

South End Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121891
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314136
Inspection date	14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Gerrard
Headteacher	T Storr
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Wymington Road Rushden NN10 9JU
Telephone number	01933 314611
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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: pupils' progress and their standards, particularly in writing and mathematics; pupils' enjoyment of school and their understanding of how to stay safe and live healthy lives; the curriculum; the qualities of leadership and management. Evidence was collected from national published assessment information, the school's self-evaluation and its own assessment records, observation of the school at work, discussions with staff, governors and pupils and an analysis of 82 parent questionnaires and comments. Other aspects of the school's work were not examined in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as recorded in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and, where appropriate, these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

South End is a large junior school that has expanded considerably since the year 2000. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and almost all pupils are of White British Heritage. There has been a high turnover in teaching staff during the past four years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

South End Junior is a good school with some outstanding features. At the heart of the school's continued success lies a dedicated team that is well led. The headteacher has high expectations of both staff and pupils and this is the reason why it continues to improve. However, there is no complacency and the school's self-evaluation correctly identifies what it does well and what it might do to improve further. It sets itself targets that are challenging but, based on a careful assessment of the pupils' attainment when they enter the school, are realistic and achievable. It is in a good position to continue to build on its strengths and, with some fine tuning, has the capacity to become outstanding.

Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the quality of teaching their children receive and they are right to be happy. Teachers plan lessons effectively and challenge all pupils, no matter what their ability, to do well. The teachers' good humour gives pupils the confidence to respond to questioning without fear of failure. Pupils enter the school with skills that are above average and, by the time they leave, they are well above those seen nationally in the key areas of English, mathematics and science. This good progress, seen in national tests over the past three years, is the result of consistently good teaching. However, the school rightly recognises that the quality of marking of pupils' work, and its match to the pupils' individual targets, is not as good as it should be to increase the rate of progress even further.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their excellent behaviour and good attendance. It was refreshing to hear one boy reflect, 'Why would you want to stay at home and watch television when you can do all the interesting things we do?' Pupils feel very safe at school and, while they are aware that bullying occasionally occurs, they are confident that incidents are dealt with very well. The staff take good care of the pupils and arrangements for safeguarding the pupils are fully in place. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully, although the school's new procedures for ensuring the information is readily available to all staff are not established. The school provides very good support for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this enables them to make progress in line with their classmates.

The school's good curriculum provides pupils with an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils say they try to eat healthily, many bring fruit for lunchtimes, and, following discussions with local authority advisers, the school council is looking forward to establishing and running a healthy tuck shop. There is an excellent range of clubs in which the pupils participate, and the very good number of sporting activities promote their physical health very well. The school makes good use of the skills of staff to enhance the curriculum, and the teaching of music and dance to all pupils by specialist staff are good examples. The pupils are very thoughtful about the needs of others and are rightly proud of their charitable activities, in particular the 'Children's Christmas Boxes' that are sent to those less fortunate than themselves. There are many other opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility, including being available at the 'friendship stop' to look out for those pupils who are feeling alone at breaktimes. The school council's request to refurbish the toilets and provide additional play equipment for lunchtimes has been addressed. These opportunities and their excellent social skills, together with their good literacy and numeracy skills, ensure pupils are well prepared for the future.

While pupils have a good awareness of their own and other cultures, the school acknowledges that it could do more to develop the pupils' understanding of the multicultural society in which

they live. It is rightly exploring ways in which its curriculum can be made more interesting and exciting so as to further accelerate pupils' progress. The school makes every effort to forge links with the community. The strong association with local schools has helped to improve the provision of its own information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils regularly perform within the local community, whether it be in the dance groups, carol singing at the local hospital or participating in the 'Festival in the Park'. Pupils are still enthusing about last year's performance of 'Bugsy'.

While work commitments restrict the opportunity for governors to observe first hand what is happening in school as much as they would like, they nevertheless have a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. Regular discussions take place with senior staff and subject leaders, providing governors with an opportunity to challenge the school to improve further. There are good self-assessment systems in place that are based securely on the monitoring of pupils' progress, regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning, and support to rectify weaknesses. The leadership team knows exactly where the strengths in teaching and learning lie and, while allowing some autonomy, gives a good steer where appropriate to ensure standards continue to rise. That standards have been maintained or improved during a period of a high turnover of staff is testimony to the strength of the school's leadership. Aware that staff move on for a variety of reasons, the school looks beyond the horizon, providing opportunities for some staff to shadow those with responsibilities and for others to gain experience through being part of the senior leadership team. This process works well and ensures a smooth transition of responsibility.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise the quality of teaching by ensuring the marking of pupils' work is more consistent and closely linked to the pupils' individual targets
- ensure that the rate of pupils' progress is made easily accessible to all staff through the embedding of its new monitoring procedures.

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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 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	2
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?	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?	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

15 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South End Junior School, Rushden, NN10 9JU

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed watching some of you dance, listening to your music and talking to you. I can understand why you are proud of your school because the headteacher and her staff work hard to make a good school.

These are some of the best things about your school:

- you make good progress in your work, particularly in English, mathematics and science
- your behaviour is excellent and you thoroughly enjoy your work
- you know a lot about how to stay safe and how to live a healthy life
- you work hard to support and help those people who are less fortunate than yourselves
- you love taking part in the many clubs at lunchtime and after school that teach you important skills in things such as art, dancing, music, sport and computers
- your teachers provide you with interesting lessons and make work fun
- all of the staff take good care of you and keep you safe.

What we would like the school to do now:

- improve the way in which teachers mark your work so that it gives you more help to reach your targets
- ensure those in charge of the school improve the way in which they check how well you are doing.

I wish you all the best for the future. Thank you again for helping me with my work.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards Lead Inspector



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