

South Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103072
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	308209
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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)	477
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	80
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Patricia Reid
Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Reardon
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ringwood Road London E17 8PW
Telephone number	020 8521 6000
Fax number	020 8503 6984

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2008
Inspection number	308209

© 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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school serves pupils who come from a wide area. Far more pupils than in most schools are entitled to free school meals. More than half have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there is a high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. Many of these pupils have moderate difficulties but significant numbers have communication, language, behavioural or emotional difficulties. A quarter of pupils are from Pakistani families and there are significant proportions from White British, Caribbean, Black African and other White backgrounds. Two thirds of pupils are learning English as an additional language. Mobility is high, with a large number of pupils starting or leaving the school between Years 1 and 6.

There are two Nursery and two Reception classes catering for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Nursery children attend part-time, mornings or afternoons. There are two intakes a year, in September and January.

The school has won a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Active Schools, International Schools Award and Investors in People.

Staff and pupils suffered considerable disruption between 2004 and 2006 while a new school was built on the same site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

South Grove provides pupils with a satisfactory education. Although standards in Year 6 have been exceptionally low in recent years, there are signs that they are beginning to rise because of recent initiatives. Improvement slowed while the new school was built and the pace of change is only now regaining momentum. Teachers and pupils are benefiting from a bright, clean new building and increased teaching and learning resources. A new thematic and more creative curriculum is supporting improvements in standards in Key Stage 1 although this is not yet fully in place in Key Stage 2. Better systems to track pupils' progress are helping to identify those who underachieve so that adults can provide further support to help them catch up.

Although standards are low, pupils' achievement is satisfactory because of their low starting points. They make good progress in EYFS and in Key Stage 1 because of good teaching. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 where the teaching is satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils with moderate learning difficulties achieve well. Staff quickly identify their needs and provide structured support to help them make good progress. Learning support assistants play a considerable role in helping these pupils take an active part in lessons. Pupils at the early stages of learning English also make good progress because teachers use pictures and diagrams to help them understand. This helps them quickly develop their language skills. Fewer pupils than in most schools reach the higher levels in the national assessments however, because teachers' expectations of the more able pupils are often not high enough.

The school welcomes pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. Every pupil is valued, nurtured and supported. This helps pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties take a full part in school life. One parent echoed the views of many when he wrote, 'The school creates a level playing field for all pupils'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They show good commitment to the school's core values of 'Organisation, Persistence, Confidence and Getting Along'. They behave well. This helps to create a calm atmosphere that supports learning and is contributing to the rising standards. Pupils enjoy school. They talk proudly of their contributions to the community such as welcoming the Paralympic flag as part of the handover celebrations. They are very aware of how to maintain healthy lifestyles through good diet and exercise. Year 2 pupils, for instance, visited the local market to count the number of stalls selling fruit, carbohydrates and proteins. The school is proactive in helping pupils keep safe in the local community by raising issues like drugs and knife crime. Although standards in basic skills are low, the positive personal values that pupils develop, such as confidence, teamwork and respect for others, prepare them appropriately for the future.

Senior leaders monitor the school's work satisfactorily. They have an accurate view of the areas need to improve and have started to address them. They have begun to hold regular reviews with teachers to check on the progress of individuals and groups. Phase leaders in Key Stage 2 provide good support for colleagues but are not yet involved in this review system to try to drive standards up still further. Nonetheless, because standards are already beginning to rise because of the initiatives introduced, the school shows a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a positive start to their education in the EYFS. Many start Nursery with attainment that is well below that expected of three-year-olds. Many speak little English. Children achieve well although only a minority meet expected standards by the time they transfer into Year 1.

Staff introduce routines sensitively so that children settle in quickly and know exactly what is expected of them. Parents and children feel comfortable because adults are friendly and approachable. Teaching is good. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's English through drama and role-play. Children enjoy these opportunities immensely, acting out the story of 'The Three Bears,' for example, with obvious delight. They develop phonics and early literacy skills well because these are taught in a fun and engaging way. The good indoor and outdoor facilities are used well and children become independent right from the start. They learn to help one another and play safely together. Staff are skilled in observing and assessing children's progress and use this information carefully to plan subsequent activities.

Adults form an effective team; they have a good understanding of how young children learn and how to keep them safe. They clearly enjoy their work and this enthusiasm motivates the children. The EYFS leader guides improvement well. Through careful monitoring and analysis, she identifies areas that need further development. For example, they are conscious that children's calculation skills are not as good as they might be and this is the focus for improvement this year. Prompt action is taken to address any aspects involving children's welfare and safety.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels.
- Raise teachers' expectations of the more able pupils and ensure they receive appropriate levels of challenge in lessons.
- Improve the roles of phase leaders in raising standards and improving pupils' progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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

Standards are exceptionally low at the end of Year 6 and few pupils reach the higher levels. Progress is good in the EYFS and Key Stage 1, where pupils in Year 2 reach standards that are just below those expected nationally. Progress through Key Stage 2 varies according to the quality of teaching but is satisfactory overall. Standards are also affected by the large number of pupils who join the school in older classes, many of whom have had a severely disrupted previous education.

