

South View Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115975
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290384
Inspection date	23 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Nicola Davies

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Deborah Armstrong
Headteacher	Mrs Pat MacDougall
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2001
School address	off Shooters Way Basingstoke RG21 5LL
Telephone number	01256 465960
Fax number	01256 841988

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils live in local authority housing and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The school has a specialist unit for children who have specific speech, language and communication needs. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is twice the national average. Redevelopment of the local area, combined with an increase in the number of pupils joining the school from overseas has meant that a higher than average number of children join or leave other than at the normal time of admission. Most pupils are of White British heritage but around one in five are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils learning English as an additional language is above average and one in ten pupils at the school is at an early stage in this.

The school has been awarded enhanced Healthy Schools Status, the Active Sports Mark and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

South View Infant is a good school which successfully places the support and well being of children at the heart of its work. The school prides itself on providing a supportive, secure and calm atmosphere which enables learners to flourish, whatever their particular individual needs. It achieves this well and establishes very good relationships with both parents and pupils. Parents and carers are full of praise for staff who support their children with 'passion and good humour'. Girls and boys really enjoy coming to school where they learn a good deal and mature well. The school's supportive and inclusive ethos helps children from all different backgrounds to get along well and to recognise and respect each other's strengths, talents and difficulties. As one parent commented 'We are like one big happy family'.

Many children enter the Foundation Stage with skills which are below those expected for their age and exceptionally low in the areas of language and communication. The school pays good attention to developing children's language skills through the well planned opportunities they have to talk with adults and each other about their stimulating and creative daily activities. As a result, children make good progress, although very few reach the expected early learning goals by the end of their time in the Foundation Stage. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Although standards by the end of Year 2 are still below average, pupils do well from their starting points and achievement overall is good. Pupils in the specialist unit also make good progress.

The good teaching at the school interests and excites children. Teachers adapt their approaches well to meet the different needs of children in their classes. Well organised smaller group work led by teachers and other adults meets pupils' individual needs well, as does the stimulating curriculum. For example, the school has a strong focus on learning through creative activity and children talk excitedly about the increasing opportunities they have to learn independently. However, on occasions, opportunities are missed to ensure that class activities consistently stretch the most able pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The highly regarded headteacher and her team of staff and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. Initiatives to improve the school further are very thoroughly researched, planned and executed. For example, since the time of the previous inspection, the school has re-organised and improved the way that the youngest children are taught. This has contributed significantly to children's good progress in the Foundation Stage, although, as yet, the impact has not been seen in the standards which older pupils attain. The school has correctly identified that older pupils' standards and progress in writing are not yet high enough. A whole school focus on writing is already underway and is being pursued with typical rigour and commitment. Such clear direction contributes well to the school's good capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and progress in writing by ensuring that targets for pupils are always challenging.
- Ensure that activities in lessons consistently stretch more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, mathematics and particularly writing are below average. However, the school's very thorough tracking indicates that individual pupils and groups of pupils make good progress when their starting points are taken into account. This system also helps the school identify where pupils need extra support. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, both within the school's unit and in mainstream classes, make good progress. A strong focus on speaking and listening and 'hands on' experience means that pupils learning English as an additional language do well and quickly acquire many of the skills in English they need. However the school needs to do more to ensure that all potentially more able pupils are given challenging targets and helped to achieve them in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy school a good deal and show a good awareness of how to keep safe, healthy and happy. Although some pupils find behaving well more difficult because of their identified needs, pupils recognise the difficulties that these pupils face and fully understand the school's effective system for maintaining good behaviour. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Even the youngest children develop a clear sense of right and wrong, so that any behaviour or actions which are 'unkind or nasty' are frowned upon. Pupils particularly enjoy it when their good behaviour or particular effort is recognised, for example through the school's 'Golden Child' system or through an invitation to eat lunch at a special table.

Pupils enjoy opportunities they have for working together and helping others. The school council are proud that they 'look after our school a lot'. Although few pupils achieve high standards in their academic work, they develop good self confidence and skills in working with others which prepare them satisfactorily for their next phase of schooling.

Attendance is below average but the school works successfully with external agencies to follow up and improve attendance in individual cases.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching makes a significant contribution to pupils' good progress. Teachers jointly plan a wide range of stimulating topics and activities. Within these, they develop different activities which are generally well matched to pupils' interests and needs. However, on occasions, opportunities are missed to fully extend the most able pupils, for example by encouraging them to undertake more independent work at their own pace. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Considerable expertise and good team work between class teachers and adults who provide support ensures that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well met. The outcomes can be seen in the good academic and personal progress they make as they go through the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the needs of the school's pupils well. From their earliest days in the Foundation Stage, children are introduced to stimulating activities. These are planned well to combine activities across different areas of learning. For example, during the inspection, children were involved in drama and music activities which developed their language skills as the same time as their creative skills. Younger children make good use of the outdoor area and the school plans to further extend the outdoor curriculum now that an all-weather canopy has been installed. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has improved considerably since the previous inspection and pupils now attain well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have opportunities to develop their literacy and ICT skills across the curriculum, although this is not yet fully consistent in practice.

There is an effective emphasis on personal and social development which helps pupils develop a good awareness of their own needs and those of others. Extra activities, such as exercise at breaktime or the lunchtime gardening club add to pupils' enjoyment and sense of well being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. There are good procedures for child protection and adults make a real effort to get to know the children and their families. As a result, pupils settle quickly and feel safe and parents benefit from the well planned additional activities the school provides. These good relationships with parents and good cooperation with outside agencies contribute significantly to pupils' progress. Academic and individual targets are shared well with parents and pupils although more could be done to involve pupils consistently in assessing their own progress and to ensure that writing targets are challenging enough.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those in the language unit, make good progress due to the high quality of teaching and support they receive. Vulnerable pupils, such as those who have social and emotional difficulties, are helped through initiatives such as a nurture group which provides extra support in a small group setting. The school makes sensitive arrangements to prepare children for change. For example, pupils from the language unit are integrated into mainstream lessons where appropriate and pupils are well prepared for their moves to new classes or schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management and stable staffing means that this school shares a very clear vision in which children's needs come first. Senior staff monitor developments well and so are keenly aware of changes they need to make to further improve provision. For example, the changing nature of the school's intake has meant that preparing adults to meet the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language has been a recent focus. The school has invested in extra training and resources to prepare staff well and it now plans to extend this by introducing extra support for pupils. Opportunities for staff to learn from the good practice in the school by observing each other's teaching is a weaker area which the school has plans to address. The current focus for the school is to improve standards and pupils' progress in

writing. Governors keep a very close check on the progress of initiatives as well as carrying out their statutory duties effectively and conscientiously.

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Annex A

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	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	3

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.

Annex A

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	1
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 talking to us when we visited your school recently. Your teachers are very proud of you and we could see why. You were very friendly and helpful and helped us to learn a lot about your school in a short time.

We agreed with you and your parents that South View Infants is a good school. Some of the good things you told us about were:

- all the adults are friendly and look after you well
- you enjoy school a lot and try hard to help your teachers
- you get along well and learn to understand each other
- you do a lot of interesting things which help you to learn.

One of the reasons that South View Infants is a good school is because your teachers have a lot of good ideas about how to make it even better. Your governors keep checking on their plans and they talk to your school council about their ideas too. Just now, they are working on making sure that you all do well in your writing. This is a good idea so that you all can do the very best that you can. Some of you told us your work was a bit easy sometimes, so we have asked your teachers to keep checking on this and sometimes give you harder work straight away. We hope you will enjoy this.

With best wishes for the rest of the year

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector