

Summerhill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108965
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309845
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony Shield

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	339
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Amanda Milsom
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2003
School address	Plummers Hill St George Bristol BS5 7JU
Telephone number	01179 030347
Fax number	01179 030348

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Summerhill Junior School is larger than most junior schools, and consists of twelve classes. While most pupils are of White British origin, increasing numbers of pupils are from a wide range of ethnic heritages. On entry, pupils' attainment is below average, although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for less than one year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. However, this judgement fails to capture the improvements the school is making and the sense of purpose and energy which the recently appointed headteacher has generated. Decisive steps forward have already been made, captured by the new school motto and logo designed by a pupil: 'Making our future shine'. The headteacher has set out a clear vision with a strong steer towards improving pupils' achievements. She is very well supported by her deputy and all staff, who share her ambition.

Although pupils' standards are below average, their achievements are satisfactory given their starting points. Significant levels of underachievement have been eliminated although some of the older pupils still have some catching up to do. Results in national tests have been significantly below average in English, mathematics and science in recent years, but there have been steady improvements in pupils' progress and achievement. This has accelerated recently and, in some classes, pupils' progress is good. Pupils' progress in writing is a relatively weaker area and many pupils lack confidence in using key literacy skills in different contexts.

Improvements in progress are the result of strong emphasis on ensuring a more consistent quality of teaching. Although some inconsistencies remain, teaching is now securely satisfactory and some is good. Above all, the climate for learning has improved, with pupils keen to do their best and behaving well in lessons. New systems for encouraging good behaviour have been very effective. Lessons are mostly purposeful and teachers choose activities which interest and motivate the pupils. Pupils know the level they are aiming for but do not have a personal learning target, based on an assessment of how well they are doing, which shows how they will improve. While in the best lessons, expectations are high and challenging work is well matched to individual pupils' needs, although for those with learning difficulties, this is not always the case. The satisfactory curriculum is well balanced, with a good emphasis on acquiring basic skills, and good opportunities for enrichment through visits, visitors and well supported extra-curricular clubs.

The care, support and guidance of pupils are satisfactory. Whilst the emotional well-being of pupils is given a high priority, and the support for vulnerable pupils in particular is secure, academic guidance and support is less well developed and established in everyday practice.

Pupils are friendly and cheerful. They like school, take increasing pride in it, and enjoy talking about their work. In lessons, their good attitudes help ensure that they make progress. In lessons, behaviour is rarely less than good. At playtimes, in less structured times, some pupils can be more boisterous. Bullying is usually dealt with firmly, and pupils say they feel safe and well cared for in school. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are learning to make an effective contribution to the school community through participating in the school council or acting as mediators in the playground. Overall, pupils' personal development is satisfactory.

The headteacher has set about securing improvements with a strongly analytical approach. Having identified what needs to be done, she has driven through a sharply focused programme to tackle underachievement. As a result, the school has a clear sense of purpose. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is well supported by governors and staff who share her vision and are firmly determined to promote school improvement. Some staff lack confidence in leading and managing improvements in their areas of responsibility. Work done to improve the climate for learning and the quality of teaching has already borne fruit. Regular monitoring has ensured the school knows itself well, and self-evaluation is good.

Most parents are very supportive of the school. Many recognise the improvements already made. The school has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and pupils' achievements, particularly in writing, through developing their confidence in using and applying their basic skills in different contexts.
- Share good practice in teaching more widely to ensure consistently high expectations and that work is planned to meet the needs of every pupil, especially those with learning difficulties.
- Check pupils' progress in lessons carefully to set personal learning targets for pupils.
- Build the capacity of all staff to lead developments in their subject and 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

Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science but, given their starting points, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Whilst there has been a steady improvement in pupils' achievements in recent years, in 2007 significant numbers of pupils underachieved, particularly amongst the less able pupils. The rate of pupils' progress is improving and in some classes is now good. As a result, while some underachievement remains, particularly amongst older pupils who have much to catch up, it has largely been eliminated. The impact of recently introduced strategies to improve pupils' achievement, including intervention and booster classes, has been effective, although much remains to be done. Writing remains a relatively weaker area and pupils lack confidence in using basic skills in different contexts. In 2007, the school was very close to reaching its targets. Year 6 pupils are currently on track to meet their targets. There are no significant differences between the achievement levels of boys and girls, or of pupils from different ethnic heritages. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, although there is some variability from class to class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are open and friendly. They greet visitors politely and say they feel increasing pride in their school and feel safe and well cared for. Attendance and punctuality have improved and attendance is in line with the national average – a reflection of pupils' increasing enjoyment of school. Overall behaviour is satisfactory. Whilst a few parents expressed concern about behaviour, inspectors saw no evidence to support this view and the rate of reported incidents of poor behaviour has reduced significantly, with no exclusions in the last twelve months. Pupils expressed some worries about bullying. Usually it is dealt with swiftly, but there are occasions when pupils feel their concerns are not taken seriously. Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is satisfactory. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and a reasonable awareness of their responsibilities in school. Whether as mediators at playtime, members of the school council or librarians, pupils take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and assemblies are respectful and thoughtful occasions. Pupils contribute to the wider community through such activities as charity fund-raising. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Whilst teaching is judged only satisfactory overall because of its impact on achievement, it is improving and there is some very effective practice in classrooms. The school's accurate evaluation of teaching and clear identification of what needs to be improved has led to significant improvements during the last year. Most importantly, the climate for learning has improved, and lessons are characterised by purposeful working, mutual respect and good relationships. Activities are well chosen to interest and motivate the pupils, and some good cross-curricular links are being developed. Behaviour in lessons is rarely less than good and the consistent application of the school's new behaviour management strategy ensures a good working environment. However, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent and there is scope for greater sharing of good practice. Pupils are keen to achieve their class targets and talk of 'getting to the next challenge', but they are not often clear about their own individual targets because these are not stated explicitly. In addition, planning is not always matched to the needs of the wide range of prior attainment in the class. As a result, expectations and challenge are not consistently high. Whilst this is particularly true for pupils with learning difficulties, it is valid for all pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Despite prioritising the acquisition of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, other subjects are given adequate coverage. Links between subjects are developing and this cross-curricular approach is encouraging a more meaningful curriculum, but there is more to be done before this is fully rooted in curriculum planning. Visits and visitors are planned carefully to enrich pupils' understanding and pupils take part in a wide range of clubs and activities with enthusiasm. Curriculum planning does not always ensure that learning systematically builds on what pupils know and can do.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Procedures for the care and welfare of pupils are satisfactory. Pupils' emotional well-being is a high priority and encourages open and friendly attitudes amongst pupils. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are fully in place and pupils know that staff will look after them. Good links with external agencies help ensure that pupils most at risk are included and given all necessary support. Procedures for checking on pupils' progress and providing good academic guidance and support are in place but are less well rooted in practice, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils are well supported by teaching assistants, but their specific needs are not always picked up in lessons, because teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved in lesson planning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Decisive and determined leadership by the headteacher is driving the school forward. In this, she is well supported by her deputy and all staff, who have embraced change with enthusiasm. A large majority of parents are very supportive of the school and, in particular, the improvements made since the headteacher was appointed. A new leadership team has energised the school and provided a clear direction for others to follow. Rigorous and effective procedures for performance management have been introduced, and this is leading to increased accountability and commitment of all staff to school improvement. Monitoring is regular, rigorous and constructive. As a result, the school knows itself well. Self-evaluation is good. Subject leaders and governors are involved in this process and are making increasingly effective contributions. The school rightly recognises the scope for further developing the work of all staff in leading and managing developments in different aspects of school improvement. The impact of initiatives to bring about school improvement has been significant in some areas, most importantly in improved behaviour and the quality of teaching. In others, more time is necessary before new procedures are rooted in everyday practice and the impact of better teaching is reflected in good progress for all 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?	3
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 disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

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?	3
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	3
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Summerhill Junior School, Bristol BS5 7JU

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, and particularly liked the friendly welcome you gave us. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory and improving standard of education.

What we liked most about your school

- The school takes care of you and ensures you feel safe.
- You are well behaved in class and try hard to do your best.
- You enjoy school and take part with enthusiasm in all the school offers.
- You take your responsibilities seriously helping out with the running of the school.
- Your teachers make your lessons interesting.
- The headteacher and teachers are working hard to make your school better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you to do even better, particularly in using your literacy skills in different situations.
- Set you personal targets which help you to raise your game and do even better.
- Share good practice amongst the teachers so that you all experience the very best!
- Help all teachers to lead improvements in the subjects and areas for which they have responsibility.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection. With best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely

Mr Tony Shield Lead Inspector

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Lead Inspector