



Southfields Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131442
Local Authority Coventry
Inspection number 293755
Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Chris Kessell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	East Street
School category	Community		Coventry
Age range of pupils	3–11		CV1 5LS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	024 76226810
Number on roll (school)	210	Fax number	024 76257457
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Gordon Meredith
		Headteacher	Paul Tuffin
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a significantly disadvantaged area. Sixty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average. A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small minority are at the early stages of learning English. Mobility is well above average with high numbers of pupils either joining or leaving the school during the academic year. Consequently, the make-up of some year groups can change quite significantly over a short period of time. Seventeen per cent of pupils are refugees or asylum seekers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This happy and welcoming school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is improving well and has a number of good features. Strengths include the pupils' good personal development and the good care and support that they are provided with. Described by one parent as a 'haven in the community', it is easy to see why the school is very popular with both pupils and parents. The friendly and caring culture is beneficial to all pupils. Asylum seekers and refugees for example, who join during the academic year, settle quickly and become part of the school 'family'. Pupils enjoy their education.

There is no such thing as a typical year group at Southfields because of the school's complex characteristics. For this reason, standards achieved change quite dramatically year on year and they range from below average to exceptionally low. Most pupils achieve at least satisfactorily in relation to their starting points. The school is very aware of the ground that many pupils have to make up, particularly in their language and literacy work, and has been successful in implementing a range of strategies to target particular groups. Pupils with little or no English for example, who arrive in all year groups, often make quite rapid progress. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory. Very few children reach expected levels by Year 1 despite making sound progress.

There are still things to do in the school to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as possible all of the time, but the momentum is there. Planning for improvement is well established and the headteacher is passionate about taking the school forward. The success of strategies, such as that for pupils who arrive in the middle of the academic year, shows that there is the capacity to continue improving. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the leaders and managers have a generally clear understanding of what they need to do to achieve greater success, there is an over-optimistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Teaching is satisfactory and enables pupils to learn effectively. There is some good or better teaching but it is not yet consistent enough across the whole school. In lessons, a range of work is normally provided for different groups of pupils linked to their ability and understanding. There are times when this is not matched accurately enough to pupils' individual needs. Teachers' expectations are occasionally too low. Classrooms are calm and lessons are interesting. Relationships through the school are very strong and the pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils feel safe and secure and have the confidence to participate in lessons. They love answering questions and are very motivated and keen to do well. Pupils' group learning targets are not always sufficiently challenging enough or appropriately worded.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils achieve as well as possible by providing them with work that is more accurately matched to their needs and sufficiently challenging.
- Provide pupils with learning targets that contribute effectively to improving their achievement and standards.

- Raise teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve so that they are consistently high.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Since the previous inspection report, the school's results at the end of Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated considerably. These variations are attributable to the differing characteristics of each year group. The school attempts to set realistic and challenging academic targets for each year group but these can often become redundant by the end of the academic year because of the high number of pupils who have either left or joined the school. Children join the school with very low levels of attainment. Only a few achieve the goals expected for their age by the end of Reception. Low standards in Years 2 and 6 mask a general trend of improvement in pupils' achievement since the school's last inspection. A significant number of pupils achieve well, particularly those who join the school with little or no English and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. This is the result of well organised support and provision for these pupils. The school recognises the need, in the future, to ensure that all pupils make good progress by providing work that is sufficiently challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good because they are given a high priority by the school. Good relationships and racial harmony result in a happy atmosphere. Pupils say that they enjoy school and make comments such as, 'We like all things we do in school.' They move around the school safely and with care and consideration. Attendance is average and improving. The involvement of the learning mentors in the school's drive to improve attendance is paying dividends. Pupils are eager to come to school. They fully understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating, although not all of them choose the healthy options on offer for school meals. Pupils are involved in decisions to improve their school through an active school council and are proud of their contributions to the local and wider community. They quote an example where they raised money to install a water borehole in Ghana. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes well to their overall personal development. Pupils are good at taking responsibility, either undertaking classroom jobs or looking after each others' welfare as 'Playground Pals'. The pupils show great maturity, which is exemplified in their good teamwork and outstanding behaviour. Despite a minority having below average basic skills, they are adequately prepared for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to do and routines are well established. Pupils enter classrooms first thing in the morning with smiling faces. Lesson planning is generally good and assessment information is used to identify what different groups of pupils will be doing to enable them to make at least satisfactory progress. The match of work to pupils' ability could, at times, be more accurate to ensure that all pupils are challenged sufficiently and make better than satisfactory progress. In good lessons, this happens consistently and teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are higher. The majority of teachers successfully use interactive whiteboards to make lessons more interesting and motivate the pupils. Teachers have a good awareness of the need to continually provide opportunities to develop pupils' language and communication skills. Consequently, time is allocated for pupils to answer questions or be involved in discussions, either with each other or the class as a whole. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They confidently work with small groups. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Although there are examples of good marking, too often, pupils are provided with insufficient information on how to improve their work or move on to the next stage of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enriched well by carefully planned extra-curricular activities, visitors and visits, including a residential stay in Wales. Pupils value these, saying that they are 'lucky' to be able to participate in them. The curriculum contributes well to the pupils' personal development. Access to outdoor learning in Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and both the Nursery and Reception classes now have good opportunities to learn outside. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly since the previous inspection and the school now fulfils statutory requirements in this subject. Despite these improvements, which are relatively recent, the school acknowledges that there is still work to be done in developing the subject further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has many strengths in this area, and pupils are provided with high quality care and support. Both pupils and their parents feel that this is a very caring school. Pupils arrive at the school with varied backgrounds and needs and are nurtured well. Relationships with adults are good, so pupils can ask for help when they need it. Expectations of behaviour are high, resulting in an orderly community where pupils feel free from any harassment. Careful attention is paid to the protection, health and safety of the pupils who say that they feel safe in school and well supported by staff.

The quality of learning targets for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good enabling many of them to make good progress against their starting points. There are effective systems in place to check on pupils' progress and pupils are provided with group learning targets. These are not always challenging enough or appropriately worded. While meaningful marking is in evidence, it is not consistent throughout the school. Academic guidance, therefore, is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but within this there are a number of strengths. All staff are provided with good levels of support and the views of pupils and parents are acquired regularly and acted upon. The gathering and analysis of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress is developing well and being used effectively to identify areas for improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have received effective training in data analysis but this has not yet been undertaken by subject managers. Despite some over optimism about school performance, senior staff have a secure understanding of where more needs to be done. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and other aspects of the school. The planned further development of Reception and Nursery provision is an example of this. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Since the arrival of the current headteacher, improvement has been more substantial. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and proud of the school but are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating school performance and its strategic development.

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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	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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	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	1
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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

We enjoyed our visit to your school to find out how well the school is doing. Thank you for making us feel welcome and greeting us with so many smiles. It was fun talking to you about your work and the school. This letter is to tell you what we found.

Both you and your parents like the school. It is easy to see why. The adults take very good care of you and lessons and other activities are interesting and exciting. You are very good at working and playing together. Many of you join the school during term-time and settle in very quickly because everyone is so supportive and friendly. Although standards in the school are not as high as in other schools, the teachers and other staff make sure that you all make progress. The school is improving and Mr Tuffin and all of the staff are working hard to make the school get better and better.

We have asked the school to concentrate on a few things that will help it improve and they are listed below:

- To help more of you make good progress by giving you different work that is just right for you.
- Give you learning targets in English and mathematics that are easy to understand and help you get better with your work.
- To make sure that you are all challenged to work as hard as you can.

Best wishes to all of you.