

Somerset Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123695
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	327968
Inspection date	4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	David Shears

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)	150
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	Nigel Yeo
Headteacher	Robert Smithen
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hamp Bridge Bridgwater TA6 6LG
Telephone number	01278 424006
Fax number	01278 242006

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Somerset Bridge is smaller than many other primary schools. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average, although it is increasing. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's overall effectiveness is good. It caters well for the pupils in its care. Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below expectations. They settle well and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they receive effective provision. By the end of the Reception Year, most achieve the goals set for children of their age. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress slows because the teaching does not sufficiently build upon their previous knowledge. In Years 3 to 6, the rate of progress increases so that by the time pupils leave the school, they attain standards that are higher than the national average. This represents good achievement for all groups of pupils.

Teaching is good overall, although it is inconsistent, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Where account is taken of pupils' previous attainment, lessons are well planned. All have clear objectives and are resourced well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are successfully supported by teaching assistants and consequently make good progress.

Pupils enjoy their lessons because the good curriculum gives many opportunities to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge. All areas of the curriculum are celebrated through carefully designed and stimulating displays that show off the pupils' work to good effect. There are effective curriculum links across all subjects, with enriching activities that are supplemented by visits and visitors to the school. Pupils also benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Pastoral care is a particular strength. All the statutory procedures are in place to ensure their health and safety both in school and out on trips. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with specific needs are well catered for because the school enlists the support of a variety of outside agencies. Parents of these pupils give high praise for the care that both they and their children have received. The effective care, guidance and support for all pupils results in their good personal development and well-being. Consequently, they behave well and have a very positive attitude to learning and school in general. Although attendance is currently only satisfactory, this is mainly due to a small number of families who find this a challenge and the school is supporting them well in improving this. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe and are learning skills that will support them well for the future in the workplace.

The major strength of the good leadership and management in the school lies in the positive way that each member of staff works together under the effective leadership of the headteacher. Together with the governing body, they have a clear idea of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They operate well as a team in tackling weaknesses. For example, the standard of writing was identified as an issue in the previous inspection report and, through effective strategies, the pupils have made better progress and their attainment has risen. This demonstrates that the leadership team has good capacity to improve. Targets are consistently set, and are mostly achieved by pupils, who work hard for the teachers, to whom they show much respect. However, the monitoring of lessons is not sufficiently focused on teaching and learning in the classroom and this limits its effectiveness in improving the provision for pupils and, consequently, their progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with skills that are below those expected for their age. They settle quickly into established routines and are happy and confident because of the good arrangements for induction prior to joining the school. The extremely caring relationships between adults and children, along with the bright and lively learning environment, fire children's imagination and ensure that they quickly develop a real thirst for learning. As a result of effective teaching and learning and a curriculum that is very well tailored to meet children's varying needs, they make good progress, leaving with average standards. Teachers, support staff and parental helpers work very effectively together, supporting the welfare of all children. They monitor achievement carefully and accurately, and plan future learning based on this knowledge. Consequently, learning builds effectively on what children can already do. Children with learning difficulties make good progress because early assessment highlights their needs and good quality support is provided. Children speak confidently and listen carefully to each other. Their personal and social development is good because of the emphasis on working together and respecting each other. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, ensuring children are well cared for in a safe environment. The outdoor space is limited and restricts opportunities to include all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment more effectively to improve teaching, particularly in Years 1 and 2, to ensure that work matches the needs of all pupils and builds on their prior attainment.
- Improve the monitoring of lessons to focus on the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that the provision is consistently good or better throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the school is below the expected level in all areas. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and leave Reception with broadly average standards. In Years 1 and 2, however, the progress slows for all pupils, particularly in reading and numeracy, because teaching does not sufficiently build on their previous knowledge. In Years 3 to 6, the pace of learning quickens so that by the time they leave the school, standards are above the national average in literacy, numeracy and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They speak of positive relationships that exist between them and the staff and talk about enjoyable lunchtimes, when a range of equipment and games are available to support their play. Their behaviour is good and the older pupils care well for the younger ones. Attendance is satisfactory overall, although the school has good procedures in place to support the small number of families for whom this is a challenge. The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is good, as shown by the caring way they help each other, although their understanding of the variety of cultures within Britain is limited. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community, such as choosing the equipment for the playground and displaying artwork in the local library.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching overall is good, although it is inconsistent, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where the progress of pupils slows. This is because assessments are not routinely used to ensure that the teaching builds on their prior attainment. Teachers work hard in making lessons interesting for pupils, including the effective use of the interactive whiteboard to support their teaching. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very positive and they like to please their teachers. This is demonstrated in the way they listen carefully in lessons. They have class, group and individual targets in literacy and numeracy that highlight what they need to do to improve in these areas. However, they do not all regularly have the opportunity to assess their progress for themselves.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum gives pupils a wide range of skills and interests, because there is much enrichment. Pupils become confident in expressing themselves in a variety of ways. For example, a number of pupils, including boys, volunteered to sing an impromptu solo in the assembly. There are good cross-curricular links, including the teaching of information and communication technology, where each pupil has their own folder with examples of work from a wide variety of subjects. The curriculum provides well for their personal and social education and supports their literacy skills. However, links with their numeracy skills, although evident, are not as strong. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well through individual plans that meet their needs and consequently, they make good progress along with their peers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The provision for pastoral care is a strength of the school. Thorough safeguarding checks, risk assessments and health and safety procedures such as fire drills are in place to ensure pupils are safe. All staff have received training in first aid. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is managed well, using good links with outside agencies. Individual education plans are clear and precise. They are reviewed regularly and support pupils' academic and personal development effectively. Although there are some good examples of academic guidance, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6, this is not yet consistent across the whole school. Where it works well, pupils have clear feedback through careful marking that encourages them and identifies how they could improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders and managers are effective because they work so well together as a team. Through careful self-evaluation, they identify and prioritise areas for improvement. They develop strategies to tackle these areas with success. Some effective monitoring takes place, particularly in the development of the curriculum, where there are clearly identified areas to improve for each subject. However, the procedures to support the monitoring of lessons do not consistently

focus on the development of teaching and learning so that improvements are not clearly identified. Parents overwhelmingly support the school and highlight the dedication and care that all staff give. Governors fully support and challenge the school. They have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and are able to accurately pinpoint continuing areas for development. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It is particularly strong within the school and local community. There are also effective developments with the global community, such as a link with a school in The Gambia and more recently in France. However, pupils have a limited understanding of the community in its national context.

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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?	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?	2
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	2
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?	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	2

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?	2
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

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Somerset Bridge Primary School, Bridgwater TA6 6LG

Thank you for your very warm welcome when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to meet you and find out all about your good school.

We thoroughly enjoyed looking at the colourful displays that show off all the interesting things that you do. It is really clear that you enjoy being in school, learning new skills and developing interests. We particularly liked looking at your art and ICT work and listening to your lovely singing. You work hard and make good progress. Well done!

We were very impressed with your good behaviour and how polite you are. Thank you for looking after us so well. You told us how much you like your teachers and know that they care for you well and we agree.

We have asked your school to make sure that your learning builds on what you can already do, particularly in Years 1 and 2. You can help by telling the teachers if you think your work is really easy or too difficult. We have also asked that your teachers are given clear guidance for their teaching, to make your learning even better.

Thank you for a very enjoyable day. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

David Shears Lead Inspector