

South Wonston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116034
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312155
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2008
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Amies
Headteacher	Mr Richard Coleman
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Downs Road South Wonston Winchester SO21 3EH
Telephone number	01962 881311
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school, located in a village near Winchester, is larger than most. Although not a church school, it shares its site with the parish church and maintains a close relationship. In addition to serving its own and surrounding villages, it takes many pupils from nearby services accommodation. Consequently, the proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at unusual times is much higher than in most schools. Many have already been at more than one school when they arrive. Most pupils' circumstances are relatively advantaged compared to the national picture. The great majority are of White British heritage, with none at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. These are mainly moderate, with social, behavioural, emotional and communication difficulties the most significant. Since the last inspection, the school has had a declining roll, due to local demographic changes.

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 which, following a period of declining standards, is starting to improve again. Many parents said that the school provides a secure environment in which their children grow up well. A typical comment was, 'I cannot fault the school for its commitment to ensuring that the children learn in a happy and safe environment'. This is evident in the good care for pupils, which contributes to their good personal development and well-being. A few parents said that their children did not enjoy school, but pupils told the inspectors emphatically that the great majority do. During a discussion, pupils were all able to give an example of something that they particularly like, except for one girl who said, 'I just like everything'. Pupils' good attendance also demonstrates their enjoyment. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about their opportunities for physical activity in a wide variety of sports clubs. Their enthusiastic participation means that they live active lives and they learn well how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Satisfactory teaching and learning, supported by a curriculum that is satisfactory, with good features, results in satisfactory achievement for pupils. By the end of Year 6 their overall standards are broadly average. Teachers have worked together to improve the help that they give for pupils to improve their ability to construct sentences and paragraphs. The impact is beginning to be seen in the signs of accelerating progress, so that English standards are slightly above average. There are also signs of improvement in mathematics. This is not yet as strong as in English because support for helping pupils to use their skills to solve problems, while improving, is not yet consistent in all classes. Improvement is slowest in science. The curriculum does not ensure that pupils have enough opportunities in all years to learn to become proficient in recording and explaining their findings from scientific investigations.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Declining pupil numbers have presented significant difficulties in maintaining the quality of provision in recent years. The school's leaders acknowledge that these have not always been tackled effectively, resulting in a significant budget deficit. Governors and staff have now eradicated this and it is becoming more possible to allocate resources to improving standards, for example, by providing additional booster groups. Leaders of subjects and areas such as special needs are improving their involvement and effectiveness in monitoring teaching and learning in their areas. It is not yet consistent in all areas and not all staff are skilled enough to do this effectively. While the school has overestimated its quality and performance in a few areas, self-evaluation has provided an accurate picture of the key areas needing improvement. Steps taken to secure this are beginning to show an impact, particularly by beginning to reverse the decline in English and mathematics standards. The school has tackled most issues raised by the previous inspection. The track record indicates a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, leading to good progress. Children enjoy the wide variety of activities which are based well on the areas of learning for their age group. Frequent role-play activities and opportunities to discuss their experiences help children to increase their communication skills and confidence. Activities for exploring and investigating are not planned on such a regular basis, however. For example, sand and water play are not always effectively used to develop mathematical concepts. Assessment procedures are rigorous. All adults carry

out observations as a matter of course and keep every child's records up to date. By the time they leave the Reception class, children are working securely in all of their areas of learning, particularly in communicating with others and their social and personal development. Their mathematical development is not quite as strong.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' mathematics standards by making teaching more consistently effective in helping them to use their skills to solve problems.
- Ensure that the science curriculum helps pupils to make progress consistently well in all areas.
- Improve the consistency of monitoring of teaching and learning in subjects and special needs provision.

