

Somerby Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119951
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327159
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Vurley
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Hulbert
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2006
School address	High Street Somerby Melton Mowbray Leicestershire LE14 2PZ
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work books, progress records, school policies, records of meetings, analysis of data and the parent questionnaire responses from the parents or carers of 13 pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' achievement in all subjects, but particularly in writing
- the quality of teaching and use of assessment information to challenge pupils
- pupils' behaviour, attendance and relationships
- the effective use of the monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning procedures to raise standards.

Information about the school

Somerby Primary School is a very small school that draws pupils from the village and the wider surrounding area. All pupils are of White British background. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. These pupils' needs cover a wide range but are mainly in the category of moderate learning difficulties.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which has improved under good leadership since the last inspection. The school's leadership team, including the governors, has a firm commitment to make improvements that benefit pupils so that they are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Effective monitoring and evaluation processes, led by the headteacher, provide the school with an accurate view of its current position and what needs to be done to improve further. Under her good guidance, the management team has worked effectively to improve, for example, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly the outdoor area.

Pupils of all abilities make good progress because teaching and additional support for those who need it, are good. Teachers match work well to individual needs. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science. Pupils' achieve less well in writing, attaining standards that are average because they have insufficient opportunities to write at length independently.

Partnerships with parents and neighbouring primary schools are good. Links with the secondary schools to help pupils feel more confident about moving from primary to secondary education are less well developed. The school works hard to promote links with the local community but pupils do not have enough direct links with people in other parts of Britain and other countries to ensure community cohesion is fully promoted.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well and develop confidence in a well-resourced and creative environment that engenders excitement and enthusiasm for learning. All aspects of the provision are good and children make a good start to their education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length and independently in order to raise standards in writing.
- Ensure the promotion of community cohesion is rooted firmly in pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of faiths, cultures and socio-economic groups represented in other parts of this country and in the wider

- world.
- Raise the confidence of pupils when they transfer to secondary school by developing more effective partnerships with these schools.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils benefit from being in small classes where teachers plan work that is closely matched to individual needs; thus expectations of the more able pupils are high and those that find learning difficult have the guidance they need to participate fully. The pace of learning is generally brisk because pupils work productively and purposefully. They want to learn and are eager to show what they can do, particularly enjoying question and answer sessions and group work where they explore ideas and learn from each other. Indeed, in some lessons, progress is outstanding because pupils love the interesting challenges and tasks teachers plan for them. Pupils rush to get started and willingly do more if teachers ask them to try harder. They are eager to discover, asking questions and offering opinions and ideas because they are confident learners. Pupils build the essential skills for the next steps in their education well.

The improved provision in mathematics, particularly investigations and problem solving, has resulted in pupils' good achievement in this subject. However, progress in writing is slower. Girls tend to settle to writing tasks more enthusiastically, particularly in the younger age groups. Encouraging pupils to write through topics, for example the Fire of London, has helped pupils gain confidence in writing.

Pupils behave well at all times. They keep themselves safe by following rules and are very well informed about health matters. They make sensible choices of food and drink water during the day as they need it. Many attend the various sports activities the school offers. They feel safe and say that incidences of bullying are rare but, if they occur, are dealt with quickly and well. Pupils have a strong sense of worth and feel a strong affinity to the school that helps them forge good relationships. Many help around the school by organising lunchtime activities and older pupils take good care of the younger ones. Pupils take part in village events and raise money for charity. The school council has been consulted about the public play facilities and is surveying pupils' views on school lunches. Pupils' sense of their own culture is good, but their understanding of life in a multicultural society is less well developed. Most pupils' attendance is good, although one or two parents fail to ensure their children attend regularly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

Good features of the teaching observed include teachers' careful planning based on their very good knowledge of each pupil's needs. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to present information in an accessible way, especially for pupils who find learning difficult. Teaching assistants provide good support and pupils work well in groups. In this way, pupils waste little time. Teachers encourage pupils to reflect on their work and consider improvements to both their own work and that of their peers. Many lessons are fun and capture pupils' imaginations as they explore. Pupils are confident to ask for help if they have problems and parents report that teachers are very approachable if they have questions about their child's work. The school acknowledges that teaching could be improved further, particularly in allowing more time for pupils to write and reducing the number of occasions when teachers talk too long or fail to challenge pupils enough. Pupils respond very well to the advice and support teachers provide. Most are clear about their targets and what they have to do to attain them.

