

Southam Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130905
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	293661
Inspection date	30 April 2007
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wayne Hawkins
Headteacher	Jennifer Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	St James Road Southam CV47 0QB
Telephone number	01926 812520
Fax number	01926 810733

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Southam Primary school is a little above average in size and its pupils come from all areas of the town. About a third come from families that experience challenging social and economic circumstances. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are significantly more girls than boys. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average.

The school has been awarded 'Artsmark Gold' for its work in developing the arts and has other national awards, including one for physical education. It is very active in developing links with schools in many countries overseas.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Southam Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. There are some outstanding features, particularly within the curriculum. The school is well led and managed under the very focused leadership of the headteacher. Expectations are good and pupils respond well to them in their work and behaviour. Pupils make good progress from their below average starting levels and standards are average by the time they leave school. Their personal development, including behaviour, is good. 'Our children's all round development is well provided for' is how one parent expressed their satisfaction with the school.

Last year, standards in Year 6 slipped. These pupils made significantly less progress than usual in school because they were affected by considerable staffing changes when they were in Years 3 and 4. Whilst they were well taught in Years 5 and 6, they did not make up all the lost ground. This year, pupils are making good progress because teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do well in school because of carefully planned small steps in their work. The effective system to track pupils' progress has identified a number of pupils who have the potential to reach higher levels in their work, as well as a number who are already at an advanced level. The challenge for these pupils is not yet consistent enough to ensure all reach their targets. Following last year's results in Year 2, the school is working well to ensure that younger boys are as successful as the girls. Older boys progress well. Children in Reception make good progress and many reach the expected level before they join Year 1. The rest need more time in order to do this.

The curriculum is good. It is rich and rewarding, especially in its outstanding focus on the arts and physical education, and on international cultures. Pupils' work is regularly exhibited at the National Gallery because of its high quality. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding and is considerably enhanced by the remarkable focus on different cultures and communities. Provision before and after school is good and caters well for the pupils who attend, including those who do not find learning straightforward.

Pupils are given good support and guidance and are well cared for. They are safeguarded well. Academic guidance is based on much improved assessment and target tracking systems, which are effective in pinpointing the progress made. Whilst there are a number of ways in which these targets are shared with the pupils, there is not yet a consistent way in which their actual achievement is celebrated visually in class or through the marking of pupils' work.

The school has a good track record of improvement, which has been enhanced by its rapid and successful response to the weaker results last year. The staff form a well bonded team who are focused on good standards. Governors keep a watchful eye on school performance and are ready to ask challenging questions to ensure it is effective. The school knows itself well. Its self-evaluation is realistic. It has good capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils with the potential to achieve higher levels are challenged consistently.
- Develop consistent ways to celebrate pupils' achievement of their targets in classroom displays and through the marking of books.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of pupils is good and has been for a number of years, despite the dip in 2006. School leaders have made substantial improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment and target tracking in the year since the 2006 tests. There is reliable data to show pupils' progress and standards. Progress is now good and standards have returned to previous levels. Leaders are working effectively to lift them further. Boys and girls are making very similar progress. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities continue to do well and there has been good improvement to standards in mathematics. There is work still to do to ensure all those pupils capable of reaching the higher levels actually do so, but leaders are determined that they will. Children in Reception are progressing well because their work is motivating and purposeful. Achievements in the arts and physical education are strengths of the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils have an acute sense of their own community and those of others in different parts of the world. They make a strong contribution to the local community through their management of stalls at Christmas and summer fairs and their links with local churches. They have regular contact with pupils in schools overseas and this, coupled with their outstanding arts education, ensures their cultural development is excellent.

Pupils know well the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Their achievement in physical education and sports underlines their good physical health. They are alert to safety issues and are aware it is essential that all the adults working with them have been checked for suitability. A few parents have concerns that behaviour is not always of the best. They can be reassured that pupils report that 'most pupils are well behaved most of the time' and do not see behaviour as an issue. In fact, behaviour is good, although there are a few challenging pupils. They are managed well.

