

Southbourne Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125878
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315338
Inspection date	24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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 (total)	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Cieszynska
Headteacher	Clive Butler
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2005
School address	New Road Southbourne Emsworth PO10 8JX
Telephone number	01243 375878
Fax number	01243 370572

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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:

Establishing whether achievement in writing is good enough.

Ensuring assessment procedures are being used effectively to provide challenging targets and to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve.

Enquiring how well the school celebrates cultural diversity and how well this links to a strong development of community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, interviews with the headteacher, senior leadership team and chair of governors, and discussions with pupils and staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own self-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 average sized junior school is on the same site as the local infant school and serves its immediate locality. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above that found nationally.

The school was awarded the Arts Council of England's Artsmark Gold Award in 2007, the Basic Skills quality mark, bronze eco-status, Investor in People (IIP) and Activemark.

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 where pupils have exemplary behaviour and achieve well. The excellent leadership and management stems from the highly experienced headteacher, ably supported by a very effective senior team. Together they have set an extremely clear vision for the school resulting in an innovative and particularly interesting curriculum that excites pupils into learning. The success of this vision is reflected in the outstanding quality of displays, excellent artwork and the increasing proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in national tests. Achievement is good and standards across a range of subjects are also at least above average. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the future and their economic well-being.

'These pupils are a delight to be with'. This comment from the headteacher is a sentiment that inspection evidence can confirm. In discussion, pupils are eager to share and celebrate their achievements and are particularly proud of the very many interesting and exciting activities they have successfully been involved in. When asked what they would want to change, no significant weaknesses were mentioned or as one pupil put it, 'I enjoy it loads and my teachers are nice'. Due to the excellent pastoral support, pupils feel safe and secure. They are very well supported and relationships across the whole school community are noticeably strong; a judgement also reflected in parental surveys. One comment summed this up by saying 'I feel part of a team whose aim is not only academic achievement but the development of a wide range of skills needed for life in general.'

Pupils start in Year 3 with standards that are broadly average. Continuous progress is achieved from the consistently good quality of teaching in each class. Very strong support systems ensure that even inexperienced teachers are able to plan and deliver lessons effectively. These are usually based around central themes which combine various subjects. For example, one class studying habitats wrote a report of their visit to a beach but were asked to write this account from the point of view of a crab. They developed key skills in creative writing while understanding the wider scientific context of what it is like to live in a rock pool. A key feature, encouraged in the teaching, is to allow pupils time to complete, reflect and refine their work. This, along with the constructive marking and future targets for improvement, provides them with the chance to set their own high expectations about what they can achieve and to have a pride in their finished product. Presentation in books and the very many hand-made folders and artwork is outstanding.

Standards in the national tests in 2008, while not confirmed, indicate a significantly higher proportion of pupils achieving above the age-expected level than has been the case in previous years. These results are reflected in the work that these pupils completed during the course of the year. In some cases, the standards in their day-to-day work were higher than those achieved in tests. It is most noticeable in writing where some of the use of vocabulary has extensively enhanced stories, poems and descriptive work. This demonstrates the school's success in its focus of developing this area of the excellent curriculum. Innovative techniques have been used, for example in one class where pupils, dressed as farmers, discussed and then wrote about their feelings towards an 'Iron Man' who had destroyed their machinery.

Assessment procedures, and their use to determine where support is needed, are excellent. Those with learning difficulties have shown good levels of progress from their lower starting points with some reaching the age-expected levels by the time they leave. The school has undertaken a thorough analysis of internal and external testing, conducted half-termly, to

ensure that the quality of teaching is matched to the quality of learning. This shows that the vast majority of pupils make the expected progress and, in some years, significant proportions are exceeding this. This evaluation correctly highlights that in the present Year 6, at the start of the year, pupils have already made the expected progress for the whole Key Stage, an indication that standards are continuing to rise. Nevertheless, the school is not complacent. Its analysis also rightly points to the need to ensure that this level of progress, particularly in writing, is sustainable throughout the school, and that results in national tests in English continue to rise from, what has been in the past, a broadly average level.

The outstanding leadership qualities of the headteacher motivate the highest professionalism from staff. The very good support structures ensure that there is continuous development of teachers' and teaching assistants' skills. This has had a significant impact on the long-term provision of the school and supports an outstanding capacity to improve. A start has been made on developing the new aspects of community cohesion. Local connections are good and, while still at an early stage, are now being supplemented with stronger links to the global family. These include video conferencing with a Spanish school and the appointment of a manager for the extended school provision. Governors support the school and undertake their duties effectively. From the good information they receive, they are able to question decisions although, along with the senior staff, they consistently underestimate how good the school is.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the success in raising writing standards, so this is consistently reflected in the standards reached in English by pupils at the end of Year 6.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southbourne Junior School, Southbourne PO10 8JX

- Thank you for looking after me so well during my recent visit. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with you all and hearing all about the interesting and exciting things that go on. It will be no surprise to you to know that I have said you go to a good school. In fact, I have said that some things are outstanding. As I promised some of you, I have written the main points of my report below.
- You told me that you thought everybody behaved well and that you enjoyed school. I agree. I think your behaviour is outstanding and you do thoroughly enjoy school because of the excellent curriculum you are offered and the way that you are expected to always do your best.
- You are taught well. Teachers try to make everything relevant so that you understand what you are learning. Clearly, from my discussions with some of you, you understand what to do next and why you are doing it.
- You told me you are looked after well and I agree. You also told me that bullying was almost non-existent and even when it happened it was dealt with quickly and effectively. I also agree with your comments.
- Your headteacher has made sure that you have the best opportunities. He, along with the rest of the staff, is rightly proud of what you achieve. They are always trying to make things better and so I have asked that the good standards that are evident in your day-to-day work are also reflected in the English national test results in Year 6.

You can help with improving your school by continuing to work hard and suggesting sensible things that can help to make your school one of the best.

Finally, I hope you all continue to be successful both in this school and for the rest of your future education.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

David Collard Lead inspector