

# Somers Heath Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114847
<b>Local Authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	338466
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Abbott HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Misra
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr G Miller
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Foyle Drive South Ockendon Essex
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 853397
<b>Fax number</b>	01708 852582
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@somersheath.thurrock.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, the plans for promoting community cohesion and equal opportunities, the policies on child protection, health and safety and equal opportunities and the school's records concerning safeguarding. They also examined questionnaires completed by 43 parents, 96 children and 22 members of staff.

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

- the progress of different groups of pupils and the extent to which the school has raised standards in mathematics
- how well the school assesses pupils, monitors their progress and uses assessment information to help personalise learning
- the contribution of the curriculum to pupils' personal development
- how well the school has kept up to date with its statutory duties regarding safeguarding, child protection, community cohesion and equal opportunities
- how effectively the school leadership monitors, evaluates and plans for improvement.

## Information about the school

Somers Heath Primary School serves an area of higher than average social disadvantage. It has one class for each age-group from Reception to Year 6, and two nursery classes, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. There is an after-school care programme provided by Surestart which is not managed by the school's governing body. More than a quarter of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the last three years, there has been a steady increase to above average in the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Since the last inspection, the school has welcomed an increasing number of pupils from ethnic minorities, including a few who are at an early stage in learning English. The school holds the Healthy Schools, Investors in People and Basic Skills awards.

**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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to child protection procedures and to the leadership and management of the school.

Somers Heath Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education but there are weaknesses in its leadership and management. There are three main failures: school procedures and policies are not up to date; self-evaluation of the school's performance is weak; and school improvement planning lacks clarity. As a result, the school has made little progress in addressing the areas for improvement noted in its last inspection. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. Nevertheless, the inspection highlighted serious deficiencies in child protection procedures and safeguarding is therefore judged inadequate. Although all staff have caring attitudes and want the best for the pupils, the school's child protection policy does not meet current requirements and not all staff have received the training they need.

Many children's development is well below average when they enter the nursery or reception class. Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, so their attainment at ages 7 and 11 is not far below the national average.

The school's strengths include the quality of some of the teaching, the good progress that pupils make in their personal development, and the way attendance has been improved. Pupils get on well with each other and make a good contribution to the school and local community. The great majority say they like coming to school and many take advantage of the good extra-curricular provision, which includes good opportunities to improve their fitness.

Since the last inspection, the school has been developing a more creative approach to the curriculum. There is also a greater emphasis on teaching phonics and a concerted effort to improve writing. Attainment in writing improved last year in Key Stage 1, but was offset by a decline in mathematics.

Teaching was good in roughly half the lessons seen during the inspection and outstanding in one. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory, because some staff have gaps in their subject knowledge. Not enough thought has been given to making sure that the teaching approaches in successive years build on each other. After the last inspection, the school was asked to improve standards in mathematics, but this

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has not happened. The school's main approach has been to give additional support for pupils in mathematics, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2. The school is beginning to see the benefits of intervening to accelerate the progress of pupils at an earlier stage.

Learning support is well resourced in the school, with every class having at least one teaching assistant. This means that pupils with identified special needs have ready access to support in the classroom. However, some of these pupils have not had their specific learning targets reviewed for two terms.

Except in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school's strategy for improvement is unclear. The school's capacity for improvement is inadequate for a number of reasons. The self-evaluation grades agreed with the school's improvement partner were over-generous because they were not supported by a coherent analysis of its current strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan includes sixty different action points, but does not explain what problems they are intended to address or how much improvement is anticipated. The school has given a low priority to meeting its obligation to promote community cohesion and has not monitored the impact of its plans to promote equality in matters of race, gender and disability.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the child protection policy and procedures are brought into line with current requirements and all staff are appropriately trained in child protection procedures as soon as practically possible.
- Raise attainment by:
  - intervening at an earlier stage to accelerate the progress of pupils whose attainment is below the levels expected for their age
  - improving teachers' subject expertise in mathematics so that the mathematics curriculum builds coherently across the age range
  - ensuring that the progress of each pupil with special educational needs is reviewed regularly against his or her specific learning targets.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and increase the school's capacity for improvement by:
  - ensuring that school self-evaluation is rigorous and up-to-date
  - clarifying the school's strategic priorities for improvement
  - ensuring that the school meets its statutory duties in relation to community cohesion and equal opportunities.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Pupils enjoy lessons and their good behaviour contributes to their learning. They make satisfactory progress in mathematics lessons, but their attainment remains below average. The good progress seen in phonics lessons is leading to higher standards in

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Key Stage 1 writing. Pupils are getting more opportunities to use literacy across the curriculum, for example, through drama and through project work. However, the impact is not yet evident in Key Stage 2 English results, which fell in 2009.

Pupils' attainment in the last three years has been mostly below average in both key stages. After the first spurt of good progress in the early years, subsequent progress is satisfactory. Progress was weaker last year for pupils receiving free school meals and those with higher levels of special educational needs, but the equivalent groups had made satisfactory progress in previous years. Attendance has improved in the last year and persistent absence is now below average.

Pupils contribute well to the school and local community. Examples include the school council, working with a nearby special school and a local park regeneration project. Some pupils operate a healthy tuck shop. Pupils' commitment to healthy lifestyles is also demonstrated by their participation in sporting activities, such as the cross-country club. Pupils get along well with each other and know how to keep safe, for example, by taking turns on the climbing frame. They gain a good understanding of different faiths and cultures.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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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## How effective is the provision?

Each aspect of provision has a mixture of good and satisfactory aspects. Teaching is stronger in literacy than in mathematics. Good use is made of information and communications technology to enhance teaching, but the use of assessment is not as strong as other aspects of teaching. The care provided on a day to day basis is good, but child protection procedures are not fully understood. Classroom support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, but the school has not always had timely support from other agencies such as the educational psychology and educational welfare services.

The curriculum has some distinctive features, and contributes well to pupils' social, moral and cultural development. The inspection coincided with 'maths week', which included a trip to a shopping centre for one class and lessons incorporating games and puzzles in two others. Younger pupils enjoyed working with a football coach from a professional club. Teachers are trying new ideas as part of the creative curriculum, but it is too early to be sure that the different subjects and science are fully covered through the cross curricular approach.

In the last inspection, the school was asked to improve teachers' understanding about how best to use the information from assessment. Pupils' attainment and progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is now assessed and recorded. Although data now cover more than one year for each pupil, it is not easy for teachers to tell how much progress each pupil has made over time. One in six pupils in Key Stage 2 is unsure of how well he or she is getting on at school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>4</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis, but, leaders and managers have not given enough attention to longer term planning. They have not made sure that they keep on top of tasks that need occasional attention, such as checking that the equal opportunity plans are being implemented and reviewing their impact, which is a statutory duty. The school is only now giving proper attention to the promotion of community cohesion. The governing body has held the school to account satisfactorily in some respects, but it has failed to ensure adequate safeguarding or to seek progress reports on the equal opportunities plans.

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Child protection procedures apart, the school complies with its safeguarding duties. The vetting of staff is conscientious and site security is good. The school recognises that it needs to improve the way it works in partnership with parents. This was confirmed by the parental questionnaires. It has some good links with other schools, but has not always had an easy relationship with the local authority, which has been critical of the school's spending priorities. The school finances are well administered.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning are satisfactory. For example, the curriculum has been updated and the teaching of reading and writing has improved. Nevertheless, overall standards are no better than they were in 2004 and pupils' progress still hovers around average. Gains in one area have been accompanied by setbacks elsewhere. Ultimately, the time since the last inspection has not been well used to embed ambition and drive improvement.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Good teaching in the nursery and reception classes helps the children make good progress towards the early learning goals. There is a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities and very good use of the outdoor area. Teachers plan interesting learning opportunities around each chosen theme, taking note of assessment information. For example, many children have a limited vocabulary, so the adults provide many opportunities for speaking and listening. Staff note down 'next steps' for individual pupils, but these are not formally linked to planning.

Children are well behaved and cooperate with each other. The increasing diversity of



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their ethnic backgrounds is reflected, for example, by involving parents to tell children about Diwali. The classrooms provide a welcoming environment and day to day care and support are good. In most respects, provision is good, but the inadequacy of child protection procedures also affects the Early Years Foundation Stage, making its overall effectiveness inadequate.

The leadership and management that is specific to the Early Years Foundation Stage has been effective. The main priority for development has been the doubling of the nursery provision by introducing a separate afternoon class. The nursery and reception staff are organised effectively and the quality of teaching has been maintained through a period of transition in staffing.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

For the most part, positive views were expressed by the parents and carers who returned their questionnaires. Five of the 43 parents felt that the school did not inform them about their child's progress and five were dissatisfied with how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Somers Heath Primary 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	65	14	33	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	49	22	51	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	37	18	42	5	12	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	26	29	67	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	33	27	63	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	35	25	58	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	33	26	60	2	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)	9	21	27	63	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	23	29	67	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	21	28	65	5	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	21	31	72	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	35	27	63	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	49	17	49	1	3	0	0

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



14 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Somers Heath Primary School, South Ockenden, RM15 5LX

I visited your school a little while back with two other inspectors. Before I tell you what we think about the school, I want to thank all of you for being so polite and helpful to us.

Most of you enjoy school and nearly all of you feel safe and well cared for. We like the way you take turns on the climbing frame. You stay healthy by joining in with sports and eating fruit at playtime. You behave well in lessons and work well with each other. The adults look after you well from day to day.

We judged teaching to be satisfactory. It is sometimes good but we feel it could be a bit better in mathematics. We think that the youngest children get on well in the nursery and reception classes. You make the same progress as children in similar schools, but we have asked the school to help you do even better.

There are two things the school needs to improve. The first is that some of the adults have missed out on some very important training. The second is that the school has forgotten to do some of the things that the government has asked. We want the school leaders to plan their work better and check carefully so that these sorts of things do not happen again.

Another inspector will visit the school in a few months to check the progress that the school is making.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott

Her Majesty's Inspector

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