

Southwood Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116246
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326349
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Gadd 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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	134
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	Mr Ian Sharatt
Headteacher	Mrs Vivienne Favell
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Southwood Lane Southwood Farnborough GU14 0NE
Telephone number	01252 375 420
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Southwood Infant School is a smaller than average school. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is low and all pupils speak English as their first language. A small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Attendance is above average, with no persistent absentees. A lower than average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include pupils with speech and language support, moderate learning difficulties and dyslexia. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at Reception.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Southwood Infant is a good school. It provides pupils with a caring, happy and exciting environment in which to learn and develop. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at the school. This is reflected in the happy atmosphere and above-average attendance. Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being are underpinned by good care, guidance and support, which ensure that pupils leave Southwood as confident and eager learners. 'My son has developed into a confident, secure, happy little boy who loves going to school each day' is a comment from one parent that captures the views expressed by the majority and with which inspection findings concur.

The headteacher's enthusiasm and positive attitude percolate through to all levels of management, ensuring that the senior leadership team and governing body provide good leadership for the school. Collectively, they have a full understanding of the areas for future development. They recognise and value the contributions made by all adults working in the school. Consequently, this has created an atmosphere of good teamwork and commitment among all members of staff. This is summed up by one of many comments made by parents: 'All staff are friendly, approachable and dedicated to the children.'

Pupils make good progress and reach exceptional standards in reading and writing and above-average standards in mathematics. This good achievement is the result of the focused intervention received by many pupils, detailed planning carried out by subject leaders and good teaching. It is also underpinned by the outstanding curriculum which has provided meaningful learning opportunities that pupils can relate to and understand. As a result, their reading and writing skills have developed to a consistently high level. Since the last inspection, pupils' standards in mathematics have also improved but not at the same rapid pace as in English. This is particularly so for the more able pupils and the school has rightly identified that this is still an area for further development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress at similar rates to their peers owing to the good adult support they receive. The very high levels of basic skills help prepare pupils exceptionally well for their futures.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons engage pupils fully and provide opportunities to learn by solving real problems through interesting and motivating topics. In good lessons teachers set high expectations of pupils' work, while effective questioning builds on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. Teachers and pupils make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. As a result of this, pupils enjoy their learning, work hard and are well motivated to succeed. In the strongest lessons pupils are able to explain what they are learning and how they can improve their work. However, this good practice is not fully embedded across the school and some pupils find it difficult to talk about their 'next steps to learning'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception from 17 different settings. As a result, their skills and knowledge on entry vary each year, from being in line to above that expected for their age, particularly in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress, so that by the time they leave Reception their skills have developed very well. Relationships with parents are strong. Good transition and welfare

arrangements enable children to settle in extremely quickly and to feel safe and secure. The new Foundation Stage leader provides strong leadership and has driven developments forward with a passion and conviction that have led to rapid success. She has accurately identified the strengths and areas for development of the provision.

Rigorous assessment procedures have been introduced to help staff prepare more accurately for children's 'next steps to learning'. The school recognises that it is still too early to see the full impact of this on pupil progress. Children are confident and readily support each other in their learning. One child told another, 'You can spell a hard word by sounding out the letters.' There is a good balance between indoor and outdoor learning activities, although outside activities could sometimes provide more guidance for learning. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Children enjoy learning and have a positive attitude towards one another. They work happily both independently and in groups, making choices where appropriate. As a result of this, children develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT to a good level and are effectively prepared for the work in Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that standards continue to rise in mathematics, especially for the more able pupils.
- Ensure that all pupils know how to improve their work by understanding their 'next steps to learning'.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have been rising steadily over the last several years and in 2008 overall attainment was exceptionally high. Above-average standards were reached in mathematics while exceptionally high standards were achieved in reading and writing. Based on pupils' starting points in Reception, this represents good progress. Pupils with speech and language support, moderate learning difficulties and dyslexia achieve as well as their peers owing to the good adult support they receive. The good achievement is also due to the rigorous monitoring and targeting of children. The school sets challenging targets that are achieved by the majority of pupils.

In mathematics the focus in recent years has been on reviewing planning and ensuring that expectations are clear and teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. Inspection evidence indicates that this has resulted in positive outcomes in pupil achievement across the school. The school recognises that standards reached could be higher in this subject, especially for the more able pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

There is a strong community feeling within the school and children talk with pride about how they raise money for various charities and share their learning through events such as 'Grandparents' afternoon.'

Pupils enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their above-average attendance. One child said, 'I enjoy school because I can see my friends, play, and I learn lots of new things.' They are keen to join in activities and are proud of their achievements. Children work hard in lessons and are always helpful and polite towards one another. These fine attitudes, along with

outstanding behaviour, contribute to them achieving well above average standards and prepare them well for the next stage of their learning.

Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn about other cultures through the curriculum and celebration of festivals such as the Chinese New Year. Charity programmes, such as Seeds for Africa and Love in a Box, add to their understanding of the wider world. Assemblies and 'circle time' provide valuable opportunities for children to reflect on their behaviour and that of others. Children feel safe in school. They have an exceptional understanding of the importance of staying healthy and of participating actively in physical education. They enjoy their healthy snacks at break-time and many talk about the importance of having a healthy diet. As one child said, 'It is important to eat healthy food and have lots of exercise so that I can grow up and be strong and have lots of energy.' Pupils make a good contribution to the community. The school council spoke with excitement about the improvements made to the playground and pupils feel that they are listened to. They are particularly pleased with the new 'tyre park' which they helped to plan and design.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers create a purposeful working environment and relationships are strong and, as a result, children feel confident in answering questions and sharing their ideas. In most lessons, pupils know what they are learning and enjoy working hard to reach the high expectations set by teachers. Teachers' secure subject knowledge and detailed lesson plans enable them to set work that is closely matched to the needs of individuals. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils are stimulated to achieve their best and can explain what they need to do to improve their work. This good practice is not always consistent; in a minority of lessons the objectives are unclear leading to less effective learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum across the school is outstanding. Pupils make good progress and achieve exceptional standards as a result of the carefully planned curriculum. It is broad and balanced, providing pupils with first-hand experiences. Subjects are linked, where appropriate, into themed days or weeks which provide pupils with exciting opportunities to learn and develop their confidence and independence. Good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT prepare pupils successfully for their future lives.

The mixed year-group teaching in Years 1 and 2 has been well planned. The school has ensured that the balance of skills, knowledge and experiences match mixed-class teaching. Children and teachers are now involved in regularly reviewing the curriculum and making appropriate changes as a result of this consultation. This well-thought-out curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular activities, day trips and visitors to the school. Day trips are carefully planned to bring the learning experience alive and to provide a meaningful context in which to learn. For example, in Reception a trip to the local woods supported the story-writing and discussion about Red Riding Hood's journey through the forest. The children enjoy a wide range of clubs and talk about how many of these help them to stay fit as well as bring them pleasure. One child said, 'I like skipping club. It is fun and I laugh lots but it is good exercise.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The high level of commitment and strong relationships between pupils and staff underpin the high quality of care. Pupils feel safe and are confident that any concerns they may have will be listened to and dealt with effectively.

Health and safety around the school is promoted well. Safeguarding procedures are fully in place. A few parents raised points, through the parent questionnaire, about the access to the school site. The school is fully aware of the issues and has a plan in place to address them.

Teachers and support staff work well together to provide a good level of academic guidance and support. Some children are aware of their 'next steps to learning' but this element of academic guidance is not consistently embedded across the school. Work is marked to a high standard and pupils are given advice on how to improve their work through questions and answers during lesson time.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

One parent summarised the views of many by writing, 'Southwood is well led and managed by the headteacher.' The good leadership provided by the headteacher is well supported by her deputy headteacher and the senior management team. All managers have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and work together effectively to set challenging targets for academic achievement. Targets are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis which ensures that all staff have high aspirations for all the pupils. Resources are well deployed and the school provides good value for money. Since the last inspection, the schools' self-evaluation has improved and effective action has been taken to improve the quality of the curriculum, improve staff knowledge and share good practice through 'peer modelling'. These changes have resulted in standards now being well above average. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is fully aware that to improve in this area would involve extending the scope of this beyond its own community and that of its locality.

Governors are supportive and hold the school to account well. As a result of the work carried out in the various committees, they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governors ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements and that finances are managed well.

There is good capacity within the school to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	2

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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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	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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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**

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southwood Infant School, Farnborough, GU14 0NE

You may remember that I came to inspect your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting you, your teachers and everyone else who works in the school. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. You made my visit very enjoyable.

Your school provides you with a good standard of education.

These are the best things about your school:

- you make good progress in your work and you reach exceptional standards
- it is a very happy place where you enjoy your lessons and get on well with each other
- you know how to keep safe and healthy, and you enjoy taking lots of exercise
- your topics are all well-chosen and because your teachers make the lessons interesting you find learning fun and exciting
- the school is well led by your headteacher and her team. They want the very best for you.

We have asked your school to improve two things to make it even better:

- make sure that you always know how to improve your work
- help all of you to do better in mathematics, particularly those of you who find the work too easy.

You can help by continuing to work hard in all lessons.

Yours faithfully

Susan Gadd

Her Majesty's Inspector