

# Somerles Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109583
<b>Local Authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	310032
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Davis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jenny Meara
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2005
<b>School address</b>	Wigmore Lane Luton Bedfordshire LU2 8AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 414545
<b>Fax number</b>	01582 414545

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether the current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain standards that are above the national average; the achievement of the more able pupils; and how effective governance is. Evidence was gathered from records of pupils' attainment, samples of pupils' past work, observations in lessons and around the school, meetings with staff, governors and pupils, and an analysis of 40 responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to contradict the school's own judgements given in its self-evaluation and these have been included in the report where appropriate.

## Description of the school

Someries Infant school is a below average sized infant school with an attached Nursery. It shares a large site with the junior school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication, or moderate learning difficulties. The school has been awarded the Activemark award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Someries Infant is a good school. It has some significant strengths and there have been across-the-board improvements since its previous inspection. These developments, combined with secure systems for checking how well the school is doing and clear commitment to raising standards, demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement. The headteacher and staff are determined to ensure that the school provides the best for its pupils. The care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent and provide the basis for them to achieve well academically and exceptionally well in their personal development. Pupils' good literacy, numeracy and personal skills prepare them well for their move to the junior school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. Many commented on the strong nurturing ethos that helps pupils to feel safe and secure, and enjoy school. A typical comment was 'My son looks forward to his day at school, his learning and the friends he meets.'

The quality of the leadership and management of the headteacher is outstanding and is the key reason for the school's success. Her commitment to continuous school improvement and to ensure that all pupils achieve well, is central to the work of the school. She is supported well by the effective assistant headteachers and has developed a close team of staff who share her vision. Many parents noted these strengths. These were encapsulated by the parent who said, 'I cannot fault the staff and I am very happy that my son is cared for by such patient and hard working adults - not only the teaching staff but office staff and dinner ladies'. Governance is satisfactory; governors are committed to the school and support it well. They have recently become more involved in shaping the educational direction of the school, with their curriculum committee receiving regular reports from teams of teachers. However, this role is underdeveloped as they are not sufficiently active in suggesting ways to move forward.

The school has thorough and comprehensive self-evaluation systems. These result in good quality improvement plans that have led to an upgrading in the quality of provision and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. For example, senior staff were conscious that the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 should be increased. Good measures were put in place, and, as a result, the proportion on course to attain the higher levels is much higher in these two areas than in previous years.

Pupils achieve well overall. They enter the Nursery with skills that are below those that are typical of their age and leave at the end of Year 2 with above average standards. Current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain above average standards in reading and writing, including at the higher levels. However, although standards in mathematics have improved, the proportion of current Year 2 pupils who are on course to attain higher levels remains the same as in previous years.

Pupils say that they enjoy learning because 'Our teachers are kind and they give lots of things for us to do.' Guidance to pupils is outstanding and reflects the increased emphasis given to placing pupils' learning at the very heart of teaching. This initiative is responsible for the clear improvements in teaching since the previous inspection. Teaching is now good and has some significant strengths. In all classes, pupils know what they need to do to improve. Year 2 pupils for example, had studied a literacy unit that focused on planning and writing sustained stories. They were very animated when outlining their ideas for the features that would demonstrate that they had achieved the purpose of this unit. Pupils know their targets well and these are used very skilfully by teachers to accelerate learning. 'There is always a next thing', commented

one happy Year 2 girl. Relationships are excellent. Pupils thoroughly enjoy talking in pairs and small groups about their work. There is a buzz of animated but purposeful discussion when teachers ask pupils to talk with their partners about solutions to problems raised. The support staff are particularly effective. As well as supporting the more vulnerable pupils, they take responsibility for small groups of the more able pupils. Even when leading a lesson for most of the class, such as in a good Year 1 handwriting session, they ensure that pupils learn quickly and progress well.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. A few parents expressed concerns about behaviour but throughout the inspection, behaviour in lessons and around the school was excellent. Pupils agree that poor behaviour is very rare and is dealt with quickly by either adults or pupils themselves. 'We make sure that everyone is happy', said one proud school council member. Although many children are unsure of themselves on entry to the Nursery, their confidence and self-esteem is developed well and parents commented on how quickly they settle when entering either this or the Reception class. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are organised meticulously. These ensure that pupils are protected well and helped to feel safe. Pupils take pride in taking responsibility, such as by being members of the school council and taking care of the environment. They enjoy planting and caring for young trees and working with the Woodland Trust to develop an area of land adjacent to the school as a wooded area. In addition, they have an exceptional understanding of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle. This is the result of the strong focus on these aspects in the science curriculum and in the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils enjoy robust physical exercise, and have a highly developed understanding of the importance of a balanced diet. Some know about the important role that calcium plays in the development of bones and teeth.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall, on entry to the Nursery, children's skills are below those expected, particularly in their personal, social and emotional skills. Because the provision is good in both the Nursery and the Reception classes, children progress well. There have been considerable improvements in the organisation of the curriculum and the outdoor areas since the previous inspection. Both are now well thought out. There has been a shift in the balance between choices children make for themselves and those to which they are directed by staff. The changes have led to the children being able to be more independent. The considerable financial resources invested in outdoor learning now supports the staff in ensuring that a rich range of activities, encompassing all areas of learning, are provided both indoors and outdoors. Staff are skilled in noting children's achievements and making use of these assessments to guide them when planning the next range of activities.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- Strengthen the role of governors to enable them to evaluate the work of the school more effectively.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	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

14 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Someries Infant School, Luton LU2 8AH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited you recently. You were all extremely polite and keen to talk to me about your work and your school.

There are many good things about your school.

- Your reading, writing and maths are better than many pupils your age and make good progress in your learning.
- You behave extremely well and work hard to help others.
- You really enjoy school and the school makes sure that there is a good range of things for you to do. I particularly enjoyed talking to you about your writing and targets in literacy.
- All the adults make sure that you are looked after and cared for well.
- Your headteacher, and all the other people who help run your school are very good at making sure that you receive a good education.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school. However, all the adults want it to be even better so I have asked Mrs Meara, the staff and governors to do two things. First, to make sure that as many of you reach the higher level in maths as you do in reading and writing. Second, to ensure that the governors obtain all the information they need on how you are doing so that they can help Mrs Meara and the staff to make decisions about how well the school is working.

Thank you once again for being so helpful to me.

With very best wishes for your future

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector