

# Somerton Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123661
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	292739
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Colin Lee

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Neil
<b>Headteacher</b>	Brenda Quinton-Tulloch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	Etsome Terrace Somerton TA11 6LY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01458 272537
<b>Fax number</b>	01458 272537

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than the average sized primary school. Pupils are taught in three single-age and one mixed-age classes. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school providing a high quality of education for its pupils. Pupils show tremendous enjoyment of all that they do at school and this pleases parents and carers as much as the good progress their children are making. The comments passed on by many parents show that they would agree with the pupil who, when asked if anything in the school could be improved, replied, 'It couldn't be better.'

Pupils' achievement and standards are good, and they are now outstanding in the Foundation Stage. Pupils start with expected levels of attainment when they enter Reception and progress well through the year groups. The gradual improvement in standards over time has led to pupils attaining above average standards in English, mathematics and science when they leave Year 2. The improved achievement in the Foundation Stage is starting to have the effect of increasing later progress, and Year 1 pupils are attaining standards well above expected levels. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well because they receive a high quality of support. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding as a result of the emphasis placed by the school on their personal, social and emotional development from the moment they start school. They behave very well and relationships with one another are excellent.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. This is because the high levels of care and concern for each pupil shown by all staff apply equally to pastoral provision and to the educational guidance that teachers give through their feedback, marking and target setting to help pupils' academic progress.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are given work that is matched closely to their abilities. Provision for the Foundation Stage has improved enormously since the last inspection and is now outstanding because teaching and assessment are excellent and the children work in an exciting environment that stimulates all aspects of their learning. There is a good curriculum for Years 1 and 2 in which subjects and topics are planned thoroughly. Planning for literacy and numeracy skills to be reinforced in other subjects is not as thorough as it is for information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum. There are very good opportunities for additional learning activities outside the school day.

The headteacher, senior management team and subject leaders provide excellent leadership and management. During a period of several changes of teaching staff, the headteacher has been the driving force behind the school's success. She motivates all members of the school community to participate with her for the good of the school. This has led to significant improvement in areas judged comparatively weaker at the last inspection, resulting in better management, higher achievement by pupils and acceleration in their progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Plan in more detail the opportunities for literacy and numeracy skills to be developed in other subjects.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are generally above average and pupils achieve well. The significant improvements in provision for the Foundation Stage since the last inspection are reflected in the children's rising achievement and the standards reached by the end of the Reception Year. In 2006, these

standards were well above expected levels in all areas of learning except reading, which was at the expected level. Standards in the current Reception class are very high in all areas. This shows excellent progress from an average starting point. The children are already confidently tackling Year 1 work in literacy and numeracy.

In Year 1, the pupils are continuing to achieve very well and have made particularly good progress this year in reading. The current Year 2 class are different from the school's usual intake insofar as there is a high proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities. Their standards are broadly average. Whilst this represents good achievement by the pupils concerned, it is below the standards normally seen in the school's performance in national tests and assessments for Year 2. These previous results have been consistently above national averages in reading and writing. Mathematics and science have been weaker than literacy in the past but were above average in 2006. This is the result of the effective measures taken to raise achievement, including good curriculum development by subject leaders and improvement in teaching across the school.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils show very positive attitudes to lessons and all other aspects of school life. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils love the chance to go in the school's Spiritual Garden because, as one explained, 'It is so peaceful and quiet, it helps you think.' Pupils show high levels of respect for the views of others and are well informed about different faiths and cultures. Attendance is good for most pupils but the overall level is no better than satisfactory because a few families have problems with punctuality.

Pupils have excellent knowledge and understanding of how to stay healthy as a result of the school's strong emphasis on the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating. They have a very thorough awareness of keeping safe in and out of school. They show genuine concern for others. Older pupils act as 'buddies' and look out for others at playtimes although, as a member of the school council made clear, 'Everyone tries to be a buddy to everyone else.' The school has a strong sense of community and the pupils make a good contribution to school life. They are strongly committed to raising funds to help children in other countries. Pupils' social skills are mature for their age and their good basic literacy and numeracy skills mean they are well prepared for future education and eventual economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers successfully develop a love of learning in pupils. They explain the main things that they expect pupils to learn and provide tasks matched closely to pupils' needs, making them confident about tackling their work. Lesson planning in the Foundation Stage is impressively thorough, with clear identification of all the learning objectives of each activity. Such planning is less detailed in other classes, for example it does not usually identify if and how literacy or numeracy skills are to be practised in another subject. Assessment procedures have recently been improved and teachers are using this information effectively to set pupils specific targets for the next stage in their learning. This contributes to a good quality of learning and is improving achievement.

