

# Somercotes Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112499
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325618
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Hall

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	234
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John McCabe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Sisson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Nottingham Road Somercotes Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 4LY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 602849
<b>Fax number</b>	01773 602849

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average size infant school in a small industrial area in mid-Derbyshire. The school is on a split site and is in the middle of a major building and refurbishment programme. It has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children aged three to five. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is twice the national average. There is a small number of children from minority ethnic groups and a few are at the early stages of learning English. The number with additional needs is slightly above average.

The school is within a Sure Start area and holds the Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark and ECO schools silver award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. There are strengths in the good personal development and pastoral care of the children. The school has a strong focus on good conduct and most children behave well. Levels of attendance have been raised significantly and are now in line with the national average. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Overall judgements match those of the school's own evaluations. The staff are particularly successful in meeting the needs of vulnerable children and their families. Parents are pleased with the quality of education and care the school provides and recognise their children are safe and happy and that they enjoy the range of activities available.

Children enter the EYFS with skills and knowledge that are below those normally expected, and sometimes well below in the case of some of the boys, notably in their language and literacy skills. Teaching and learning deal with this appropriately and children across the school make satisfactory progress. When they leave school at the age of seven, standards are below average overall, and boys' performance still lags behind that of girls. Staff have prioritised the achievement of boys as requiring improvement, particularly in writing standards. While work is underway to raise standards, learning activities are not consistently interesting enough for some children. Opportunities for everyone to discuss their ideas are too limited. This has the result of reducing children's progress.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Teachers manage children's behaviour well and offer lots of praise and encouragement, which produces a good climate for learning. However, sometimes the children have to sit and listen for too long and lessons are not always pitched at the right level of difficulty. This is because staff do not make full use of assessment information to plan for the needs of different abilities in the classes. Staff care well for the children and their families and work very effectively with a wide range of external agencies, which helps to bring different groups together in the locality and provides much support. Children with additional needs are also supported particularly effectively, which enables many of them to make good progress in their personal development and learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is the capacity to continue to improve. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Senior staff monitor the work of the school satisfactorily although not always rigorously enough. While standards have improved, rates of progress are not yet consistent across all subjects.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Staff provide good pastoral care for the children, which enables them to settle happily at school. Their achievement is satisfactory. Many enter with limited early learning experiences. Some are initially very quiet, using only few words and not speaking freely about what they are doing. Several children find it difficult at first to conform to the requirements of school. Nevertheless, staff organise a suitable range of activities for the children to learn social skills and to develop their learning, including outdoor play. Some of the activities and the general learning environment of the separate Nursery and Reception class areas do not always stimulate children's imagination and social skills enough. Coupled with this, staff sometimes miss the opportunity to focus on language, such as key words and to get the children to use these themselves. This slows progress so that by the time they leave the EYFS many do not reach the expected goals,

especially in communication and numeracy skills. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the EYFS leader plans to take further opportunities to monitor the quality of planning, teaching and learning across the key stage.

