

South Street Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108326
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	309649
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	David Shearsmith

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	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Thrle Martin
Headteacher	Mrs Julie McGrow
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Cramer Street Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE8 4BB
Telephone number	0191 4773993
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an above average sized primary school in the inner city of Gateshead and most pupils are from the immediate area. However, more recently a significant number of pupils have joined the school due to the closure of neighbouring schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average, as is those identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is higher than most schools. The school has achieved a number of national awards including Investors in People and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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. Pupil's behaviour is outstanding, especially in lessons because they enjoy their learning and make good progress. Their personal development is good as they have a good understanding of how to stay safe, know about economic well-being and develop their basic skills well. They take part in a wide range of school activities and are involved in the wider community. A very wide variety of sporting activities and school initiatives to promote healthy eating ensure pupils develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Pupils' achievement is good and they make good progress throughout the school. They enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those found nationally for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, standards are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as do those whose first language is not English. A stimulating and interesting curriculum ensures children get a good start to their school lives in the Foundation Stage. There is good progress in developing many aspects of communication language and literacy skills in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes. However, writing standards are still well below average by the end of Year 2.

Teaching and learning is good. Some outstanding lessons have extremely good pace and give pupils well guided opportunities to work independently. All teachers, as well as the good support assistants, develop positive relationships with pupils that support learning well. Staff engage pupils well and effective planning to meet pupils' needs ensures good progress in most lessons. Teachers have accurate information from the school's assessment systems which is being used increasingly to identify targets for pupils. However, these personal targets are not always used consistently well in lessons to support learning.

The good curriculum includes a particularly strong range of experiences for pupils to participate in both during and after school. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupil's basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), as well as personal skills for life. The school is developing a creative and skills based curriculum which is motivating pupils, ensuring they enjoy their lessons and further developing their spiritual moral social and cultural learning.

Care, guidance and support is good overall as the school has a very strong commitment to ensuring pupils are cared for in all aspects of their school life. All statutory procedures are in place to ensure pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Although procedures for academic guidance are in place, they are not consistently applied and as a result, pupil's progress is not tracked as proficiently as it could be.

Leadership and management are good and the recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared with all staff. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and a strong leadership team who have contributed to identifying clear school priorities. Action to address relative weaknesses has been effective and standards are rising. The governing body support the school well and as a result, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is good overall. Children enter Nursery with skills that are well below those typical for their age and achieve well although many do not reach the level expected for