The most recent national tests suggest a marked rise in standards at the end of Year 6 for pupils of all backgrounds and this is reflected in the school's records and in pupils' work. Strong pastoral care helps pupils with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties engage in their education and make good progress. Well organised group activities help pupils with moderate learning difficulties to make good gains in literacy and numeracy. Pupils in the early stages of learning English quickly develop their confidence and fluency and make good progress. The

progress of more able pupils in Key Stage 2 slows because teachers do not always demand enough of them in terms of work and effort.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have good relationships with adults and one another, which contribute to the school's positive and friendly atmosphere. They like school and most attend regularly and punctually. Attendance rates are average and improving. Most pupils behave well. They respond positively to the school's expectations, although sometimes, when the pace of activities is slow, some older boys may become bored and disrupt others.

Pupils understand how to keep safe and healthy. They know about the dangers of drugs and understand what to do if they feel threatened. Many enjoy the good range of after-school sports and a high proportion walk to school. They play an active role in their school and wider community. School Council members are proud of their achievements, including improving school meals.

Pupils develop into confident, respectful young people with good attitudes to learning. Despite their low levels of literacy and numeracy, they are adequately prepared for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The main reason for pupils' good progress in EYFS and Key Stage 1 is the good teaching that they receive. Teaching in these classes is lively and ensures that all pupils are challenged so that they develop their learning at a good rate. Little time is wasted. Pupils move briskly from one activity to another. In one outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 2, the teacher enthused pupils so much they could hardly wait to get started. They discussed their work sensibly with one another and thoroughly enjoyed the task. Whilst teaching in the older classes is never less than satisfactory, it is of variable quality. In the good lessons, teachers use a range of strategies to engage pupils' attention and keep them interested. They are responsive to the needs and moods of their pupils, making sure they provide a good degree of challenge for different groups. In contrast, some lessons, whilst otherwise satisfactory, do not challenge the most able pupils who are often capable of much more. In these lessons, pupils often spend too much time listening to the teacher rather than doing things for themselves.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A new curriculum is in place for pupils in Key Stage 1 and has recently been extended to Years 3 and 4. This is already having a positive impact on pupils' interest and enjoyment. A strong emphasis on relevant first-hand experience, drawing well from resources within the local community, is helping pupils to make sense of their learning. New programmes to improve literacy and numeracy skills are having a beneficial impact in younger classes but their impact has yet to filter through to Key Stage 2.

Teachers adapt the curriculum carefully for pupils who find learning more difficult. Learning support assistants work well with these pupils to ensure they take a full part in lessons. A good

range of extra-curricular activities helps pupils to grow personally and socially. They have good opportunities to develop sporting, musical and artistic interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents really appreciate the high levels of care that the school provides for their children. Adults know the children very well so are able to take swift action if any problems arise. Pupils and staff warmly welcome new pupils who start mid-way through the year. They assess their needs quickly and implement programmes to help them if necessary. There are robust arrangements to keep pupils safe and clear rules for pupils' conduct around the school.

Pupils with moderate and more complex learning difficulties receive good attention. Individually tailored learning programmes ensure they get the right sort of support so they can play a full part in school life.

Every pupil has individual learning targets for reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils regularly evaluate how successful they have been in meeting these targets. Teachers' marking also focuses on these goals for development and provides useful advice about what pupils need to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

School leaders have strong support from parents who appreciate their openness, approachability and the way they ensure that all children are included in the learning process. Leaders go out of their way to gain advice, expertise and support that will enable them to serve pupils with sometimes quite complex learning difficulties. The school has a long history of working closely with parents and the wider community. Links with a school on Shetland, for instance, have involved not just emails but also visits by pupils and staff. The governing body is representative of the local community and provides valuable insights and information that helps the school meet the needs of different groups. They are developing their monitoring role satisfactorily.

Senior staff acknowledge that their focus was diverted during the construction of the new school and that the rate of improvement slowed. Last year was the first full year in the new building. Leaders established a full cycle of monitoring and evaluation that has led to improvements in tracking pupils' progress, the marking of pupils' work and in setting individual pupil targets. These improvements, along with the new curriculum, are beginning to show a positive impact on pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 1.

Phase leaders support their colleagues well by modelling lessons and supporting planning. However, they are not yet involved closely enough in the new system of review meetings with individual teachers, to hold them more accountable for their pupils' progress. Targets are set for the achievement of different cohorts of pupils although these are only moderately challenging, especially for the expectations of the more able pupils.

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.

Annex A

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?	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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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	2

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?	2

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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

01 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Grove Primary School, London, E17 8PW

Thank you all very much for welcoming me and the other inspectors to your school recently. We really enjoyed watching you working in lessons and chatting with you in the playground and around the school. You gave us a great deal of information that was extremely useful in helping us to reach our conclusions.

You go to a satisfactory school. Some things are good, such as the way the school looks after pupils who have difficulties with their learning and who need a bit more support. We were pleased that the children in Nursery, Reception and in Years 1 and 2 were making good progress in their lessons. It is good that you know how to keep yourselves healthy, by choosing a sensible diet and taking enough exercise. You told us about how the school keeps you safe, for example by blocking websites that may be dangerous. We could see that you enjoy school, especially all the practical activities that the teachers organise for you. We like the way that all the adults welcome you and your families and provide advice and help when it is needed.

We were particularly impressed with the way that most of you behave well and work hard in lessons. You show good levels of respect for each other and for adults in the school. Well done!

We have asked the teachers to improve a few things to help you do even better at school. We think that the work could be a bit harder for some of you. More of you should be reaching higher levels. We have asked teachers to check your progress even more carefully to ensure you are all doing as well as expected.

I know you will want to help them with these tasks and the best way you can do that is to keep working hard and behaving well. My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M Summers

Lead Inspector