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

- Enable all children and especially the boys to make consistently good progress, particularly in their writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by using assessment information to provide work at the correct level of difficulty for children of all abilities.
- Focus monitoring and evaluation of the school's work on achieving more consistency in rates of children's progress, so that standards rise further.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children enter Year 1 with skills, knowledge and understanding that are often below the expectations for their age. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show that in some years standards were close to national averages because girls achieved well. In 2007, standards fell, particularly in writing. While this was linked to the number of children who, for identified reasons, found learning difficult, data shows that for several years boys have not done as well as girls, to a greater degree than seen nationally. In 2008, standards rose, with many doing well in reading and mathematics. Girls outperformed boys and did well to reach above average standards. The school has begun to focus upon the achievement of boys and children are making satisfactory progress overall. The majority of children, including the small number speaking English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities often make good progress because of the wide range of intervention programmes and additional support that they receive.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children enjoy school a great deal and thrive within an environment where they feel safe. This view is supported by high parental satisfaction. Attitudes and behaviour are good overall because children and adults like each other. Initiatives such as 'playground friends' effectively maintain high levels of harmony. The school council and 'Eco Police' also make a valuable contribution to the school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children are well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society. They contribute well to the wider community through, for example, fund raising projects for Africa. Most acquire sound knowledge for their future well-being, and they have good social skills. The impact of the school's approach towards developing healthy lifestyles is good. Children have a good awareness of keeping safe and being active. Although further work remains to be done to ensure that food in lunchboxes is healthy, a high proportion of children are very aware of what is good for them.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers manage children's behaviour well, which ensures lessons are calm and purposeful. Staff offer lots of praise and encouragement and this raises children's self-esteem. The planning of lessons is satisfactory overall and occasionally good. The headteacher collates a suitable range of assessment information so that staff are able to track the progress children make. This information is used appropriately to set targets and plan a range of activities for the children. However, at times tasks are not demanding enough. Not enough writing is on display in order to encourage children. Occasionally, when teachers do not use time efficiently, children sit passively so that concentration, effort and the pace of learning dips. The effectiveness of how teachers use support staff is variable. Those working with children on specific support programmes are well trained and very effective. They clearly add much to children's learning. Others, usually those who support children within lessons, are not always deployed to full effect.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school regularly reviews its curriculum in its stated quest to provide 'a world class curriculum'. A well-structured personal, social and health education programme ensures that children across the school develop responsibility and maturity. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory with improving links between subjects. However, further work remains to be done to ensure activities stimulate the children's imaginations and provide challenges for all levels of ability. Successful themed events, such as 'Big Art Week' effectively develop creativity across subjects and make learning enjoyable. Information and communication technology is becoming a more integral part of learning than in the past. Children who find learning difficult are well catered for. Strong links with other schools and outside agencies contribute richness and diversity. Effective partnerships with, for example, a local sports college effectively raise children's awareness of keeping fit.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school takes very good care of its children, making their well-being paramount. Procedures for ensuring safety, including those for child protection, are thorough. A particularly good range of support mechanisms ensures all children thrive in this happy environment. Tight, effective monitoring has raised attendance to average levels. Teaching assistants play a major role in the success of group work for children with particular needs. Very effective coordination of work to ensure good behaviour enables vulnerable children to participate fully in school life. Initiatives such as 'Positive Play' develop their self-esteem well. The school is actively seeking support for its growing number of children with English as an additional language. Family links have a strong focus and the school works closely with a range of outside agencies to maximise children's learning. Improving systems for tracking children's achievement and assessing standards are beginning to contribute satisfactorily to the better progress children make.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher and staff are fully committed to the children and their families and work well as a team to meet the needs of the local area and raise expectations of what can be achieved. This is widely appreciated by parents who praise the help and support their families receive. There are many current challenges for the school in the midst of its major building and refurbishment programme of the very old accommodation. This has sometimes limited the staff's opportunities to carry out effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. While senior leaders clearly recognise the strengths and weaknesses of what is provided, this has not always led to consistent action being taken to resolve issues. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and working with commitment to develop their role as a critical friend of the school by challenging strategic decision-making.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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

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

10 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Somercotes Infant School, Somercotes, DE55 4HA

Thank you very much for looking after Mrs Campbell and I when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed speaking to several of you and meeting you in lessons, at lunchtime and in assembly.

These are some of the best things we found.

- You enjoy coming to school and know a lot about exercising and eating sensibly.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are given lots of help and make good progress.
- The school works hard with different groups of people to make sure you and your families are helped as much as possible.
- The staff care for you, look after you well and make sure you are safe.
- Most of you behave well and grow in confidence

Yours is a satisfactory school. To help things to improve even more we have asked that:

- teachers organise interesting things for you to make sure the boys achieve as well as girls in their writing
- staff make sure that some work is more challenging for you, so can make even better progress
- your headteacher and staff check what happens in school even more carefully to make sure everything is the best that can be provided.

To help your school continue to improve, please try hard to take part in all the class discussions so that you learn and use lots more new words to help with your speaking and writing and please remember to eat healthily.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector