

Saffron Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117195
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338966
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Heywood
Headteacher	Debbie Purrett
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time in school looking at learning. They visited 12 lessons and observed nine teachers. The inspectors also held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils, and talked with pupils in lessons. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, school development planning, governing body minutes and pupils' work. Inspectors also scrutinised the 104 questionnaires received from parents and carers, as well as those from staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- the extent to which higher expectations of academic performance are tackling variation in learning and raising attainment
- how successfully the school's collective leadership team and governing body are influencing the rate of pupil progress and lifting performance
- how successfully the school promotes community cohesion in this country and beyond.

Information about the school

The large majority of pupils are from families of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above that found in most other schools. The proportion of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is increasing. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and in some year groups is 35-40%. The proportion of pupils who arrive or leave part way through their primary school education is above that found in most other schools.

The Early Years Foundation Stage has flexible entry arrangements to meet the particular needs of parents and carers. Some pupils in Years 1 to 3 are taught in classes which contain more than one age group.

Among its awards, the school has National Healthy Schools status and the Activemark. There is after-school care provision within the school, but this is not managed by the governors and was not included in this inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which operates successfully in challenging circumstances. Particular strengths include outstanding care and support that place a high priority on enhancing pupils' self-esteem and creating a harmonious school community. These strengths provide a very strong foundation for learning. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, which is well regarded in the local area. One parent's comment sums up the views of many: 'Saffron Green is a happy school where each child is known and valued by a very caring staff.'

Strengths in leadership at all levels have underpinned improvements since the last inspection, including teaching and the roles of subject leaders. The commitment shown by staff and governors is reflected in their determination to gain the best provision and outcomes for all pupils and their families. Governors and school leaders have a clear understanding of where the school is now and of the improvements still needed. Consequently, the school is well placed to move forward.

Almost all children start school with a narrow range of skills and low levels of knowledge and understanding in several key aspects, including communication. Improvements are such that pupils' attainment has been lifted by Year 6 to broadly average. Relative strengths in English reflect the good opportunities pupils have to read extensively and write for different purposes. The overall picture of the school's attainment, however, is affected by the lower standards reached by the significant numbers of pupils who join the school between Years 1 and 6. Despite the good progress made by these pupils, the large gaps in learning caused by disruptions to their schooling are difficult to fill, sometimes in only a short space of time.

The school knows that the quality of teaching and learning is at the heart of improved performance. The push for highly effective teaching is evident in the continual review of classroom practice. Detailed assessment procedures support successful teaching, which engages pupils and motivates them with interesting activities. Consequently, pupils are progressing well in lessons that are, typically, lively and well paced. Closely tailored support ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with their peers. In a few lessons, however, information from assessments is not used as well as it should be to tailor tasks and activities to pupils' differing needs, and particularly stretch the more able pupils.

Pupils' good personal outcomes are reflected in their considerate behaviour and enjoyment of learning. They have an exceptionally good understanding of keeping safe and a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. Popular clubs and after-school activities provide pupils with many opportunities to develop their creative and performance skills.

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Pupils are respectful and value each other's views, but have a limited knowledge of communities in other parts of this country and around the world. Opportunities for developing these aspects of community cohesion are missed when linking learning together across different parts of the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by always:
 - using assessment information well to adapt lesson content in response to pupils' differing needs
 - providing challenging tasks that are pitched at the right level, particularly for the more able pupils.
 - Extend the strategy for promoting community cohesion by:
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value people from a range of communities nationally and globally
 - ensuring that its promotion is included in planning when linking subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' enjoyment of learning, as seen particularly in their eagerness and involvement in English, mathematics and music, is characteristic of lessons and indicates the good pace of learning across the school. Pupils willingly contribute in lessons and work well in small groups. They write with enthusiasm, particularly when thinking creatively, and show great satisfaction in getting the tasks right in mathematics, for example. In music, pupils worked collaboratively and with great success.

The work seen in lessons and pupils' books reflected an improving picture, with broadly average levels of attainment by the time pupils are in Year 6. The school is on track to reach its realistic but challenging targets for English and mathematics in 2010, with more pupils in line to reach the higher Level 5 of the national assessment tests. There are no significant differences in progress between different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language, and those who join the school partway through their education. More able pupils also make overall progress in line with their classmates, despite lesson activities not always fully challenging them.

Pupils say they like coming to school, enjoy making friends and feel very secure in the supportive environment. These positive attitudes are reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils show a good understanding of personal safety. They also show much enjoyment of practical activities, such as playing musical instruments. They express empathy when considering the plight of earthquake victims. Pupils are considerate towards each other and are aware of dangers in and out of school. They are polite and courteous, and willingly take on responsibilities to help the school run smoothly. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to represent the views of others

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and help make decisions regarding the running of the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good subject knowledge, good relationships, and effective use of support staff are key strengths of teaching. Incisive questioning often gives pupils opportunities to think about their work and reflect on the answers. Topics, such as those that encourage imaginative writing and link different subjects, successfully capture pupils' interest and grab their attention. Consequently, pupils willingly become interested in their learning and want to find out more for themselves. However, assessment information is not used often enough to identify appropriate teaching strategies. Pupils are happy that they can ask for help when they need it, although they are not always sure what they need to do to improve their work.

The wide range of attractive displays gives an insight into the richness and diversity of the curriculum. It provides a careful balance between basic skills in literacy and numeracy, the linking of different subjects, and the development of pupils' performance and creative skills in subjects such as physical education, music and art. The curriculum

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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is underpinned by the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT), which enhances learning and gives pupils access to a wide range of resources. The school recognised the need to lift aspects of pupils' English, mathematical and scientific skills, and is tackling this area well. To overcome weaknesses in writing, for example, the school is giving pupils more opportunities to read and write for different purposes and these are already proving to be successful. Pupils' experiences are enriched by a wide range of popular clubs and trips, and by a supportive and sensitive programme of personal, social and health education.

The exceptional support for pupils' personal development and pastoral care is recognised and highly valued by parents and carers. 'My child has always enjoyed school and has never not wanted to go in,' one parent commented, 'he knows that there are adults in school that he can go to, which helps him feel safe and happy'. The close attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected in the many opportunities for physical activity and the provision of healthy school meals. A number of strategies, including a club that engages a professional band, have been used successfully to lift attendance. Individualised programmes of support are successfully drawn up for vulnerable pupils, covering a broad range of personal and learning needs. These programmes are linked to rigorous tracking of the pupils' progress. Evaluations lead to well-focused intervention, which skilfully enhances pupils' literacy skills and builds confidence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's strong collective leadership, underpinned by a determined and resourceful headteacher, has established an increasingly popular school that is committed to developing each pupil's self-esteem and raising standards. The school has established challenging targets set for all aspects of its work. The school's rigorous monitoring procedures are very effective in identifying the needs of pupils. The school promotes equality and tackles any form of discrimination exceptionally well. As a result, all groups of pupils make equally good progress. Staff and governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The committed staff feel well supported and value the opportunities given by the school for their own professional development.

Governors work closely with the school and readily challenge the effectiveness of its

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developments. Their strategic involvement ensures that policies are systematically reviewed and resources are closely targeted at educational need. Attention to pupils' safety is integral to the school's work and safeguarding procedures are very firmly established. Local services and agencies are used exceptionally well to enhance the well-being of vulnerable pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Community cohesion is strongly promoted within the school and in the local area. Links and partnerships with other schools nearby and outside agencies are extensive and show a thorough understanding of local needs and challenges. However, the school's own documentation rightly indicates that it must do more to help pupils understand about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of the United Kingdom and beyond. Parents and carers are given good opportunities to present their views on the school and benefit from regular contact through newsletters, the website and family workshops.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

Good leadership and management ensure that children's needs are identified early and, in keeping with the rest of the school, attention to the welfare and safety of children is very strong. Detailed planning takes good account of children's low starting points. Well-planned topics ensure all areas of learning are covered with a particular focus on reading, speaking, listening, writing, and number skills. Adults respond skilfully and with sensitivity to individuals or those taking part in larger group activities. Support is good for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who are

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more vulnerable. Children listen attentively and play together well, enjoying a wide range of stimulating activities, although their use of language is often very limited. New experiences clearly fascinate, but many children struggle to express their ideas clearly and the school is looking at ways to promote speaking and listening further. Children, including those at the early stage of learning English, make good progress in all areas of learning.

The school makes effective use of the indoor and outside areas which provide a creative and stimulating learning environment. Staff work closely with parents and carers. They give closely targeted support during both teacher-initiated activities and those which children choose for themselves. Children are nurtured from the very start. As a result, they settle quickly and are eager to learn.

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 questionnaires were positive, and many of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. These included remarks about children's good progress and enjoyment of school, the very caring and supportive environment, and the extended curriculum.

A very small minority of parents and carers recorded reservations over several issues, including the way the school deals with suggestions or concerns and the support for their child's learning. These reservations were not reflected in the very large majority of comments and the inspection found evidence to indicate that the school is willing to listen to the views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saffron Green 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 inspector received 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 241 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	67	28	27	5	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	70	29	28	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	57	38	37	5	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	50	47	46	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	58	39	38	4	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	50	46	44	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	42	56	54	3	3	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)	37	36	52	50	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	49	43	41	6	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	46	38	37	9	9	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	33	60	58	5	5	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	56	54	44	42	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	62	36	35	2	2	1	1

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 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saffron Green Primary School, Borehamwood, WD6 2PP

We very much enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for making us feel so welcome. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found while we were with you. Yours is a good school that is becoming even more popular with parents and carers. It is a place where you feel very safe and benefit from outstanding care and support. You told us it is also a school where you want to be, make lots of friends, and enjoy taking part in the many interesting and exciting clubs and activities. All but a very small number of your parents and carers are happy with the school. You behave well and get on with each other very well.

Here are some more important things about your school.

You make good progress in lessons and you enjoy your work.

Those in charge of the school are making improvements that are helping you to make even faster progress.

All staff take exceptionally good care of you, and make sure that you know exactly what to do to keep safe.

You have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better:

- make sure that teaching always meets your learning needs and challenges those of you who learn quickly
- help you to understand more about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of this country and the wider world.

You can help by continuing to work hard at the tasks and activities you are given. We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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