

Southmead Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101027
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	307568
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Olson Davis

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	319
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	67
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ioriwerth Harries
Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Purcell
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Princes Way Wimbledon Common London SW19 6QT
Telephone number	020 8788 8901
Fax number	020 8788 8782

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school serves a diverse community. Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are of Pakistani, Black-African, Black-British and mixed backgrounds and an increasing number of pupils are from Eastern Europe. More than a third of pupils speak English as an additional language with an above average proportion in the Nursery at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. The number of pupils who find learning difficult, including those with a statement of special educational need is well above the national average. Approximately one in ten pupils has a statement of educational need for autism. Many more pupils than usual join or leave the school at other than the usual times. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS) for pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Southmead Primary provides a satisfactory standard of education. The strong headteacher has established a good ethos, in which pupils are happy and enjoy learning. Adults know the pupils' pastoral needs well. The school is successful in making sure that pupils from all backgrounds and abilities feel valued, safe and secure. As a result, pupils enjoy their school, they behave well and want to learn. As one parent wrote, 'My child enjoys school more than I can say. He is really, really happy at school and loves his teachers. He always talks about his school, teachers and friends'. It makes good use of a wide range of external agencies to support pupils, including the local authority, who have provided valuable support and guidance.

The school has strengths in the caring approach adopted by all adults that ensures there is a calm and supportive environment in which pupils can develop. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good awareness of major world faiths and respect that other pupils may have different beliefs. They adopt healthy lifestyles and have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and taking regular exercise.

The school is improving because the headteacher provides determined leadership and a clear vision that is shared by the school community. There are clear plans for improvement and these are set to be developed further as the school takes part in the Improving Schools Programme (ISP) from the local authority.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in mathematics and well below average in English and science. Given the low starting points and complex learning needs of many pupils, this represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils make steady progress because the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The school is not complacent and works to improve the overall standard of teaching and learning in order to accelerate pupils' progress. A greater stability in staffing, closer monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, and the reorganisation of learning groups, have led to improvements in achievement. Despite the relative inexperience of some teachers, staff are confident because they are well supported by senior staff. However, the school recognises that more remains to be done to raise standards further, particularly by making more rigorous and consistent use of assessment information to ensure that all groups of pupils are appropriately challenged and achieve as well as they can.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Although there have been improvements there is more to do to ensure the full impact of new structures and initiatives on raising standards. Core subject leaders offer sound support and advice to colleagues throughout the school. All other subjects leaders are new to their roles. School leaders rightly recognise the need to strengthen the influence of subject leaders on monitoring and improving achievement levels, and the quality of teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with very low basic skills. In addition, an increasing number speak little or no English when they start. They make sound progress in the EYFS but few children reach the learning goals expected by the start of Year 1 in communication, language and literacy or in their mathematical development. Children settle happily and quickly into the school routines. They receive a wide range of stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors. As a result, they have positive attitudes to learning and made good progress in their personal and

social skills and in their physical development. There is a good balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Teachers focus on children's language development and mathematical development as in these areas they are weakest. However, staff do not consistently match work to different needs and as a result children's progress remains only satisfactory. For example, all children are taught the same phonics when more able children already know these sounds and can link them to letters, and are able to make three letter words using their phonic skills. Sometimes teachers accept one-word answers and children are not sufficiently encouraged to put their thoughts into words by giving extended answers. The recently appointed EYFS leader provides satisfactory leadership and management. Priorities are suitably identified to improve the provision and quicken the rates of children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English and science.
- Make better use of assessment to accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils.
- Develop the roles of subject leaders particularly in relation to monitoring achievement and improving the quality of teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make steady progress from well below average starting points to attain standards at Year 2 and Year 6 that fluctuate from well below average to below average. A high proportion of pupils join the school throughout the year and overall their attainment is low. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in mathematics because teachers make better use of assessment to identify and close the gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge. Standards in English and science are low. A significant factor was the large number of pupils in that group who found learning difficult. One in five of the pupils had a statement of educational need for autism. Nonetheless, these pupils made satisfactory progress because of the extra support provided for their additional needs. Pupils with autism make good progress in developing their communication and social skills. The many pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Current work shows that achievement is improving and more pupils are on track to reach the expected level. This is because of the school's focus on basic skills. Systematic work on developing pupils' phonic skills is improving pupils' skills in reading and writing but pupils' handwriting is generally not well formed or joined.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils participate well in school activities and show positive attitudes to learning. They acquire the sound basic skills and good social skills that prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Pupils enjoy school and comment how friendly other pupils are. They show respect for each other, their teachers and the school environment. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community through positions of responsibility, for example, as school council representatives. They have been instrumental in helping to improve school meals. Visits to places of interest help to develop pupils' good awareness of the wider community. A positive link has been formed with a school in Rwanda and pupils have raised funds and exchanged

