

Southill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113719
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	325868
Inspection date	27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	David Townsend HMI

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	208
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Sharpe
Headteacher	Wanda Bolton
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sycamore Road Southill Weymouth DT4 9UF
Telephone number	01305 773144
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, accompanied by an Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How well pupils make progress, especially the higher ability pupils in writing.
- How well the teaching, assessment, academic guidance and the curriculum promote progression in pupils' learning.
- How successfully leaders have maintained and built upon the strengths identified at the last inspection.

The inspection gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors 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

Southill is an average sized primary school. It admits pupils from a wide catchment area and is oversubscribed. Children join the school from a wide range of pre-school settings. Most are from White British ethnic backgrounds and speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that seen nationally. Pupils' social and economic backgrounds are similar to those found nationally. Their attainment on entry to school is generally average, although this varies from year to year and can dip 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

Southill Primary provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Parents rightly praise its caring, family atmosphere and recognise its success in promoting pupils' personal and academic development. One parent summed up the views of many in saying that 'children get an excellent start to their education at Southill'.

The key to the school's success is its relentless drive in developing pupils as thoughtful, articulate, caring and confident learners. From broadly average starting points, pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding exceptionally well. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2 to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, pupils of all abilities have made accelerated progress and reach very high standards in English, mathematics and science. In 2008, virtually all pupils reached the expected Level 4 and around half reached the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make very good progress.

A main factor in the pupils' excellent academic achievement is the high quality monitoring of their progress. Through this, senior managers quickly identify any dips in attainment in relation to the demanding targets set for each individual. In turn, subject leaders carry out careful analysis of pupils' work and rigorous action is taken to address any shortcomings. For example, last summer, the school identified that able writers in Year 2 had too few opportunities to write at length in a range of styles. This evaluation led to the implementation of a comprehensive plan for action. Action included staff training, a review of the way assessment tasks were structured and more opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum. The school's data show that these pupils, who are now in Year 3, are making good progress towards the higher levels this year.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their social, moral and spiritual development, are outstanding. The school's very supportive ethos helps children to be responsible, confident and motivated to learn. For example, school councillors play a key role in bringing about improvements, such as the 'buddy bus stop' for supporting less confident pupils, the 'jungle gym' and the work underway on developing further the school grounds. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good; pupils are polite, sensible and respectful of others. Attendance rates are high. Pupils feel very safe in school and are very clear to whom they would turn with a problem. They demonstrate an extremely good knowledge and understanding of how to lead a healthy life. They know about the importance of a good diet and regular exercise 'for the brain as well as the body!' and they strive to act on this awareness. A curricular emphasis on 'global issues', as well as the links established with a school in London that serves pupils from many different ethnic backgrounds, help promote pupils' good cultural development. Given the strong emphasis the school places on developing their basic skills and personal qualities, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Very effective support and intervention is given to pupils to ensure they all have the same opportunities. For example, as parents note, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including some with complex needs, are fully included in all school life and fully supported to achieve. Indeed, the teaching team know all pupils very well and offer high quality pastoral care and academic guidance. For example, across the school, teachers make consistent use of a colour coding system in their marking to flag up key learning strengths and areas for development in pupils' work, all closely linked to lesson objectives. Consequently, pupils feel

very clear about how well they are doing and what they need to learn next. Teaching assistants play a significant role in helping to deliver well-targeted intervention programmes for individual pupils and groups requiring extra support to reach their targets.

Across the school, good and sometimes outstanding teaching, as well as a rich and varied curriculum, ensures pupils do extremely well academically and personally. Pupils very much enjoy school because learning is made fun, and the high expectations extend to all areas of learning, such as music, art and the use of information and communication technology. An exceptional programme of visits, visitors, after-school clubs and special events serve to enrich the curriculum significantly. Lessons are well organised. Active learning is emphasised well and the match between learning tasks and pupils' needs and abilities is good. The school recognises, though, that facets of the most effective teaching seen, in which pupils are continually challenged and inspired to lead their own learning, are not yet sufficiently widespread.

Highly effective leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by her deputy, has been the driving force behind the school's success. Senior leaders receive the full support of the committed staff, whose expertise is utilised well. There are many opportunities for others to lead new initiatives, to coach colleagues and model new approaches. The dedicated governing body knows the school very well and provides incisive challenge to help it move forward. Good teamwork among staff and pupils, parents and governors contribute to the school's very comprehensive self-evaluation. There is a firm commitment to promoting cohesion within and beyond the school community. Given its track record in continuing to provide a very well rounded education and, in particular, its success in increasing progress rates for all pupils, the school has outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle into school quickly and happily, because of the effective induction procedures the school has in place. The teaching team pays close attention to the children's personal development, which is outstanding. Teaching is good and ensures that the children experience a purposeful learning environment where they can develop their creativity and independence. For example, a small group of children thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to re-enact the story of Little Riding Hood, complete with a 'not very scary wolf'. The teacher monitors children's progress very carefully and sets clear targets for their learning. This ensures children make good progress across all the areas of learning so that most reach the levels expected of them on entry to Year 1. Writing is developing well as a result of the good emphasis on improving provision. Children happily wrote about good and bad characters in the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. The teaching team promotes welfare well within a safe and secure environment; all children, including those who are vulnerable, thrive. There is a good range of stimulating activities both inside and out to engage children in their learning. However, the adults' questioning is not always fully effective in challenging children in their learning. Although the leadership is fairly new, it is good. There is a clear sense of direction and a determination to ensure the best for the children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of all teaching to that of the very best in school.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

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	1
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

28 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southill Primary School, Weymouth DT4 9UF

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school and the chance we had to talk with some of you. Thank you for welcoming us and telling us what you think about life at the school and your own work. We have judged yours to be an outstanding school and these are the reasons why:

- Your achievement in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave is outstanding.
- You really enjoy being at the school. You get on very well with each other and the adults. You behave very well indeed.
- You are proud of your school and feel very safe there, especially as the adults look after you so very well.
- Your teachers make sure your lessons are interesting and exciting.
- You especially enjoy the wide range of clubs, visits, visitors to school and special events that form a key part of the rich curriculum.
- Children in the youngest class get off to a good start and are very happy and ready to learn.
- The headteacher does an excellent job and the entire staff work very hard to make sure that everyone has a chance to succeed.

As you are already doing so well, all of your teachers should expect the very best from you in all your lessons and you can help by working hard and being fully involved at every stage in your own learning.

We wish you the very best of success in the future.

Yours faithfully,

David Townsend

Her Majesty's Inspector