

Summerfield Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110385
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	337486
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B King
Headteacher	Graham Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 22 lessons involving 16 teachers, made other short visits to classrooms and scrutinised pupils' work. Meetings were held with the headteacher and other teachers with key responsibilities, governors and pupils. An inspector met informally with parents at the end of the school day. Documentation was scrutinised, including policies, records kept on pupils, and the school's development plan. Inspectors received 107 completed parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The quality of the start given to children in the Reception Year.
- The contribution of teaching and the curriculum to the achievement of all ability groups in Years 1 to 6, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- How well pupils of all ages contribute to the school community, show initiative and independence, and develop understanding of cultural diversity.
- The effectiveness with which leaders and managers at all levels improve the provision for pupils.

Information about the school

Pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. About half the pupils are of White British heritage. Over a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is a little above average overall, and it is high in some year groups. The school has a number of awards for aspects of its work, including Artsmark Gold, Activemark and Healthy Schools status.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Summerfield School provides children with a good start in the Reception Year. Children settle in well and move on quickly in all aspects of their learning and development. Pupils are supported in making steady progress as they move up through the rest of the school.

Good quality pastoral care and support are provided for pupils of all ages. Inspectors agree with parents who overwhelmingly consider that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils themselves say that they are safe. They value the good relationships they have with adults in school; as one commented, 'I know that if there is an issue I can take it to the teacher and they will sort it out.' Pupils enjoy being at school, feel free from bullying, and say that they make many good friends. Strengths in the curriculum, as well as the care, contribute much to pupils' enthusiasm and to their good personal development and well-being. Attention to the arts and personal, social and health education is good. Pupils enjoy a rich range of opportunities in addition to daily lessons, such as visits, visitors and clubs.

Attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6, representing satisfactory achievement for all ability groups in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Pupils do relatively better in reading than in writing and mathematics. The school has rightly recognised that teachers are not using all opportunities available across the curriculum for pupils to use and develop their writing skills. Another area that the school agrees requires more focus in order to raise pupils' attainment, is the development of problem solving skills in mathematics.

The main reason why pupils' progress is satisfactory is that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Even so, there is some good practice, particularly in the teaching of writing in Years 1 and 2. In the most effective lessons, expectations of all ability groups, including the more able, are high. Pupils are strongly involved in reviewing their progress within lessons and through very effective marking. When teaching is satisfactory, pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own progress and taking responsibility for their learning. In satisfactory lessons, the level of challenge or support is not always closely matched to the needs of different ability groups, particularly, but not exclusively, in whole-class sessions.

Strong teamwork among the staff ensures that the school runs smoothly from day to day. The school has developed satisfactorily since its last inspection and has adequate capacity to improve further. However, leaders and managers do not evaluate how effectively provision, particularly teaching, contributes to pupils' progress in a sufficiently objective and analytical way. This results in some of the school's evaluations of its work

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being too positive. The knock on effect is that the drive for improvement is not sufficiently relentless and focused, even though staff are committed and work hard.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching promotes consistently good progress by:
 - providing the right level of challenge or support for different ability groups at all stages in a lesson
 - reviewing progress in lessons and using marking to provide clear feedback to pupils on what they are doing well and how they can improve their performance.
- Strengthen the contribution of the curriculum to pupils' learning and attainment by:
 - fully utilising all opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills in different subjects
 - giving more attention to the development of problem solving skills in mathematics.
- Rigorously and objectively analyse the impact of provision, particularly teaching, on pupils' attainment and progress so that there is a relentless and effective focus on driving improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' good behaviour in lessons and around the school helps to make the school a calm and safe place. As a result of the care and support shown to them, pupils form good relationships and are sensitive to the needs of others. They willingly help each other in lessons and share ideas. The school is racially harmonious, reflecting pupils' good understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity. Pupils of all ages contribute positively by taking on responsibilities. The youngest pupils, for example, take great care of their class registers when taking them to the office. Older pupils do much to support the younger ones, for instance, hearing them read and running clubs and other activities. Pupils are also active in the wider community and do a good deal to raise funds for charities.

Pupils understand the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise. The cookery club and the many opportunities to participate in sport are all well received. Pupils' good outcomes in this area reflect the school's achievement of the Activemark award and Healthy Schools status.

While pupils are enthusiastic about school and develop many good personal qualities, their preparation for their future lives is satisfactory rather than good. This is because the rate at which their competence in literacy and numeracy develops is satisfactory. Although still average, the attendance rate is not as high as it was because an increasing number of pupils are taken out of school for family holidays.

Achievement is satisfactory for all groups, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, because learning in lessons and over

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time proceeds at a reasonable pace. Pupils nearly always try hard and follow instructions to the letter even when not challenged sufficiently. Just occasionally, there is restlessness when they have to sit through whole-class sessions that are too long or not well matched to their differing learning needs. Learning is most effective in lessons in which pupils are required to take real responsibility for evaluating their work and identifying how it can be improved. When given the opportunity to do this, pupils respond with considerable maturity. The extent to which some pupils are able to correct their own writing in Years 1 and 2 is impressive. Pupils are also best engaged and learn most productively when activities provide them with the right level of challenge. However, pupils do not experience these good opportunities consistently.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and the curriculum support pupils in making satisfactory progress over time. While some lessons are good, there are others in which a significant amount of the teaching is at a level that is matched generally to the needs of the mixed ability classes but not focused sufficiently on the full range of needs. When this is the case, it is usually

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

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the most able pupils who are not challenged fully. There are also times when the lower attaining pupils, or those with special educational needs, are not given enough support. When pupils work individually or in groups, teaching assistants are usually well deployed to assist those who need extra help but there are times in whole-class sessions when this is not the case.

Marking is satisfactory but there is a wide range of practice. The most effective marking makes it explicit to pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. There are some examples, however, of comments that give praise when it is not warranted. In Years 3 to 6, there are missed opportunities to guide pupils to improve their performance and to develop their independence and accountability as learners.

In Years 1 and 2 imaginative writing and the basics of literacy are promoted well. However, in Years 3 to 6 the attention to developing pupils’ writing skills across the curriculum is inconsistent. While the mathematics curriculum provides generally appropriate coverage of the various aspects of the subject, problem solving receives less attention. A strong focus on the arts develops teamwork and creativity well. Pupils respond particularly positively to opportunities to think creatively and to use their own ideas. High quality artwork displayed around the school, the standard of singing and successes in music festivals, as well as opportunities in dance and drama, clearly reflect the school’s achievement of the Artsmark Gold award.

Work in the arts, combined with the value that the school gives to each individual through its care and support, contributes hugely to pupils’ strong personal development and self-esteem. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English, grow in confidence as a result of the attention to each pupil’s personal welfare. Vulnerable pupils are given good support. Attention to health and safety is strong with generally secure anticipation of all potential hazards.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership of the pastoral support for pupils is strong and a high priority is given to safeguarding. The school is rigorous in vetting adults who come into contact with pupils and in ensuring that the site is secure. The outcomes of this are evident in the trust pupils have in the adults in school and the positive comments of many about the security of the site. The school draws well on the support of outside agencies and

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collaboration with other schools to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils. It also shares its strengths with other schools, most notably its promotion of the arts and its work in personal, social and health education. Community cohesion is suitably promoted as seen in the respect pupils show for the cultural traditions and beliefs of others, participation in local events, and a developing link with a school in Mumbai.

Leaders and managers embed ambition and drive improvement satisfactorily. However, the pace of improvement is only satisfactory because senior leaders do not always dig beneath the surface of what they see in lessons and recorded in pupils’ books. As a result, their evaluation of how well pupils of differing ability are learning and the reasons for this is not rigorous enough. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation of the school’s work are maintaining satisfactory achievement rather than pushing it on to become good. The extent to which subject leaders and other middle managers are involved in monitoring and developing provision is only adequate. Because the school includes all pupils equally and succeeds in promoting satisfactory achievement for all, its effectiveness in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is also satisfactory. Governors have a generally realistic view of the school’s strengths and areas for development. They are kept well informed about what is happening in school and are providing an acceptable and developing level of challenge.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Through a wide variety of good and well-resourced activities, indoors and outside, children make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They

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are particularly confident in entering the reception classrooms at the start of the day and show a high level of independence. Children’s relationships with each other and with the adults are good. They work and play together amicably, are curious and imaginative, and behaviour is of a high standard. Effective teaching ensures that good progress is made across all areas of learning, including all aspects of communication, language, literacy and mathematical development.

Provision for children in Reception is well led and managed, with good teamwork evident among staff and volunteer helpers who are used well. As a result of recent improvements in provision, children are now leaving Reception with attainment that is higher than in past years and is a little above average. This represents good achievement in relation to starting points broadly at the level expected. Good progress has been made in the use of assessment to meet children’s learning needs. Even so, there are some occasions when adults’ interactions with children as they work and play independently are not sharply enough focused on the individual child’s next steps in learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents who made their views known to inspectors are pleased with all aspects of the school’s work. Inspectors agree with parents’ views about strengths in the care for pupils and that pupils enjoy school. They found that while the school promotes steady progress for pupils, there is potential for parents to be given more precise information to help them support their children’s learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Summerfield School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 320 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	64	38	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	53	48	45	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	52	49	46	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	48	49	46	6	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	56	44	41	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	49	49	46	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	39	60	56	5	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	35	33	54	50	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	41	54	50	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	33	57	53	0	0	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	36	58	54	1	1	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	39	36	58	54	1	1	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	52	46	43	0	0	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Summerfield School, Milton Keynes, MK13 8PG

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. You were very welcoming. We enjoyed watching your lessons, looking at your work and talking with you. We found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that teaching and the curriculum help you to make expected progress over time.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year. You are lucky to have such an exciting outdoor area. We saw that you enjoy playing and working there. Those of you who are in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in writing.

You are well looked after. Many of you told us how safe you feel and that the adults will help you if you have any worries. You also get on well with each other and behave well. You know a good deal about how to stay fit and healthy. You have many good opportunities to participate in arts activities, including music, dance and drama. Your artwork is of a high standard and the displays of it are fantastic.

The adults in your school want the best for you. To help, we have asked them to do these things in particular now.

- Make sure that the teaching is at the right level for each of you in all lessons.
- Involve you fully in reviewing how well you are progressing and make sure that you know what you need to do to improve your work. This is sometimes done very well, but not always in all classes.
- Give you more good opportunities to write in different subjects and to develop your skills in solving mathematical problems.
- Check really carefully on how well teaching is helping you to learn so that improvements can be made to speed up your progress.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by telling your teacher if your work is too easy or too difficult. Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger

Lead inspector

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