letters. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. It strives to encourage parents to play a more active role in their child's schooling. Despite the school's best efforts to minimise absences, attendance is satisfactory. Too many parents take their children away for extended periods and this hinders the progress these pupils make.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Strengths in the teaching include good behaviour management and the development of positive relationships with pupils. Pupils enjoy the lessons and are usually aware of the purpose of what their teachers ask them to do. One pupil said, 'Teachers make lessons interesting and fun'. Teachers give clear explanations which means that pupils get on purposefully and work well together. They mark pupils' work regularly against the learning intentions of the lesson but their comments do not always give specific guidance on the next steps in learning. In some lessons, assessment information is not used effectively to plan the next steps in learning. As a result, pupils' learning is not moved on quickly enough. In these lessons, more able pupils find the work lacks challenge whilst less able pupils find that it is too difficult. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to provide good support to individuals and small groups who find learning difficult or are at the early stages of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Through subjects such as art, religious education, and music pupils acquire a strong awareness of the cultural diversity of the community. Art is a strength and this is reflected in the attractive displays around the school. A well-structured programme for personal, social and health education promotes safe and healthy lifestyles. Teachers are making links between science and ICT to improve standards but some opportunities to develop pupils' investigative skills in science are missed. A phonics programme is producing rapid improvements in reading and writing. Nonetheless, opportunities for extended writing are not extensive and there is an inconsistent approach to the teaching of handwriting. A small but growing number of clubs, visitors to the school and visits to places of interest further enriches the curriculum and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Safeguarding procedures are securely in place. Vulnerable pupils are sensitively supported in school and have the help of outside agencies such as the education welfare officer and educational psychologist. There is a strong commitment to include all pupils, particularly those with autism in all aspects of school life. Pupils who join the school part way through the year are helped to settle quickly with the support of the learning mentors. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The targets teachers set in literacy and numeracy are not always specific enough for pupils to know what exactly they have to do to improve their work. Systems for tracking pupils' progress and evaluating how well they are doing are developing. These systems are not yet sophisticated enough to monitor the progress of different groups, and to identify quickly when they are not making the expected progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Until recently, the school's development had been adversely affected by high staff turnover. There were inconsistencies in the teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1. Rigorous monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has led to improvements, particularly for the teachers new to teaching. The reorganisation of classes into smaller, single aged groups allows teachers to be clearer about the learning needs of their pupils. This is already having a positive impact on achievement but more remains to be done to ensure that teachers are making the best use of assessment information to accelerate the progress made by pupils. School self-evaluation is satisfactory. The headteacher knows the school well and school improvement planning identifies the key areas for development. However, some subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating the school's work. This limits their impact on raising standards. Governors are supportive and provide increasing challenge to the school to improve its provision for pupils.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southmead Primary School, London, SW19 6QT

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed visiting your classrooms and talking to you. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the good things about your school.

- The adults take good care of you, which makes you feel happy and safe.
- You enjoy your learning and the other activities in school.
- You are making satisfactory progress in your learning and this is getting better.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in developing their personal and social skills and in their physical development.
- You behave well and want to do your best in lessons.
- You take lots of exercise and know a good deal about healthy living.
- The school council represents your views well and you all help the school to run smoothly.
- The school works well with people outside school to make sure that you get the help you need.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to make your school better for you by doing three main things.

- To help you do better in English and science lessons.
- To make sure that teachers give you tasks that are at just the right level for you so that you can make faster progress in your learning.
- That some of the teachers in charge of subjects visit classrooms more often to see their subjects being taught. This will help them to check that things are going well in their subjects and that you are making good progress.

You can help by always trying your hardest and doing your best work. A few of you take time off school and when you do, your learning suffers. You can make sure that you come to school when you should unless you have a very good reason. We hope that you will help your teachers as they work hard to make your school even better for you.

Yours sincerely

Olson Davis

Lead Inspector