

# Southwold Primary School and Early Years' Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122465
<b>Local Authority</b>	CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	314301
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Hall

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Alan Clark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kay Price
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Kennington Road Radford Nottingham NG8 1QD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 915 5756
<b>Fax number</b>	0115 915 5757

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This slightly smaller than average sized primary school serves an inner city area of Nottingham where there are pockets of considerable deprivation. There are a growing number of families associated with the adjoining University. Almost half the pupils are from a wide range of ethnic minority groups and double the average proportion speak English as an additional language. The majority leave or join the school other than at the usual time. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is double the national average and the proportion with learning difficulties is higher than seen in many schools. The school holds the National Healthy Schools Gold, Emotional Well Being and Activemark awards.

## 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. Pupils enjoy their time here because it is a warm and welcoming place that enables everyone to settle well and thrive. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education and care offered. As one notes, while her child 'is improving all the time and is being challenged in the things she does I never feel they are putting too much pressure and take the fun away'.

Children enter the school with skills that are often well below expectations for their age. They make excellent progress in the Early Years Centre particularly in their personal development. When they enter Year 1 skills, knowledge and understanding are close to the expectations for their age. In Years 1 to 6 pupils make good overall progress. However, there are challenges for many pupils that affect learning, including changing schools. Overall, most pupils, including those with English as an additional language and the high proportion with learning difficulties, achieve well from a very modest start. National assessment and test results, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, have been slightly below national averages. While a reasonable proportion of pupils achieve what is expected for their age relatively few attain the higher levels. However, there is an upward trend in standards and progress is good when compared to that in similar schools.

Personal development is good overall as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The behaviour of most pupils is good. Many are enthusiastic about the range of activities and the friendships they make. There is real joy shown in high quality singing and signing in whole school assemblies. Pupils understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle and to keep themselves and others safe. There are good opportunities for them to help the school community including as Young Leaders. Because many grow greatly in confidence and improve their basic skills, this helps them prepare well for their future.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Most staff plan carefully to meet the diverse needs of pupils and manage their behaviour well. However, there is variability in the quality of teaching and staff do not always expect enough of pupils, particularly the higher attainers. The pastoral care of pupils is often excellent and the support for those with specific needs is of high quality, with the Learning Mentor being very effective in supporting sometimes troubled children. However, academic guidance is not as strong. While the school has good systems to check and track the progress made, some teachers do not make best use of this information to set consistently challenging tasks that meet the needs of all learners. The curriculum is good and staff make excellent use of links with the adjoining University to extend learning including in sporting, cultural and academic areas through visits to places that open up new horizons for the pupils.

The headteacher provides very effective leadership. She has a strong vision for the school centred on caring and supporting children and their families. The drive to continually move forward and raise standards is well supported by other key leaders. Governors are supportive and keen to develop their role further. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children enter the excellent Early Years Centre (EYC) with a very wide range of experiences. Many are at the very early stages of English and several have identified learning difficulties.

Staff are very aware of the individual needs of the children. They provide a lively, stimulating and happy environment where children enjoy a host of practical activities and soon start to make rapid progress in all areas of their learning. The checking and tracking of progress is excellent and information is used very effectively to provide challenging activities. Most staff have very high expectations of what can be achieved as seen in phonics activities where children have to use and match words containing two and three letter sounds. Overall, children of all abilities make excellent progress. Parents are rightly delighted with the quality of care and education. The EYC team show huge enthusiasm and dedication to their roles. They continually question what is provided for the children, which coupled with determination to provide the best they can has ensured that high quality provision has been a feature of the school for a number of years.

