



# Somersham Primary School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 124609  
**Local Authority** SUFFOLK  
**Inspection number** 293051  
**Inspection dates** 1–2 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Ruth Frith

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Church Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Lower Somersham, Ipswich
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Suffolk IP8 4PN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01473 831251
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	72	<b>Fax number</b>	01473 831251
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Marsbury
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Jeanette Hubbard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 November 2002		

---

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 1–2 March 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 293051
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 Additional Inspector over two days.

## Description of the school

This is a small, four class rural school which serves the village of Somersham and surrounding villages. Pupils come from families representing a range of socio-economic backgrounds and nearly all are White British. A few pupils come from the Traveller community. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies considerably from year-to-year. It is broadly in line with national expectations for those in the current Reception class but has been below in previous years. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above that usually seen and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. Several pupils enter the school during Key Stage 2. There has been high staff turnover including four headteachers in five years but over the last two years staffing levels have remained stable.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money. Staff are successful in creating a friendly and supportive environment where children enjoy school and attend regularly. Children settle well in the Foundation Stage and standards are similar to those expected nationally. Progress throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory overall although improvements in teaching are bringing about pockets of good progress.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but good features are evident throughout, such as the positive atmosphere which supports learning and the way teachers develop pupils' thinking by effective questioning. The good rate of learning in some lessons ensures that no time is wasted and pupils achieve well. In others, the work is not always well matched to the range of abilities within the class and insufficient challenge is provided, particularly for the more capable pupils. Consequently, progress remains no better than satisfactory. Improvements to the teaching of science have helped to raise standards and the current focus on raising standards in mathematics is beginning to bear fruit. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress overall. However, all groups do not do as well as they should and some of the more capable pupils in Key Stage 2 could do better. Standards in English and science are broadly average but are below average in mathematics.

Pupils' personal development and well being are good. They behave well and develop good relationships with adults and each other. Pupils' pastoral care is good so pupils feel safe and know what to do if they have a problem. Academic care and guidance remain satisfactory because, although some pupils are clear about their literacy and numeracy targets, others are not. Consequently, some pupils do not know what they are aiming to achieve. The curriculum is satisfactory overall but the mathematics provision has not been as effective as that in other areas. Improvements in art, music, dance and drama are making learning more interesting and the personal, social and health education programme is good. Pupils know how to live safe and healthy lives and this is beginning to influence what they do. Many are keen to take part in physical activities to improve their fitness.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's system for checking its performance is sound and staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done next. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have been unsatisfactory in the past. Consequently, improvements have not been as quick as they should have been. However, recent developments and improvements to these systems are beginning to accelerate the rate of improvement. Consequently, the school now has satisfactory capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics across the school.

- Through effective, regular monitoring and evaluation raise the quality of teaching to good throughout the school.
- Use the information gained from tracking pupils' progress to ensure that sufficient challenge is provided, particularly in mathematics and for pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that all pupils are clear about their targets and know how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage, especially in their personal and social development and early reading, writing and number skills. By the time they enter Year 1, most reach the standards expected for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. In the 2006 Year 2 national assessments, they reached standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were broadly average. Standards were similar to the previous year in writing, improved in reading but were lower in mathematics. Results of the 2006 Year 6 national assessments were below average in English and low in mathematics and science. Nearly half of these pupils had learning difficulties and overall standards in each subject were affected by the lower than average number of pupils reaching the higher levels. The school did not reach its targets in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress was broadly satisfactory in English but inadequate in mathematics and science. In response to this, the school has made improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum and currently pupils achieve satisfactorily from Years 1 to 6. Nearly all pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to others in the class. The progress of one or two pupils from the Traveller community is affected by their low attendance.

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

### **Grade: 2**

In response to the high expectations of adults, pupils behave well and build good relationships with staff and each other. They can be seen taking care of other children, for example during playtime, and supporting each other when working in small groups during lessons. Because they enjoy school, the vast majority attend regularly and arrive on time. Pupils' good knowledge of how to live safe and healthy lives is beginning to impact on what they do. They have a clear understanding of what they should do if they see, or experience, unacceptable behaviour from others. Many said they were more willing to try out unfamiliar fruit and vegetables and enjoy the healthy school meals. They use the large school grounds to raise fitness levels and enjoy taking part in sporting activities with other schools. They make a positive contribution to the community through the school council when they have a say in how areas of the school are decorated. Pupils' good social skills equip them well for their next stage of education and beyond but weaknesses in numeracy mean that support for their economic well-being is only satisfactory. Spiritual and cultural education is developed well

through music, art, drama, dance and religious education but more could be done to raise pupils' awareness of cultures different from their own.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although satisfactory overall, some good aspects of teaching are evident throughout the school. The good relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the supportive school ethos where pupils feel confident to try out new things. They enjoy their learning. Teachers' questioning is a strength because it develops pupils' thinking well. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class develop their own questions for a character in a popular series of books and show by these questions that they have understood the stories and enjoyed them. Teaching is good here because all are well motivated by the good range of activities. Lesson planning has improved. Teachers now have more comprehensive and up-to-date information about how their pupils are progressing and frequently use this to plan appropriate work. However, now and again they miss opportunities to match work to the range of abilities within the class. This sometimes limits the expectation of the more capable pupils, particularly in mathematics.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Staff place sufficient emphasis on developing pupils' skills across all subjects but have been less successful in numeracy. Pupils like the recent improvements to music, art, drama and dance but many would like more opportunities to use computers. The school is addressing this by purchasing more up-to-date resources but currently the computer suite is not used to full effect. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoy their French lessons. The personal, social and health education programme is effective in developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem and, together with science and physical education lessons, encourages them to stay safe and healthy. Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop good skills through cycling proficiency and swimming and to benefit from regular exercise. A good range of clubs and additional activities, such as taking part in a local music festival, help to develop pupils' skills and extend their interests.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

There is a good system of pastoral care which helps pupils to settle well and enjoy their schooling. There are effective systems to encourage good behaviour, and through their day-to-day practice staff successfully show pupils how to respect and care for others. Effective procedures are in place covering health and safety and child protection issues. Consequently the needs of pupils are well safeguarded. Satisfactory support is provided to meet the needs of those pupils who find learning difficult. They develop confidence and are well integrated in school. Recently, additional numeracy sessions

have been provided for a small group of pupils in each class to develop their confidence with numbers and accelerate their progress. Initial signs are promising. Changes have been made to the way targets are set for pupils, for example, in numeracy, but not all pupils are clear how these link to the work done in lessons or what they should do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school development plan highlights priorities for school improvement and gives overall direction to the school's work. However, it lacks a sharp focus on how standards are expected to rise and by how much. Nevertheless, there are clear procedures in place to improve standards through better teaching. The newly introduced system to track pupils' progress means the staff now have clearer information about the progress pupils are making. Consequently, they can more readily intervene when necessary and provide additional support. It is too early to see the full impact of the recent improvements but early signs are encouraging and staff are optimistic. Due to a heavy teaching commitment, the headteacher has been unable to develop a fully effective system for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are becoming more proactive in their work.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

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

### 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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

5 March 2007

Dear Children

Somersham Primary School, Church Lane, Lower Somersham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 4PN

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and finding out about what you do. I have written below some of the things I liked.

- You enjoy school and work well together.
- The school is a happy place because you get on well with each other.
- You know how to stay healthy by eating a good diet and having plenty of exercise.
- You behave well and look after each other.
- Staff look after you well so you feel safe. I was pleased to hear that you would go to a member of staff if you had any problems.

I have spoken with Mrs Hubbard, the staff and governors and we have agreed that they need to help you do better in mathematics and also help to make the work more challenging, particularly for those of you who find learning easy. Teachers are also going to improve their teaching and help you to understand your targets and improve your work.

I left your school confident that it will continue to improve and wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector