

Southwater Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125890
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315345
Inspection date	4 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Douglas Smith
Headteacher	Sue Winn
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Worthing Road Southwater Horsham RH13 9JH
Telephone number	01403 733254
Fax number	01403 733753

Age group	4–7
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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: • standards and achievement throughout the school, especially in relation to the achievement of boys in writing • the quality of care, guidance and support for pupils, with a focus on academic guidance and support • the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage. The inspector gathered evidence from discussions with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body, observations of teaching and of pupils at work and at play, scrutiny of school documentation and self-evaluation, samples of pupils' work and an analysis of parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected 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 a larger than average infant school. Children enter the school at the age of four with skills which usually meet expectations for their age, although their language and communication skills are often less well developed. Very few pupils have a first language other than English. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides an excellent education for pupils and prepares them very well for the next stage of their education. Achievement is outstanding. Underpinning the excellent progress made by pupils is the high quality of teaching linked to a curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils very effectively. This is an important factor in ensuring that pupils consistently attain well above average standards. Pupils presently in Year 2 are on course to exceed the very challenging targets set for them in the 2008 national assessment tasks. Even so, the school is not complacent and constantly analyses its performance to ensure that any gaps in pupils' learning are quickly identified and corrected.

This is a school which knows itself well and demonstrates an excellent capacity for further improvement. At the heart of the school's success is outstanding leadership and management, especially that of the headteacher, who provides a very clear vision and direction. Staff and governors are proud of what they believe is a very successful school and parents are overwhelming in their praise. Typical of the many positive comments from parents is, 'Southwater Infant School has provided both my children with an outstanding start to their education. They love going to school and enjoy a fantastic range of opportunities.'

The curriculum links different subjects together very well in order to ensure learning is relevant, purposeful and enjoyable for pupils. The quality of pupils' work on display is of a high standard and provides clear evidence that the school's success is not just restricted to test results. Pupils say they look forward to lessons, especially when they involve practical work in subjects, such as science and information and communication technology (ICT). They say that teachers are approachable and friendly. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers are nice and make learning fun.' Classrooms are stimulating places and teachers use a variety of approaches to make lessons interesting. This was very apparent in a music lesson when the beaming smiles on pupils' faces as the teacher played back the music they had helped compose clearly showed just how much they enjoy their learning.

The school provides an excellent level of care, guidance and support for pupils and this is the basis for their outstanding personal development and well-being. There is a pleasant atmosphere about the school. Parents are very positive in their appreciation of the caring way staff look after their children and comment about the 'safe and secure environment' the school provides for pupils. Good induction and transfer arrangements help pupils settle quickly into new routines. Health and well-being are securely safeguarded and child protection procedures meet current government requirements. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils requiring extra help, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported and make the same excellent progress as that of all the other pupils. The school has developed and implemented effective procedures to track pupils' progress and uses them very well to set individual pupils challenging targets for improvement, especially in English and mathematics.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding and is reflected in their above average rates of attendance. They play a very full and active role in the community and pupils are aware of the importance of their involvement in fund raising for local and overseas charities. They talk excitedly about the school's participation in many village events, such as the local carnival and the concerts they perform at a local independent school. Pupils take the responsibilities they are given very seriously and have a good understanding of the need to make healthy choices

and to adopt safe practices. Older pupils ensure younger ones feel safe and secure at playtimes and talk enthusiastically about their role in looking after the younger children. They know there is always someone to help them should the need arise. Whilst their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, their moral and social development is excellent and this is reflected in pupils' exemplary behaviour and outstanding attitudes towards others. Pupils fully understand the need to make sensible and healthy choices and realise the importance of keeping fit. They join in the good range of popular extra-curricular activities provided by the school with great enthusiasm. They are keen to talk about the activities they take part in, especially their membership of the school's excellent choir. A wide variety of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest build up pupils' knowledge of the wider world. However, pupils' appreciation of the multicultural nature of modern British society is not as well developed as other aspects of their cultural education.

The headteacher and senior management team have been very thorough in regularly analysing the school's performance and in implementing improvements where needed. This has enabled the school to identify and sustain existing good practice and to address any inconsistencies. This means that standards have remained well above average since the previous inspection. It has ensured that boys have continued to perform far better than boys do nationally, especially in regards to the standard of boys' writing. Leaders have been well supported in this by the governing body, which fulfils all its statutory duties well and offers a convincing level of challenge to the school. Individual governors play an important role in school affairs. They bring a good level of expertise to the school and take their responsibilities seriously.

The school has built up very good relationships with parents, who are very supportive and appreciate that their views are regularly sought and acted upon. Resources are very good and used extremely well. Links with external agencies are good and support pupils' learning well, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The words of one parent summed up the outstanding quality of provision in the school's Foundation Stage. 'We are delighted with our son's progress in Reception. He thoroughly enjoys school and is extremely enthusiastic about all aspects of it.' Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage and make excellent progress because teaching caters exceptionally well for the needs of all children. Teachers work very well with teaching assistants to ensure that lessons effectively blend opportunities for children to learn both independently and with adult direction. Classrooms are colourful and provide stimulating learning environments. Lessons often make excellent use of role play and real life situations in order to capture children's imaginations and so add to their enjoyment of learning. Recording of children's progress is very thorough and is used exceptionally well to plan future work. Staff work very effectively to ensure there is always a very strong emphasis on language development, especially that of boys who often enter the school with less well developed communication skills than girls. This ensures that children make rapid progress in developing their language and communication skills during their year in the Foundation Stage and is a key factor in ensuring that by Year 2 pupils attain consistently high standards in reading and writing.

Progress in children's personal, social and emotional development is very good and parents appreciate the care and support their children receive. Children are happy to share and to take turns whilst joining in lesson activities with enthusiasm. Regular visits to interesting places within the local community are used very well to build up children's understanding of the wider

world in which they live. A further range of interesting activities, both indoors and outdoors, ensure that children exceed expectations in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society.

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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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

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?	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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southwater Infant School, Southwater, RH13 9JH

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. Everyone was so friendly and I soon realised why you like your school so much. I enjoyed talking to you about what you like the most about school, seeing you all working in lessons and listening to the lovely singing of your school choir, of which you must be very proud. Here are some of the things I particularly like about your school:

- Your school is an outstanding school which makes sure that you are very well prepared for the time when you leave and go to the junior school.
- Your teachers always try to make lessons interesting and this helps you to make outstanding progress and reach high standards.
- You really enjoy everything about your school.
- Your personal development is excellent. You all behave very well indeed and you are very friendly, caring and polite.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors lead and manage the school really well.

I believe your headteacher and teachers can do something to make your school even better.

- I have asked your school to help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from different cultural backgrounds to your own.

You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron

Lead inspector