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

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in English, mathematics and science and their standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Starting points vary for different year groups. While they are above average in most years, the current Year 6 pupils entered the school matching national expectations for age, as did the children currently in the Reception class. Standards are strongest in English, where they are slightly above average. Pupils develop a good vocabulary and become proficient in writing for a variety of purposes. They develop the expected range of mathematical skills, but often find it difficult to use these to independently solve problems. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning to carry out their own investigations, but do not always record their findings well. Pupils who learn at a slower rate than others, and those who need additional help to maintain their concentration and effort, make as much progress as their classmates, due to the sound individual support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most behave well, although pupils said a few find it difficult to do so all the time. Pupils can name healthy foods that they enjoy and are proud that the healthy tuck shop was their idea, presented through the school council. They say that they like it when new pupils arrive as this means that they can make new friends. Those who have arrived later than most say that because the pupils already here made them welcome, they settled in quickly. The older pupils make a good contribution to school life. They often help the younger ones, for example as peer mentors or leading 'huff and puff' sessions. The younger pupils play less of a role than in most schools - for example they do not have representatives on the school council. Pupils willingly contribute to local community life, through involvement in events and celebrations and the close links with the parish church. Pupils' progress in their key subjects prepares them satisfactorily for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan interesting lessons and manage their pupils effectively, which encourages positive attitudes to learning. Teachers know their pupils well. Regular assessments enable them to challenge the whole ability range, including the most able. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to provide extra support and guidance for slower learners. Teachers have sound subject expertise. They demonstrate this, for example, in their strategies to help younger pupils' to build words when reading and writing, which are beginning to accelerate their progress. While lessons are often good, there are not consistently enough at this level to lead to good overall progress by pupils. For example, teaching does not consistently provide effective opportunities for pupils to learn to apply and develop their mathematics skills in solving problems. Teachers mark work frequently and many make constructive comments to enable pupils to correct and improve their work. This is not fully consistent, however, and in some cases, comments are purely congratulatory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision for English and, to a lesser extent that for mathematics, is becoming increasingly effective in helping pupils to develop and use their skills. That for science, while satisfactory, is weaker and improving less strongly. Science plans often place an over-reliance on worksheets, which reduces variety and limits pupils' opportunities to develop and use literacy skills to record and explain findings in depth. The school has responded to falling pupil numbers by having several classes with pupils from two year groups. Plans do not always fully provide for all pupils in these classes, but this is being addressed. The programme for personal, social and health education is well thought out and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and safety. The curriculum is enhanced by specialist music provision and the teaching of French. The use of computers to stimulate and extend learning has improved considerably and is now good. There is a good range of well-attended clubs and popular trips, although several parents said that they regret that there is no opportunity for pupils to experience a residential trip. Sport plays a prominent role in school life, supported well by links with external agencies and specialist providers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff are committed to the care and guidance of their pupils and encourage them to take part and enjoy all the school's activities. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust and regularly reviewed. As a result pupils are safe and feel secure. All pupils, including those who arrive during the school year, receive good induction when they start school and parents say that this helps them to settle in well. Vulnerable pupils are well cared for and staff provide a lunchtime club which caters for their particular needs. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. It has recently been strengthened by a new system for tracking progress which is accessible to all teachers and support staff. This is being increasingly used well to provide extra support and guidance for those whose progress is falling behind that expected. However, this is not yet fully consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the future direction of the school. Colleagues working at all levels support him with commitment and energy. Governors are aware that standards could be higher and their willingness to challenge is contributing to the accelerating drive for improvement. A decision was taken to work without a deputy head. This significantly increased the burdens on the headteacher and other staff. Although they shouldered these with high commitment, this has reduced the cohesion and effectiveness of the leadership team. A new deputy has now been appointed to take up post at the start of next term. A significant minority of parents say that the school is not responsive enough to their views and concerns. The headteacher acknowledges that the school has not surveyed parents and carers' views for two years. Plans to carry out a survey soon are nearing completion.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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?	2

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	3
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

19 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Wonston Primary School, Winchester, SO21 3EH

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and we are grateful for the help you gave by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is a satisfactory school.

Some things about your school are good. The adults care for you well. Because of this you are happy and feel safe. You help your teachers a lot by coming to school regularly, behaving well and always being ready to join in with activities. Some of you told us that you love all of the opportunities for sports and other activities like learning musical instruments. You also said that you like it when new pupils arrive because you can make new friends. Some pupils who arrived during the school year said that they soon settled in because the other pupils made them so welcome.

You make satisfactory progress in your learning. You do best in English. We were impressed by how well you speak and your writing is also becoming quite good. You do not always show this when recording the results of your science investigations, though. We have asked the teachers to give you more help to improve this. We have also asked them to give you more chances to practise using your mathematical skills to solve problems, so that you can become as good in this subject as in English.

The headteacher and staff know how to make your school even better and are working hard at this. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that all staff regularly check how well the areas that they are in charge of are doing. This will help them to share their ideas for making improvements when these are needed.

Well done to you for your hard work so far and very best wishes for your future lives.

Yours faithfully

George Rayner

Lead Inspector