

Southwold Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100242
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	307334
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Michelle Walder
Headteacher	Mr Gary Boyd
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2006
School address	Detmold Road Clapton London E5 9NL
Telephone number	020 8806 5201
Fax number	020 8806 9287

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average and popular inner city primary school serving an area containing some high deprivation. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mainly from African and Caribbean backgrounds. Over three quarters of pupils have home languages other than English and about one in five is at an early stage of learning English. About one in 10 pupils is from a refugee, asylum seeker or traveller background. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals and of those who receive support for learning difficulties are above average. The number of pupils who join and/or leave the school other than at the end of Year 6, is high, but the number leaving is reducing. The headteacher took up his post in April 2006 and the entire leadership team has changed over the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Southwold is an improving school that is providing a satisfactory education for pupils. Following a period in which parents and staff lost confidence in the school it is now a popular choice of parents. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent said, 'We walk for 30 minutes in the morning and the afternoon to be able to send our children to Southwold'. Parents now feel welcome in the school because of the good partnership that has been developed with them.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills well below expected levels, many with a limited knowledge of English. They make satisfactory progress but still enter Year 1 with well below expected standards. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. In years 5 and 6 they achieve well because, measures such as having smaller classes and grouping pupils by ability, are successfully beginning to raise standards. Pupils' standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average. Pupils who have specific learning difficulties and those from all the ethnic minority backgrounds make the same progress.

The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. A particular success has been the promotion of high expectations of behaviour which is now consistently good and contributes to the positive learning environment. Pupils enjoy the school where they feel safe and cared for but attendance rates are well below national averages because too many parents take their children out of school for extended holidays. The school is a harmonious community where cultural backgrounds and faiths are accepted, and understood by all. One pupil said, 'Whatever religion or colour you are, you would always make friends'. Pupils know what they should do to keep healthy and most make healthy choices of food as well as enjoying the sport activities provided. The contribution they make to the community is satisfactory and because of the improved standards in Year 6 the preparation for their ongoing education and later life is now satisfactory.

Teaching is consistently satisfactory. It is often good, particularly for the older pupils, but if standards are to improve, more good teaching is needed in the lower year groups. Good systems to improve marking and the use of assessment to set challenging targets have been introduced. There has been insufficient time for these to embed, and they are not used consistently across the school. Although the higher ability pupils are making similar progress to others, they are insufficiently challenged to make even better progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There is a shared vision of raising standards to maximise the opportunities available to pupils. The headteacher and deputy have had a good impact on raising standards and improving provision in a very short time. However middle managers have not yet had time to impact significantly on raising standards and overall the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle quickly in the friendly, welcoming environment in which they are well looked after. Resources include an improved outdoor area accessible to both Nursery and Reception children. Many parents comment on how happy their children are in the Nursery. Recently introduced support measures, under the guidance of outside consultants, are helping to improve the provision, after a period during which there was insufficient attention to monitoring children's progress. Teaching is now more focused on providing a good balance between

teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to learn through structured play. There is more still to do to ensure that children are sufficiently challenged during these activities. Nevertheless, children are now making satisfactory progress. The leadership team is aware of the areas requiring development and is working hard to ensure improvement continues.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and provision in the Foundation Stage.
- Make consistent use of data and marking to ensure that work matches the needs of all pupils to enable them to meet challenging targets.
- Work with parents to improve attendance levels.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which still have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupil standards overall are well below average but achievement from their very low starting point is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2 they have made satisfactory progress but are still achieving standards that are well below average. More consistently good teaching helps ensure that pupils progress well in Years 5 and 6, and standards are broadly average. Pupils who have learning difficulties make similar progress to other pupils. Actions taken by the school following the previous inspection to raise standards in English, mathematics and science have been successful. A monitoring visit in July 2007 identified that the school needed to focus more sharply on raising standards as a matter of urgency, especially in writing. This has been achieved.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Assemblies make a strong contribution. For example, a story about a Polish lady made good links to the themes of 'hope' and 'courage' to help pupils understand feelings. Their consistently good behaviour enables all pupils to learn in lessons and to enjoy school. Bullying is very rare and is dealt with promptly. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They are proud of their school where they say there is a good range of activities. They are particularly excited about the SHINE at Southwold Saturday School. Attendance rates at the school are well below national averages and too many parents take their children out of school for extended holidays. The school council has an influential role in the school. It is well organised and has its own small budget.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Many of the teachers are new to the school but they are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. Pupils are keen to learn and their good behaviour and positive attitude to learning are strengths, which boosts the impact of the teaching. The classroom management skills of the teachers are good and they use praise and reward systems well. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons, especially the practical ones. Whilst lessons are at least satisfactory, many are good

because of their increased pace. Recently introduced marking systems are beginning to be effective in some classes, but marking is still inconsistent and does too little to show pupils what they need to do to improve. The use of data to monitor and assess progress is improving but is still not used sufficiently to inform planning and to challenge pupils. This is particularly true for the higher ability pupils. The use of target setting is at an early stage of development. Support staff provide good support for those who need extra help with the work during the main part of the lesson. They are not always used effectively during the introduction part of the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The past focus on raising standards in the core subjects has limited the breadth of the curriculum. Pupils themselves identified that they were doing too much mathematics and English. The curriculum is now becoming much broader as well as more appropriate to the needs of the pupils. For example, the teaching of philosophy strengthens pupils' ability to reflect, ask sensitive and thoughtful questions, and promotes listening skills. There is still a need for more practical work and more effective links between subjects to support literacy and numeracy skills. At present the curriculum does not sufficiently cater for the higher attaining pupils. Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular trips including a Year 5 residential trip and many more local trips to support classroom learning. The provision for additional learning beyond the school day is good and additional support is provided for some pupils by visiting art therapists.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school ensures that all the pupils are treated equally and, by promoting high expectations of behaviour, ensures that they feel safe and secure. Parents comment on how welcoming the school is and they feel their children are well cared for. Child protection procedures are secure. Whilst health and safety is an ongoing priority within the school, the record keeping systems do not always reflect the good practice that takes place. Academic guidance is satisfactory but many of the new systems introduced are not yet used consistently. At present pupils' targets and the levels at which they are working are not shared sufficiently with them. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are well supported in class, which enables them to make similar progress to their peers. Regular review meetings are held for each class to monitor every child's progress. Those with language difficulties are, at present, supported mainly by the class teacher with the leadership team directing the limited specialist provision to those who need it most.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership team has faced many challenges since its members took up their posts. They have worked well together since the last inspection to address the issues identified, and much has been achieved in a short time. As well as acting quickly to ensure standards at the end of Y6 are as high as possible they have built a team of enthusiastic and able teaching staff who are producing satisfactory and improving teaching. The management structure they have put in place is recent and middle managers are still developing their skills. Parents are very pleased with how the school has improved. One parent said 'Southwold has come on leaps since the last inspection and my children have come on brilliantly in both learning and behaviour'.

Governors are enthusiastic and are becoming more involved in school activities. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. The local authority has provided good support in helping to raise standards and are now providing support in the Foundation Stage, an area of concern rightly identified by the senior leadership team.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

19 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southwold Primary School, London, E5 9NL

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed being at your school, meeting with you and your teachers and talking with you during the day. Yours is an improving school that is providing a satisfactory education. You and the school have many strengths including:

- you all enjoy school and behaviour is good
- the staff look after you and ensure you are kept safe
- relationships in the school are good
- teachers give good support to those of you who find learning difficult
- during your time in the school, you all make satisfactory progress
- your lessons are at least satisfactory and you are now receiving more good lessons
- the headteacher and all the staff are working hard to improve the school.

In order to help the school improve and become even better, we have asked the school to:

- always use the records of how well you are doing to make sure that the work they give you in lessons is at the correct level
- use this information to help them advise you how to get even better and meet challenging targets
- provide more good teaching to help you make better progress
- improve the quality of teaching and opportunities in the Foundation Stage.

We wish each one of you every success and happiness in your future education.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood

Lead Inspector