

South Brent Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113218
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311160
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqui Hopper
Headteacher	Helen Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Totnes Road South Brent TQ10 9JN
Telephone number	01364 72203
Fax number	01364 73994

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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: the progress the pupils make in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1; more capable pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 2; and the impact of leadership and management on improving achievement. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, reviewing the assessment data the school uses to track the progress the pupils make. 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, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This primary school is a little larger than most. Pupils attend mainly from the village of South Brent and surrounding hamlets, a socially and economically diverse area. An average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. Nearly all pupils are White British and a few are Travellers. Pupils' attainment on entry varies and is below that expected because a substantial proportion has limited communication skills and personal development when joining the school. Whilst the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average, most of these have higher levels of need and so the number with statements of educational need is above average. The percentage of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the normal times is above average. The school provides a specialist training support service for other schools 'The Enable Project' for facilitating pupils' emotional health and well being. A significant number of pupils across the whole age range enter later with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has won the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the National Inclusion Quality Mark, Active Mark and Gold Arts 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 with outstanding features. The headteacher provides very good leadership and strikes the right balance between striving for good academic achievement and promoting excellent personal development and well-being. Pupils thrive because the school really nurtures them and gives them a very well rounded education. It provides outstanding opportunities for them to develop their creativity. Behaviour is excellent because of the school's outstanding care and support. The school is a happy place and very much at the heart of the community. Relationships are excellent at all levels. Parents are delighted with their children's progress and, as one parent said, 'South Brent is a super school, my daughter talks enthusiastically about her learning experiences. We are all very happy.'

Pupils achieve well. When children start school a considerable number have skills which are lower than those expected for their age. As a result of well-planned provision and good teaching, they settle well and make good progress. The good start made in Reception is thoroughly built upon in Key Stage 1. Over the past few years there has been an improving trend in standards in Year 2 and pupils now enter Year 3 with average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. From Reception to Year 2, the school is doing particularly well in raising the proportions reaching higher levels in reading and writing in relation to their starting points.

Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress. Standards are above average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Standards in national tests have been rising and were above average last year. The latest tests indicate pupils made good progress from their starting points and this includes the later entrants with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards of art and design are outstanding and pupils of all ages make excellent progress in this subject. However, the school is fully aware that pupils' progress in writing is not as quick as in reading and there is scope for more pupils to do better, particularly at the higher levels. Pupils' writing is very imaginative indeed but weak punctuation prevents pupils reaching higher standards.

A key factor in pupils' good achievement is the strong emphasis given to ensuring that all pupils enjoy school, and feel safe and valued. Pupils of all ages appreciate the friendships they have across the age groups. They are confident that their views are taken fully into account and that any concerns will be dealt with quickly. They understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the well coordinated support they are given. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties make excellent progress because of the expert support that is given through 'Jungle and Woodland Den', the Enable Project provision. Close partnership with outside specialists enhances this provision. The school also works with specialists for Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage education and this contributes to the good progress made by these pupils.

The sustained successful leadership by the headteacher ensures that the focus on raising achievement is always a priority. Recent changes to the senior leadership team, after a time when the headteacher was without a deputy, have been very well managed. The new senior leadership partnership is working very well, bringing a wealth of expertise to the school. Good self-evaluation arrangements have led to the school having an accurate view of its own performance. Teachers' general skills in planning and promoting pupils' learning are systematically evaluated. Performance targets lead to professional development opportunities. Subject leaders play an effective part in evaluating pupils' progress and supporting their colleagues. However, the school is fully aware of the need to step up opportunities for subject

leaders to observe their colleagues teach in order to give more guidance. Governors play a key part in challenging and supporting the school. They are rightly revising how to make the best use of their subject strengths to inform their monitoring work.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers provide very interesting lessons that often have practical starting points that make learning relevant for all pupils. They are particularly effective in developing pupils' thinking and creativity. However, basic skills are not taught systematically enough before pupils are set to work, especially so in writing. Strong teamwork by all the staff is a major reason why the school is improving and for its good capacity to continue to do so.

The vibrant curriculum enables pupils to excel in the arts, including music and dance. Links between subjects are well made and lead to experiences of a high quality. The pupils reveal their enjoyment of many subjects including the wealth of opportunities for extra-curricular activities, sport and trips. The curriculum develops pupils' sense of wonder and helps to stimulate their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is currently improving its teaching of spelling and this is producing better results but it has yet to have an effect on the writing by older pupils. Pupils of all ages happily take on responsibilities, and important personal skills, such as team working and cooperation, are extremely well developed. Pupils demonstrate excellent organisational skills when they initiate and manage regular charity events. The school rigorously promotes good attendance.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in literacy and numeracy and across other areas of learning. By the time they begin Year 1, most are at the expected levels but few exceed them. There are excellent induction procedures for helping children when they join the school. Parents really appreciate the close links that are encouraged between home and school. Children are carefully nurtured and parents are delighted with how quickly they settle and are kept safe. The Foundation Stage is well managed with a well-planned curriculum around topic themes. Good teaching which utilises opportunities for purposeful play as well as focused group teaching makes sure children get off to a good start. Children's progress is carefully checked and rigorous support is given to the significant numbers who begin school with limited personal and/or speaking skills. The school quickly identifies those children who are more capable in order to give them more challenge.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing through more systematic teaching of basics, including punctuation.
- Increase opportunities for subject leaders to check the quality of teaching and learning across the school so they can have a greater impact on raising achievement.

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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?	1
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	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	1
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	1
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

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

20 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Brent Primary School, South Brent, TQ10 9JN

I am writing to say thank you for making me so welcome and for talking to me when I came to visit your school recently. I also want to tell you what I found out about your school.

First, you need to know you go to a good school where you make good progress. Here are some good things about your school:

- Your headteacher leads you very well and your teachers and governors are working hard to make the school even better.
- You make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- You really enjoy school and are keen to take part in the many exciting learning activities.
- You have fantastic opportunities for art, music and clubs and your art work is wonderful.
- Teaching is good and your lessons are very interesting.
- You are a credit to your school and behave extremely well. Your teamwork is impressive.
- Teachers take superb care of you, make sure you are kept safe and listen really well to what you have to say.

This is what I am asking the school to change:

- Make sure you spend more time on learning about punctuation so your writing gets better.
- Help teachers in charge of subjects to be more involved in checking up on how well you are learning.

I hope you will continue to work hard and enjoy school. Thank you once again for letting me see your lovely school.

Best wishes

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector

Annex B



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Lead inspector