Attendance levels are well above average, which reflects pupils' good enjoyment of school. They work hard and are enthusiastic about their learning, which encourages them to make good progress. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the effective care given. Pupils throughout the school develop satisfactory levels of basic skills in English and mathematics and good levels in information and communication technology. Pupils enjoy working in teams and taking on responsibility, which is good preparation for their future life and education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning quality has been improved well. The weaknesses caused by the past upheaval in Year 3 and 4 staffing has been eliminated. There is now good consistency of teaching and learning across the school and previous strengths found in parts of the school, especially Years 5 and 6, have been maintained and shared. Pupils' progress has accelerated as a result of the good pace to the work, variety of motivating activities in lessons and the capable involvement of teaching assistants.

Teaching in Reception is good and there is a successful mix of adult led work and independent investigation. Work is carefully planned for Reception children and they are assessed regularly, and effectively, for the progress they are making.

Pupils are keen to assess their own learning and do this accurately. Their self-assessment is not consistently recorded in displays that celebrate the achievement of their targets. Whilst the marking of work is conscientious and identifies ways to improve, it does not always flag the level of attainment or whether personal targets have been met.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There are some outstanding features to the curriculum, particularly the arts focus and emphasis on international cultures. Pupils benefit from these initiatives and produce high calibre work that reflects their interests. Out of school activities are good. Year 6 pupils particularly enjoy abseiling during their residential visit and the programme of sports and fitness activities, including dance, contributes much to pupils' achievements. The before and after school clubs cater well for those pupils who attend.

The curriculum for mathematics has been improved well and work has commenced to improve that for English. Standards are rising because of effective improvement to the curriculum, but there is still work to do to ensure more able pupils all achieve their potential. Reception children benefit from a well structured curriculum that covers all six areas of learning in depth.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

'Our teachers listen to what we say and help us when we need it' is the general view of pupils. They are keen to explain that they are well cared for, kept safe and given good guidance. They see the staff as friends and are keen to work with them. Pupils who do not find work easy, whether because they have learning difficulties and disabilities, find good behaviour challenging, or lack concentration, are all nurtured well.

Pupils know their personal targets and evaluate their own progress realistically. There is not yet a consistent celebration of pupils' progress visually in classrooms or through the marking of work in books.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

School leaders are not complacent and are 'going for gold.' Under the steady and resolute guidance of the headteacher, staff and governors have addressed the weaknesses in standards and achievement found last year with considerable skill and expertise. Pupils' progress has risen well as a result and systems to check and evaluate school performance and to track pupils' progress have been made much more fit-for-purpose. All leaders and governors share in the same good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They work well as a team and have good expectations of the pupils.

School improvement planning is based on accurate evaluation of the school's work and pinpoints priorities precisely. The enhancement of provision for the more able, and the refinement of the target tracking system to celebrate pupils' achievement in a more long-lasting way visually,

are the two key priorities for leaders to focus on at present. They have already recognised these things are necessary.

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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>	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	1
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	1
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?	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	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

27 April 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southam Primary School, Southam, CV47 0QB

I enjoyed my recent visit to school and want to thank you for the welcome you gave me. I discovered a lot about you and was pleased that you wanted to share your ideas and thoughts. I think you go to a school that gives you a good education. I also found many other good things.

- You make good progress and reach average standards.
- You are keen to come to school and your attendance is very good.
- You are well behaved, and work and play together well.
- Not many children know as much as you do about life in their local community and in other countries.
- You are taught well.
- You achieve excellent results in arts subjects and physical education.
- You are well looked after.
- Your school is well led by your headteacher and the staff and governors.

I think there are two things that can be improved.

- There should be harder work for those of you who are capable of reaching higher levels in your tests.
- When teachers mark your work or display it in your classroom, there should be more comments about how well you have reached your targets.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead Inspector