These include a cine-club which is especially effective in developing pupils' skills through film-making. Pupils' experiences and skills are deepened by educational visits and the expertise of many visitors. They are excited by the opportunities they have to develop their creative ideas and are proud of their gold Arts Mark awards. Computers play an important part in learning. Work in subjects such as art, geography and history is stimulating and there are good plans to link up subjects to create further interest for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents and carers say their children are well cared for. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well in their personal development. Good links with outside agencies such as education welfare enhance the provision. Procedures to safeguard pupils and health and safety arrangements are robust. Pupils say they feel safe and know who to talk to if they have problems. As one said, 'Staff shield us from danger'. Academic guidance is good, although the targets set for individual pupils sometimes lack precision and challenge. Pupils new to the school quickly settle and are made to feel at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership team have successfully created a positive environment in which pupils are happy and ready to learn. The Reception classes are well managed. Successful initiatives have ensured the arts play a large part in pupils' personal development. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and has resulted in plans which identify key areas for improvement. However, they lack a cutting edge because they do not show how developments are expected to impact on standards attained. In addition, lesson observations have not always led to specific developments designed to identify what teaching needs to do to raise standards. The role of middle managers is developing but is not yet fully effective in ensuring that successful strategies lead to rising standards. The governing body is supportive but does not challenge the school sufficiently to reach high standards. Satisfactory progress has been made since it was last inspected. Because it sees the need to raise standards and is beginning to have some success in doing so, its capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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?	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?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so helpful and courteous during our recent visit. Thank you for sharing your thoughts about your school.

Our report says that Summerfield is a satisfactory school with some good features. We particularly noticed how happy you all are at school and how well you are developing into responsible and well rounded individuals. The younger children make a good start in the Reception classes. Pupils from all different backgrounds get on well with each other. You also treat each other with kindness. We noticed that you behaved well in class and had good attitudes to learning. We saw the good art work on display. A number of you said that the school provided many interesting things for you to do outside normal lessons. We agree with you. Things like the cine-club, theatre productions and educational visits do much to widen your interests and make school life enjoyable. One thing we particularly liked was the assembly, taken by your local vicar. This showed you really understood the meaning of the story of 'the prodigal son' and what it means to be kind to each other.

There are a few things that could be better. We have asked your teachers to work on these areas next. Standards in writing should be higher. You can all help by thinking carefully how you write each sentence and write longer pieces of work more often. You could work a little faster and more of your work needs to be more difficult. You can help by working as hard as you can particularly on learning which is a little more demanding than usual. Your headteacher and your teachers are keen to ensure you do even better in the national tests in English, mathematics and science. They keep a check on how well these are improving. We have asked them to make some changes in the way they do this so that you can learn more quickly and get better test results.

Thank you once again for all your help.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Alan Jarvis

Lead Inspector