

Samuel White's Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109033
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	309856
Inspection date	26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Erne
Headteacher	Gaynor Zimmerman
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Creswicke Avenue Hanham Hanham BS15 3PN
Telephone number	01454 862510
Fax number	01454 862511

Age group	4-7
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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 effectiveness of systems to track children's progress and how these systems are used to decide on actions to raise standards, particularly in writing; the effectiveness of teaching and learning in meeting the needs of all children; and whether clear direction has been set for improvement by the headteacher, senior staff and governors to raise standards and drive the school forward.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; the school's assessment records; observation of the school at work; discussions with children, staff, parents and governors; and analysis of parental questionnaires. All classrooms were visited. 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, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Most of the children attending this large infant school come from the surrounding urban area. A below average proportion of children are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although an above average number of children have a statement of special educational needs. The main needs are communication and physical difficulties. There have been many staff changes during the last year and the headteacher was appointed in April 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school providing a sound education for its children. There are particular strengths in the strong pastoral care and in the children's good personal development. Virtually all the parents are extremely supportive of the school and are very pleased with the way their children are cared for. One parent captured the views of many in commenting, 'This is a friendly school, the headteacher and all the staff are very approachable and nothing is too much trouble.' A small number of parents expressed concerns regarding behaviour and supervision at lunchtimes but the inspector found no cause for concern during the inspection. Understandably, a few parents felt anxious regarding the many staff changes in recent times. However, the majority share one parent's view that, 'The school is fab, despite a number of changes it has been business as usual throughout.'

Children make satisfactory progress from starting points that are similar to those expected for their age when they enter the Reception classes, although their writing skills and their ability to link sounds and letters are lower. By the time children enter Year 1, standards are broadly in line with those expected in all the areas of learning. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The progress of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory and they receive appropriate support. The advent of a new headteacher has resulted in a renewed sense of purpose amongst staff and governors after a difficult time with many staff changes. The headteacher is a good leader and has quickly established a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Wasting no time, she has implemented highly effective actions to improve the planning and organisation in the Foundation Stage. Parents and children are very pleased with the transformation and observations such as 'The children are enjoying the new layout of the rooms, they love the snack table and the freedom of the open door to the outside play area to explore and learn,' were typical of many comments received.

The school is currently undergoing a full review of its curriculum in order to make it more relevant to the children's interests and sustain their motivation to learn. This is entirely appropriate, as although it meets requirements, it does not currently identify opportunities to develop literacy skills across subjects. A wide range of visits and visitors, after school clubs and opportunities to take part in exciting activities, such as a recent whole-school topic on the Olympics, all serve to broaden children's experiences and enrich their learning effectively.

Children say they love school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They say they would not want to change anything apart from some fresh paint on the walls and brighter doors. Children are kind and considerate in their dealings with each other and the attractive and very large playground is a happy place. Behaviour is good and children love being school councillors and discussing ways to improve the school. They are currently very excited about the prospect of having a pet rabbit and are eagerly discussing names. Children have a good understanding of the need to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Years 1 and 2 pupils and the staff participate enthusiastically in the daily outdoor wake and shake activities. Children leave the school with good personal skills and average standards in basic skills, which ensure they are soundly prepared for the next stage in their education.

The school is a highly caring community and the relationships between adults and children are good. Consequently, children feel valued and secure. Children are well looked after. A wealth of assessment information is collected but until recently this has not been focused enough.

Systems for checking children's academic progress are improving and as a result the school is beginning to identify more effectively where children need more support. However, currently, assessment information is not used consistently to ensure the needs of all children are met.

Children have good attitudes towards their work. They say they enjoy learning because their teachers are kind and use lots of praise. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although some good teaching and learning was observed during the inspection. This good teaching is not sufficiently widespread to ensure that all children make the best progress possible. On some occasions, tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the differing abilities of children and more able children are not given sufficient challenge in the work they are set, which inhibits their progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher is a good leader who has a very clear vision and knows precisely what the school needs to do to improve further. Together with the deputy headteacher she is taking swift and decisive actions to bring this about. The use of data, by senior staff and governors, to check the school's performance is beginning to improve. As a result, the leadership team is starting to adopt sensible strategies to bring about improvements in order to raise standards and achievement. This is illustrated by the recent successful improvement to the way reading is taught. The school's self-evaluation is good and, based on its track record there is a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The governing body is very supportive of the school. Governors' monitoring role is improving and they have a satisfactory picture of how well the school is performing.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress and standards are average in all the areas of learning at the start of Year 1. Good emphasis on the development of basic skills, such as phonics, helps children's early reading and writing skills. Parents like the way their children settle quickly and happily. This is because the care and attention given to children's welfare are good. Good improvements have been made to the planning and organisation of the Foundation Stage this term. There is now an improved balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. Children are starting to experience a lively, exciting and interesting curriculum both indoors and outdoors. Interesting role-play areas such as an ice cream van and a Chinese restaurant promote children's language skills effectively. Teaching is satisfactory and improving as staff become increasingly confident with the new organisation. The headteacher, working in close cooperation with the Foundation Stage leader, is providing good leadership and management and provision has improved rapidly and dramatically.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan and provide more opportunities for children to develop and practise their literacy skills in all subjects.
- Enable teachers to use assessment more effectively to plan lessons that meet the needs of all children and ensure the more able are sufficiently challenged.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better to ensure all children achieve well and reach higher standards.

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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	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	2
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 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	3
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

27 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Samuel White's Infant School, Bristol BS15 3PN

I enjoyed my visit to your school. You were friendly and smiley and you made me feel very welcome. It was great to see how excited you all are about having a pet rabbit and it was good to see Years 1 and 2 pupils doing their wake and shake activities. I think Samuel White's is a satisfactory school. Here are some of the things I found out.

- You enjoy school, feel safe and your behaviour is good.
- Teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- You go to a caring school. Everyone has your best interests at heart and wants you to be safe and happy and to do as well as you can.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make sure the school gets even better.
- I have asked the school to do three main things to help it improve further.
- Make sure you have lots of chances to practise your reading and writing.
- Help teachers to plan work that is just right for you all and is not too easy or too hard.
- Improve teaching so that it is good in all lessons so that you all do well and reach even higher standards in your work.

You can help your teachers by always working hard and behaving well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox Lead Inspector

Annex B

27 June 2008

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- Improve teaching so that it is good in all lessons so that you all do well and reach even higher standards in your work.

You can help your teachers by always working hard and behaving well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox
Lead Inspector