

Sefton Park Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108961
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309844
Inspection date	12 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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 (total)	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Bremner
Headteacher	Jan Lonsdale
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	St Bartholomews Road Ashley Down Bristol BS7 9BJ
Telephone number	0117 377 3290
Fax number	0117 377 3292

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching, progress in mathematics and the provision for and progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of school tracking and assessment data and discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, members of the governing body and pupils. The views of parents were gathered from the Ofsted questionnaire.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

The school is currently subject to proposed reorganisation by the local authority from a two-form entry to a three-form entry school. It is not within the remit of an Ofsted inspection to investigate parental concerns about such proposals.

Description of the school

Sefton Park is an average size junior school. Around 35% of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, a third of whom are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average. Attainment on entry has been rising over the past few years and is above average although it was lower than this for the older pupils. Since its last inspection the school has become part of a federation with Sefton Park Infant School, sharing the same headteacher and governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sefton Park Junior is a satisfactory school where considerable improvement has been made over the last two years. This is partly due to its federation with Sefton Park Infant School, which has had an especially positive impact on the quality of provision and on improving progress. Standards and achievement, which had previously declined, are now rising again due to good teaching and learning and the effective guidance and support pupils receive. Standards are average overall although above average in English. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory as is their preparation for their future economic well-being. Progress continues to improve. Despite this, older pupils have not had sufficient time to make up for the slow progress made in mathematics in the past, resulting in standards in this subject remaining below average. Pupils with learning needs achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds with identified needs and those at the early stages of learning English are supported well by staff employed to ensure they have equal opportunities to learn. The vast majority work well and make satisfactory progress. However, the school is fully aware that a few still find it difficult to engage fully in school life and it is working hard to address this.

The driving force behind the improvement is the inspirational leadership and highly skilled management of the headteacher. Many parents wrote of their delight at the way she is helping to move the school forward. Some expressed their regret at the added workload for a headteacher running two schools. However, this is managed well, with the deputy headteacher providing very good support in the day-to-day running of the junior school when the headteacher's attention is required elsewhere. Systems for managing and monitoring the school's work are comprehensive and effective. Pupils' improvement targets are challenging, and the procedures for checking on their progress are good. The school's outstanding partnerships with other schools and agencies benefit pupils' education and welfare especially well and help to ensure that the school's contribution to community cohesion is excellent.

The headteacher has made the very best use of strengths evident in the infant school to help bring about improvement in the juniors. The middle phase team, involving both infant and junior staff, has enhanced provision for the younger junior pupils considerably. Due to very good arrangements for sharing teaching skills, older junior pupils are now benefiting from the outstanding qualities of teaching shown in the infant school. After a high turnover of staff in previous years, the existing team is working well together, committed to providing a standard of education that meets the needs of each pupil well.

The school has an accurate picture of how well it is doing. Development planning is good, effectively involving governors who provide good support, and the school is rigorously addressing remaining areas of weakness. This, together with success in improving provision and achievement over the past two years, gives confidence that the school is well placed to improve further.

The quality of teaching is good and continues to improve, including in mathematics. This is largely because of the effective professional development systems in place for staff, which ensure there is a consistent approach in all lessons. Pupils like their teachers and enjoy coming to school and taking part in the practical and challenging tasks set for them in most lessons. The school consistently achieves its attendance targets, which are above the local authority average. Pupils themselves say learning is fun and they get lots of help if they do not understand new work. Teachers involve pupils where possible in making decisions about their own learning so that individual pupils' interests are capitalised on well. This helps support the needs of pupils

from different ethnic backgrounds in the school, as well as encouraging pupils to develop self-esteem and work hard. Pupils receive good advice on how well they are doing and how to improve their work. They are also encouraged to explore different ways of learning and carrying out their tasks so that they can complete these successfully. These strengths are helping to bring about good learning in lessons although this has not been as effective in the past due to weaker teaching.

The satisfactory curriculum has been enhanced through adapting the very successful programmes used in the infant school. Effective links between subjects give pupils many opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills. The investigative approach now used in science has also helped to improve achievement. A good range of programmes is in place to support pupils who find work difficult. Strategies to raise standards in mathematics are helping to bring about improvements in progress although at a slower rate than in English and science. This is largely because, too often, activities are organised for the whole class rather than identifying activities for pupils at different stages of learning. The school is aware of this and is re-organising its provision for mathematics to improve progress further.

This is a very caring school where rigorous attention is paid to pupils' welfare and safety. The school fully complies with government guidelines regarding the safeguarding of pupils. One parent put the views of many when writing, 'My children have always enjoyed school and they feel well cared for and supported.' Some parents raised concerns over the small playground and aging toilet facilities. However, there is a good level of supervision at playtimes and staff are well trained in first aid so that any accidents are dealt with appropriately. The state of the toilets is monitored very regularly and pupils are involved in deciding how these can be refurbished and kept clean. Pastoral support is good. Although there are a number of pupils who find it difficult to behave well, behaviour is generally good and often exemplary in lessons. Pupils get on well together and know their views count with adults. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, as is evident in their response in assemblies. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and love the many opportunities for sport on offer. Pupils make a positive contribution to school life including through the work of the school council and as playground buddies. Their awareness of other cultures and world citizenship is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in mathematics, in particular by ensuring that activities consistently help pupils at different stages of learning to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Build on and extend the range of strategies in place to engage the interest of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

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.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
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?	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

13 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sefton Park Junior School, Bristol, BS7 9BJ

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I particularly want to thank the school council members who gave up their lunchtime to speak to me. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. However, lots of things have improved over the past two years and some things are already good.

- Here are some of the things I found out were good about the school:
- Your progress has improved over the last two years. Standards are average by the end of Year 6 and are above average in English.
- Most of you behave well and the behaviour I saw in assembly and in lessons was very good.
- You all get on well together and enjoy taking on responsibility such as a school council or or playground buddy.
- You are taught well and especially enjoy the interesting activities teachers plan for you. You get lots of good advice on how to improve your work.
- You are well cared for and feel happy and safe in school.
- You have an excellent headteacher and, together with staff and governors, she is working well to help your school improve further.

Here are some of the things I would like to see improved:

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- Progress in mathematics is better than it was, but it still needs to improve more so I have asked staff to help you make better progress in this subject.
- Although most of those of you who come from different ethnic backgrounds do as well as your classmates, a few could do better and staff know that they have to carry on working hard to help them do as well as they could.

You can help by working hard in lessons and always trying to do your very best.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

D Wilkinson Lead inspector