their age by the time they start in Year 1. Children make good progress due to good teaching and learning and the effective leadership of the coordinator. A particular strength is the staff's outstanding level of commitment to improving children's communication, language and literacy skills and supporting personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children are highly engaged in their activities, enjoy their learning and develop their skills well. Although there are many strengths in developing children's understanding of the world, there is only limited outdoor provision, which restricts the range of activities on offer. The school has correctly recognised this need to ensure better outdoor access. When the outdoor area is used well children respond well and are motivated by the experiences.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards of writing at Key Stage 1.
- Improve the tracking of pupils' progress and the setting of individual targets so that pupils know how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. From entering school with skills that are well below those typical for their age, pupils make good progress and reach standards that are broadly average by the time they leave the school. Many pupils start Year 1 having not yet reached the level expected for their age and despite good progress by the time they reach the end of Year 2, overall standards remain below average. Standards are rising especially in reading although writing remains relatively weaker. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 and by the time they reach Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. These standards are reflected in the school's most recent results in the national tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make good progress, as do pupils whose first language is not English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good overall. Pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles grows through the promotion of healthy eating and the excellent sports opportunities in both school and extra curricular activities. Pupils are friendly and polite and behave extremely well; they are highly engaged and involved in stimulating lessons. They say they feel safe and secure in school and that adults are always available to support them. Pupils are keen to say how they enjoy school and so attendance is improving and is in line with the national average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is successfully promoted through teaching visits and visitors. Economic well-being is supported well in lessons through careers visits, business visitors and links to a university project. The school council effectively promotes pupils taking responsibility for behaviour and the buddy system that supports pupils' personal development. Strong community links with the church, Age Concern, Chinese New Year celebrations and links to other faiths provide pupils with a good understanding of wider cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In the most effective lessons, pupils are clear about what they are learning, know how to improve their work and make good progress. These lessons are also fun, have pace and involve the pupils in independent learning. Staff use resources well and have good subject knowledge which they use in their effective planning to meet pupils' needs. Pupils show good attitudes to their work because of this effective teaching. Relationships throughout the school are positive. Teaching assistants are deployed well, providing effective support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are also effectively supported in smaller groups of pupils identified for very specific support; these 'nurture groups' make good progress. Pupils are sometimes involved in assessing their own work but the school recognises that this is an area for development. Although literacy and numeracy targets are put in some pupils' books, they are not being used consistently to improve pupils' work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with an outstanding range of sporting activities, reflected in a number of awards. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and the school is actively developing a more relevant, creative and skills based curriculum. There is a strong and effective focus on basic skills including literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. This has been successful in raising standards in reading especially at Key Stage 1 although writing is not yet showing the same improvement. Music and sports' provision are strengths of the school and pupils participate in them with enthusiasm. French in Key Stage 2 is proving to be successful and the school also involves pupils in language activities throughout the school. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well and provides good opportunities for them to develop work life skills. Learning is enriched by a wide range of after-school and lunchtime clubs and is further enhanced by educational visits out of school and visitors to the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Although the school offers extremely strong pastoral care and support its academic guidance of pupils is relatively weaker. Staff work very hard to ensure that pupils feel safe, secure and happy in school. Health and safety procedures are fully in place, particularly risk assessments for the site and trips off site. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Pupils with learning and physical disabilities are very effectively supported and are fully included in all aspects of school life. Individual education plans are tailored well to pupils' needs and reviewed regularly. The school has put good strategies in place to improve attendance and these are having an impact as attendance is improving. Information from the school's system to track academic progress is accurate but not used effectively enough to form clear targets for improving pupils' work. Pupils do not know in sufficient detail what they have to do to improve or what they have done well that they can build on.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher is committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve well in all aspects of their learning. She has clearly identified the correct key priorities to ensure the school will improve. Subject leaders have a good understanding of school priorities and support the overall leadership of the school well. Wider leadership and management is good because the senior leadership team has evaluated the school with other stakeholders. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and gives a good reflection of strengths and weaknesses. Leadership at all levels is aware of the needs of the school and what the school needs to do to improve. In 2007, for example, the school identified that more able pupils were not making sufficient progress in science and this has now been successfully remedied. The governing body is particularly aware of its responsibilities and challenges as well as supports the new headteacher. Although the school has been through a period of instability it has continued to make good progress. It is now well placed to move forward and the capacity to improve is good. The school has good financial management to provide good value for money.

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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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
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	1
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	2
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 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Street Community Primary School, Gateshead, NE8 4BB

Thank you for your welcome during our recent visit. We really enjoyed our days in your school. You were all courteous, extremely well behaved and a credit to the school. We particularly enjoyed our conversations with you and all the interesting things that you told us about your school that were good, and sometimes fantastic.

Yours is a good school and you make good progress. It is clear that you all feel safe, secure and happy. Your teachers work really hard and provide you with exciting and interesting things to do. We were particularly impressed by your behaviour in class and all the sporting activities that you take part in. The huge range of after school activities gives you lots of new experiences.

There are some things that we think will help the school to get even better:

- younger pupils need greater help to improve their writing
- teachers need to help you set personal learning targets and track how well you are doing.

We are sure that you will help your teachers by always doing your best and being sure to ask if you need extra support. Please thank all your parents for taking the trouble to tell us about your school.

Yours sincerely

David Shearsmith

Lead inspector