In all classes, there is close, very effective collaboration between the teachers and teaching assistants so that all are aware of the different children's specific needs. Joint planning by teachers ensures that pupils in the mixed-age class are having appropriately similar learning activities to those in single-age classes. There is good attention to the needs of gifted and talented pupils. They are challenged well by their work, both in class lessons and in the opportunities they have to work with pupils of similar ability from other schools. All pupils show good levels of concentration, whether working in groups, with an adult or working independently.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in the Foundation Stage love coming to school because they have an exciting range of learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors, including purposeful play. In Years 1 and 2, a strong and effective emphasis is given to the development of pupils' core skills in literacy and numeracy lessons. In addition, the school provides a broad, stimulating curriculum, a feature of which is the regular themed day or week where the whole school is involved in a project. Some projects also offer parents an opportunity to work alongside their children. The highly successful Healthy Living Week saw parents and pupils working together in activities as diverse as line dancing and dental hygiene. Good use is made of ICT to support pupils' work in other subjects. In contrast, planning is not clear enough about how literacy and numeracy skills are to be developed across the curriculum.

The curriculum is enriched by a good range of educational visits, visitors and school clubs. These are greatly enjoyed by pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The staff know the pupils very well and the school works very closely with parents so that pupils' needs are met. Pupils feel safe and know that they can talk to staff if they have any worries. Child protection procedures are robust, and all mandatory checks for safeguarding children are carried out meticulously. The school works exceptionally well with external agencies to provide support for pupils when this is required. Effective arrangements help children to settle into the Foundation Stage and prepare Year 2 pupils for their next stage of education. The school has improved its procedures for educational guidance considerably. These are now outstanding because they have clear impact on pupils' achievement, which is now at least good. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and discuss this with them. The pupils have a clear understanding of their achievements and of their targets for further improvement. Their progress is tracked carefully, targets are constantly being revised, and well judged actions are taken to support any pupils who may be falling behind.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher successfully manages the challenge of combining a class teaching commitment with strong, focused leadership and management of the school. She has created a very effective teamwork approach so that all staff work towards common aims. The senior management team works very well together on planning for school improvement, monitoring and evaluating teaching and checking on pupils' standards and progress. As a consequence, pupils' achievement

is being driven upwards. The school knows itself well and its self-evaluation judgements are accurate, although cautious. The governing body is fully involved in the day-to-day life of the school and has effective strategies for monitoring its effectiveness. There have been significant improvements in all areas identified for development at the last inspection. This indicates that the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement in the future.

All staff have several subject leadership responsibilities and carry these out very effectively. They have regular opportunities to carry out monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in their subjects and provide useful feedback to colleagues. The school recognises that lesson planning needs to be checked to ensure that, where appropriate, different subjects are being used to extend pupils' learning of core skills. There has been recent improvement in the evaluation of pupils' achievement. Data are analysed very thoroughly and used constructively to show where improvement can be made and to determine the action necessary to achieve this. The improved standards and achievement in reading, mathematics and science are examples of the effectiveness of these procedures.

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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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	3
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	2

### 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>	2
<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	2
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	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

12 May 2007

Dear Children

Somerton Infant School, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6LY

Thank you for making me welcome in your school and for talking with me so willingly. I thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. I think your school is doing an excellent job in helping you to learn. The school does many things very well. This is what I particularly appreciated:

- You make an excellent start to your education in the Reception class.
- You are reaching good standards, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- You behave well and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where everyone helps one another.
- All of you are taught well and at times the teaching is excellent. The teachers work hard to plan interesting things for you to do in your lessons. This is helping you to learn well.
- The teachers and teaching assistants give good help to those of you who find some of the work quite hard.
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise and about how to keep safe at school and home.
- All the adults look after you well and make sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The school is led superbly by your headteacher and all the adults, including the governors, work well together to improve it.
- I think your school could get even better if:
- you have more opportunities to develop your reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.

I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Somerton Infant School an even better school by continuing to work hard and do your best.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee Lead Inspector