

Sparrow Farm Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102508
Local Authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	308036
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Couchman-Boor
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
School address	Sparrow Farm Drive Feltham TW14 0DG
Telephone number	020 8890 7194
Fax number	020 8751 1322

Age group	7-11
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Inspection number	308036

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: 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 an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school with a particular focus on the following: pupils' progress in mathematics, the quality of arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for them to improve, and confirmation of the provisionally agreed judgements for pupils' personal development, curriculum and teaching and learning. These provisional judgements were based on the school's own self-evaluation form. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body, various staff and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and visits were made to lessons. Work samples and a range of documents and data were examined. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments as given in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly more than in most schools and the percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher. Twenty-six different first languages are spoken. Eleven pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who find difficulty in learning the basic skills is higher than the national average as is the proportion who join or leave the school at times other than the normal ones. The school has gained the healthy schools award. The headteacher is in her first year at the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is well led by its new headteacher who is ably assisted by senior managers. Self-evaluation is very accurate. Staff work together effectively and create a happy atmosphere in which all pupils prosper and achieve well. From a slightly below average standard of attainment on entry, they reach average standards in English and mathematics. In science, they reach an above average standard because teachers place a good emphasis on investigation. The school has added good value for several years and this continues. Pupils are well prepared for their future education.

Pupils make particularly good progress in reading because staff motivate pupils well and pupils take a keen interest in books. They eagerly and successfully took part in an area schools' competition to read and review books and made a public presentation based on their opinions. Nevertheless, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics has not been consistently good. In response, staff have taken successful action over the past year to improve attainment, particularly but not only, in mathematics. They have ensured a greater consistency in calculation methods across the school. They have also challenged able pupils more effectively in their work and set up an extra-curricular mathematics club for them. Parents' meetings about teaching methods have helped them to support their children more effectively. As a result, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in mathematics has risen. Writing remains an area for further improvement because pupils' spelling and handwriting are not as good as they should be and pupils do not always take enough care when they present their work. This sometimes leads to inaccuracies.

Pupils enjoy school, contribute well to the school community and undertake various roles well, such as 'buddying' new entrants. Pupils are ambitious. They are proud of their school, respect their teachers and sense the corporate spirit. One said, 'The teachers support you and your friends are behind you and the class usually works as a team.' Most pupils behave well and have a good attitude to their work. They have a good understanding of personal safety, for example being alert to strangers. They practise healthy life styles by engaging in regular exercise. They took the initiative to write to publishers to obtain books to stock the library. They raise money for charities, particularly children's charities. However, despite strong efforts by the school, overall attendance is below the national average, mainly because some families take extended holidays abroad, which interrupt schooling and progress. Pupils have a good understanding of environmental matters. Their survey in the locality of carbon emissions has prompted cycling and walking to school and the setting up of their own road safety sign.

The vast majority of parents express positive views about the school. One parent's comments sum these up. 'The school has given all my children a solid education. It is a happy school, friendly and very approachable. I have never had a problem with staff or class routines, teaching methods or any other pupils.' However, parents state rightly that they do not understand the role of governors very well or how to contact them. The governing body has gone through unsettling times with several changes of personnel. It is seeking to re-organise itself so that its members are more pro-active and can understand the school's strengths and areas for development better. It is well led by its new chair, who is prepared to challenge and question.

The arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils and first-aid are firmly established and well organised. Adults know individual pupils well. Staff record the more serious incidents of misbehaviour, note the action taken and involve parents. They are quick to involve external

agencies with pupils who find particular difficulty in learning or who demonstrate emotional and social need. As a result, all pupils receive the necessary support in this inclusive school. Pupils who find difficulty in learning to read and write and pupils who arrive with little English receive small group or individual support. This assists their good progress. Pupils are kind to new pupils and together with staff help them to settle in well.

Staff have improved tracking arrangements during the year and it is now much easier for staff to spot pupils who are not making expected rates of progress. Special programmes are arranged to support such children so that they can catch up. Pupils throughout the school clearly know how they can improve their work in English. This is not always the case in mathematics, however, as teachers do not use target setting consistently.

Pupils undertake a good range of work. There has been considerable improvement in the provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection. Staff, nevertheless, recognise the need to improve the links between subjects and to make the work more relevant to pupils' interests. They prepare well their lessons and match work to pupils' needs. Their good use of modern technology enables them to present lessons visually, which supports pupils' concentration and levels of interest. Good use of investigation in mathematics is helping the pupils to think more systematically and to see pattern in number. Pupils made good progress in a Year 6 lesson. In an interesting investigation they carried out about 'spacemen', they made a table to record the pattern of their results. Monitoring of lessons has been effective because staff concerned have honestly assessed both strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and these are leading to improved teaching performance. The monitoring of pupils' work samples has not been as consistently effective, as for example, in science pupils' graphs are sometimes inaccurate because they are drawn on lined paper in their exercise books. Also, staff have not identified presentation, spelling, neatness and handwriting as areas for improvement sufficiently well.

A particularly good feature of teaching is the way that teachers question pupils and get their ideas of what successful learning will look like before they begin their activity. This helps pupils to focus carefully in their work. Teachers also engage pupils in thinking about important issues. In geography, for example, pupils took on different roles, such as construction workers and environmentalists, debating the 'pros' and 'cons' of constructing a dam. In an interesting Year 6 lesson, pupils having previously researched conflict in different countries, acted as their United Nations representatives, debated the costs of war and made out a case for being the 'world's leader'. They thoroughly enjoyed the challenge and set about the task with much maturity and earnestness. They developed their speaking skills and vocabulary well in doing so.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching, leadership and management, the curriculum and pupils' personal development, including their attitudes and keenness to do well, demonstrate a good capacity to improve even more.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' accuracy in spelling together with their handwriting and presentation skills in order to raise attainment in writing.
- Adopt a more consistent approach when evaluating the outcomes of pupils' work so that standards continue to rise further.

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.

Inspection judgements

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

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
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

24 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sparrow Farm Junior School, Feltham, TW14 0DG

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited. I enjoyed talking to you and visiting your classrooms. You behave well and enjoy school. Most of your parents are happy that you attend Sparrow Farm Junior and I agree with them. You attend a good school. You make good progress and reach the expected standards for your age in English and mathematics and an above average standard in science. Your handwriting and spelling are not as strong as other aspects of your work and you do not always set out your work as neatly as you could. I have asked the staff to work on these aspects with you to help you to improve.

Your teachers take very good care of you and work hard on your behalf. They make your lessons interesting and want to make them even more so. They give you good opportunities in sport and physical education so that you receive enough exercise to keep you healthy. You feel safe in school and know how to keep yourselves safe. You work well together and respect your teachers. I was very interested to learn of your success in the reading competition that you entered and won.

From time to time, the teachers like to look at each other's lessons and learn from one another so that they can improve their work. However, when they look at the work that you do, they do not always analyse it critically enough to improve your attainment. I have asked them to be more thorough when they look at work across the school so that your attainment rises even more.

I was very interested in your ambitions for yourselves and hope that you reach these. I am sure you will if you continue to do your best. Thank you once again for your welcome and help. I wish you well for the future and hope that you will continue to work hard and that you will all attend regularly. This is so important for your continued progress.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth

Lead Inspector