The curriculum provides pupils with a good grounding in all subjects. The linking of subjects through themes and topics helps pupils to make better their learning. Many out-of-school activities enrich pupils' experiences well and provide them with a good insight into the world of work and leisure beyond school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively. The headteacher has an accurate view of provision across the school. She has the trust and support of the entire staff and supports and guides them well, inspiring them to take the lead in improving provision. She has established a good working atmosphere where raising standards is a priority. Subject leaders carry out regular review of

pupils' work and discuss the outcomes with all staff so consistent practice is established through the school. This has resulted, for example, in improved provision in mathematics to ensure pupils are on track to attain the levels expected of them.

The school's work to promote equality of opportunity is evident through the observations and data showing that all groups of pupils make similar progress. The leadership team has been determined in its efforts to raise standards and, to this end, staff have established a reliable assessment system. This is being refined still further to ensure all pupils are challenged to meet their potential.

Governors are astute in their understanding of the school's work and continually probe to ensure decisions are the right ones to bring about the identified improvements. They provide good support and challenge. They are well informed through clear and accurate headteacher's reports and the visits they make to check the impact of improvements, for example in ICT. At the time of the inspection safeguarding procedures met requirements.

The school has a good understanding of what still needs to be done, for example, to extend community cohesion more effectively into the wider national and international communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are keen to do well. They avidly explore the environment, learn new stories and ask questions. They were spellbound as they watched sand absorb water. Their attempts to build moats and drawbridges resulted in excellent teamwork to stem the flow. Teaching is good, with assessments used well to ensure activities match the children's needs. Teachers' planning takes account of the fact that while children's skills and knowledge in most areas of learning are at the levels expected for their age when they start school, their literacy and numeracy skills are less secure. Adults encourage children sensitively to have a go with work that presents greater challenge, for example writing. Learning is made interesting through discussions,

sometimes adult led and often child initiated. For example, children were eager to write party invitations. As one child said, 'Parties are fun. We have cake and dancing and dress up.' Good relationships with the community, particularly the children's allotment, supplement the good curriculum well. Even when children work with pupils in the Key Stage 1 classroom, staff ensure they all take a full and active part. The environment is vibrant and exciting. Children particularly love the outdoor area that stimulates their curiosity and independence.

Behaviour is excellent. All children play and learn well together in a safe and caring environment. Staff know the children well. They keep a watchful eye on children who need specific support and discuss any concerns with parents promptly. The leadership and management are good, and ensure that all children succeed and attain average standards by the end of the Reception Year.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all the completed parental questionnaires were positive. Many parents made specific comments about how happy their children are at school, how much they enjoy it and how well the school cares for its children. A typical comment in conversation with parents was, 'My child is very happy here and can't wait to get here; even when ill she wants to come.' A small minority of questionnaires raised concerns about the number of parents who moved their children out of the school in the autumn term of 2008, and asked whether this was related to pupils' progress. The inspector found no conclusive evidence as to why parents had moved their children to other schools.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Somerby Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspector received 13 completed questionnaires. In total there are 22 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	8	1	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Somerby Primary School, Somerby, LE14 2PZ

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed being in your school and, with your help, I learnt a great deal about your school.

I think you go to a good school. There are many things your school does well.

- You reach above average standards and make good progress.
- You behave well and make good friends at the school.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy.
- Your lessons are interesting. You enjoy learning and you are taught well.
- You know your targets and your teachers are good at helping you improve your work.
- You learn well in all your subjects and enjoy many other interesting activities.
- The staff in your school take good care of you.
- Children in the Reception class have fun in their learning and do well.
- All the staff and governors work well to make sure you have a good education.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and knows how to make it even better.

In order to help your school become even better I have suggested three key things that your school could do better.

- Make sure teachers give you more time to write by yourselves so that you do even better in writing.
- Help you find out more about people in other parts of Britain and other countries.
- Work more closely with your secondary schools so that you feel better prepared for when you move on.

You showed me just how willing you are to help your teachers. Perhaps you can ask them to give you more interesting things to write about and help you build links with people in other parts of this country and abroad.

I hope you all do well in your education.

Yours faithfully

Rajinder Harrison
Lead inspector

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