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

- Raise standards by ensuring that the more able pupils achieve all that they can.
- Use assessment information consistently to plan activities that always provide exactly what pupils need to achieve well.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the school with speaking and listening skills that initially are very limited. Their early reading and writing skills are also restricted as is their understanding of mathematics and other areas. They settle very quickly, make rapid gains in their learning, and become much more confident individuals. Assessments show that in the six to nine terms they have in the Early Years Centre children make excellent progress and when they enter Year 1 standards are close to what is expected for their age in several areas. In Years 1 to 6, most pupils make good progress. An above average proportion of pupils join the school other than the usual time. Staff do well in integrating these pupils and those who find learning difficult. The large numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good overall progress. They often benefit from the support of bi-lingual adults, some of whom work in the adjoining University. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and girls and boys do equally well. While overall progress is good, some pupils do not achieve the levels they are capable of. However, indications are that standards are rising.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Secure relationships are a strong feature and key to the school's success. Playtimes are enjoyable social occasions thanks to the effective work of, for example, 'Playground Buddies'. Most pupils behave well and enjoy their work, although a small number present very challenging behaviour. The school uses its richness of cultural diversity particularly well to give pupils a deeper understanding of other cultures. Those with responsibilities, including the school council, take them seriously and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils develop a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles but more remains to be done to persuade them of the benefits of healthy packed lunches. By the time pupils leave, most have acquired good personal and sound academic and independent skills for the next stage of their education. Despite the Learning Mentor's excellent monitoring, attendance is no more than satisfactory because some families do not appreciate the importance of regular attendance.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good overall and is strongest for the youngest and oldest pupils, where it is sometimes outstanding. Here staff make high but achievable demands upon pupils. In Years 5 and 6 teachers make particularly good use of probing questions to check, not only what pupils know, but also to identify what may need to be covered again. The good number of skilled teaching assistants are used well to support the learning of those of different abilities. The management of pupils is generally good. However, where teaching is less effective staff do not always manage the disruptive behaviour of a small minority or demand enough of all groups. While planning for many activities is good, the best use is not always made of assessment information to set tasks that challenge all.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of activities. It has adapted its curriculum well to meet the needs of a changing intake. It places strong emphasis on improving literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Well-planned experiences, such as Science Fun Day and Spanish lessons, successfully bring the curriculum alive. They provide good opportunities for pupils to gain independence and develop future life skills. There is a very good programme for supporting pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The school makes effective use of visits and visitors to support pupils' learning. High quality clubs and enrichment opportunities add greatly to pupils' enjoyment. Strong links with the local secondary school have a positive impact on learning. However, further 'fine tuning' remains to be done to ensure planned activities provide challenge, particularly for the more able in mixed age classes.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. There is a strong emphasis on nurturing each child as an individual. Secure and up-to-date procedures safeguard pupils' welfare and safety. Day-to-day pastoral care is impressive. Pupils value the care shown to them and are confident they can confide in anyone if necessary. Support for pupils with English as an additional language and those who find learning difficult is of high quality. Very strong links exist with other schools and outside agencies. Recently implemented procedures for guiding academic progress are good overall, with improving systems for assessing pupils' standards and setting targets. However, not all teachers evaluate pupils' levels of understanding as an integral part of their lessons. Consequently, assessment information is sometimes not used to best effect to provide the highest level of challenge.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

Leadership and management is good overall with the dedication of the well respected headteacher being a key feature of why the school has continued to move forward. The head

and senior staff form a strong and effective senior leadership team who share a clear commitment to enriching the lives of sometimes vulnerable children. Senior staff radiate both great warmth to children and their families and a quiet determination to keep moving forwards, sometimes in the face of adversity. School self-evaluation is good and staff recognise strengths and areas for development accurately. There are appropriate systems to monitor the quality of the work of the school. However, opportunities to evaluate teaching and learning are not rigorous enough to identify and eradicate inconsistencies in provision. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are committed to the school but at times are dependent upon the staff for information.

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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	1
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	3
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?	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	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

<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	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	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

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southwold Primary School and Early Years Centre, Nottingham, NG8 1QD

Thank you very much for looking after us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you in lessons, at lunchtime and when we spoke to the school council. We think this is a good school and there are lots of things your school does well.

These are some of the best things-

- The youngest and oldest of you make excellent progress because the staff expect a lot of you.
- Most of you like coming to school and try hard with your work.
- You really enjoy singing in assembly.
- There are excellent links with people and organisations outside school that help to make learning exciting.
- The staff care for you and look after you very well.
- Your headteacher leads the school well. She and the staff work very well together as a team to ask what else needs to be done to improve even more.

These are things I have asked the school to improve-

- Make sure that some of you, especially those who find learning easy, make even more progress.
- Use information from checking your work to make sure that your next activities are not too easy for you.

To help your school, please try to make sure you attend regularly and do try to remember to eat healthily!

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall,

Lead inspector