

# Summerswood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117182
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312526
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Jones

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lesley Cooley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elaine Sadler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Furzehill Road Borehamwood Hertfordshire WD6 2DW
<b>Telephone number</b>	02089533139
<b>Fax number</b>	02082077008

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the consistency of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of marking and target setting to support progress
- how pupils appreciate cultural diversity and respect for others.

Evidence was gathered from the observations of lessons, discussions with staff, pupils and governors, parents' questionnaires, examining pupils' work, school assessment data and documentation including the school's self-evaluation. 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 is an average sized primary school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who have a first language other than English are broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Children start school in Reception with skills and personal attributes broadly in line with those expected for their age. The Primary Support Base supports a few pupils from the wider area who have behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, who are integrated into the school. Trained staff also support a small number of pupils with these problems in their own schools. Summerswood has gained the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2008 following a period when the school was under temporary leadership. There have also been considerable changes to staffing during the last two years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Summerswood Primary provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Focused teaching and a well planned range of learning activities ensure that the children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. By the time they reach the beginning of Year 1, most have exceeded the levels expected for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. In the most recent national assessments, pupils achieved broadly average standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 attainment was higher than average, particularly in science. These pupils had made satisfactory progress from Key Stage 1. Pupils who need additional support or those who find learning more difficult make good progress relative to their capabilities. The Support Base integrates pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties successfully into mainstream classes, and given their difficulties and challenges, they make good progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good because of the good quality care, guidance and support provided by all adults who work in the school. The pupils feel safe in school because, as they say, 'it is a happy and friendly school, and everyone gets on well with each other.' Their behaviour is good and attendance is satisfactory. Pupils readily and naturally celebrate cultural diversity and appreciate the contribution made by pupils from different backgrounds to their own. As one said, echoing the views of others, 'When we meet someone we don't see them from different cultures, we just see everyone as a friend.'

The school ensures that the pupils are aware of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Many pupils are enthusiastic in their praise of teachers, the activities provided in and out of lessons and the friendliness that they say everyone shows when in school. The evident quality of all these aspects ensures that pupils enjoy their education. The school council is developing its role well, with good opportunities for council members to discuss issues that are important to them and other pupils in the school. There are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility around the school, and pupils respond well to these. Links with the local community have been developed, including those with local and national charities.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and improving. Under the strong guidance of the new headteacher, swift action has been taken to tackle weaknesses, for example to improve teachers' planning. As a result, they are ensuring that the work is now matched well to the needs of different groups and that expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised. As a result of this, standards are beginning to rise. The best lessons start with a clear explanation of what the pupils are expected to learn, and the range of learning activities that are planned link well with the purpose of the lesson. However, these qualities are not consistently present across the school and the more able pupils are not always challenged to make the best progress. Marking is inconsistent; it is often affirming and encouraging but does not consistently inform pupils as to the next steps in their learning. Those who need additional support or those who find learning more difficult receive well-targeted support from teaching assistants. This ensures that they maintain a good pace to their learning and make good progress in their work.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and enhanced by a range of extra activities in and out of lessons. Coverage of key skills in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and is helping the pupils to achieve improving standards. There are a good range of activities offered to pupils outside the school day, including a club run by older pupils for younger ones. The school is a very caring

community and all staff are sensitive to the personal and social needs of the pupils. The pupils are developing an awareness of their targets for learning in English, mathematics and science and they suggested that this makes the school 'challenging and more interesting'. The school is developing a secure system to track pupils' progress, although this valuable information is not yet shared at all levels in order to identify priorities for improvement.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Over the last two years, there has been a slowing in the rate of progress, exacerbated by significant changes of teaching staff. The new headteacher leads the school very well, and this is appreciated by parents who are pleased with her clear vision for the school. She has had a rapid and marked impact on the school since her appointment, particularly in the care for pupils and their personal development. She has quickly gained the respect of the staff and has brought them together as a more effective team, demonstrating that the school is well placed to improve further. Because the headteacher has a clear view of the strengths of the school and areas where improvement is necessary, priorities for development are accurate. However, the strategies for checking how well the school is doing, while improving, are not yet embedded at all levels. Governance is good. The governing body is supportive and also realistic in its judgements about the school and its own effectiveness. They were rigorous and robust in their approach to appointing the headteacher and were wise in their choice. They are developing effective approaches to evaluating the work of the school in close collaboration with the headteacher.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum provides a good balance between those activities led by an adult and those initiated by children. Consequently, children make a confident and positive start to school life. They achieve well and many reach higher levels than those expected for their age. The quality of teaching is good. The good start children make in the Foundation Stage prepares them well for the next stage in their learning.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and enables pupils to achieve their potential.
- Establish more rigorous self-evaluation processes across the school, involving leadership at all levels.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but with 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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2

### 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	3
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

<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>	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	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	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	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**

16 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Summerswood Primary School, Borehamwood, WD6 2DW

Thank you for the polite and warm welcome I received when I visited your school recently. I very much enjoyed speaking to so many of you and visiting all your classrooms. I thought you would like to know what I found out about Summerswood Primary School.

You clearly enjoy school and gain a lot from the friendships and opportunities provided. I was impressed by your good behaviour and the respect that you show one another - well done! You are also making some good choices to help you to stay healthy and fit. Many said how much they enjoy the opportunities to take responsibility around school. I think this is helping you to mature and become confident young people.

You told me that you enjoy lessons. I can see that you are acquiring sound knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science and that your skills are improving.

Mrs Sadler has worked very hard and has made a big difference since she joined the school but wants to do much more to improve teaching and learning. Your teachers and the governors are also very keen to work closely together to make the school even better in the future, and I am sure they will succeed if you play your part.

With best wishes to you all for your futures at Summerswood Primary School.

Ian Jones

Lead inspector