

# Southam Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130905
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	341057
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bob Drew

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	265
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sally Armstrong
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Longworth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	0 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	St James Road Southam Warwickshire
<b>Telephone number</b>	01926 812520
<b>Fax number</b>	01926 810733
<b>Email address</b>	admin2624@we-learn.com

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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 four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation form, development plans, key policies and monitoring records, and analysed 63 parental questionnaires.

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

- the factors behind a drop in standards at Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection, with underperformance by several groups of pupils and a general weakening in attainment in mathematics, and the impact of recent action to reverse these trends
- whether inspection could confirm the school's view that its capacity for sustained improvement was good.

## Information about the school

The school is average in size and serves a mixed residential area in Southam, a small rural market town. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British with a very small number coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties is above average. The headteacher has been in post one year. Awards held by the school include the Activemark, Gold Arts Mark and Bronze Eco School Award.

**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**

**2**

### Main findings

This is a well led, rapidly improving school. While its overall effectiveness is currently satisfactory, it already has a range of good features. Capacity for further improvement is also good. This is especially clear at senior leadership level, where the headteacher has made an excellent impact on the school. More time is required for the full effect of her initiatives to be felt but in her first year her detailed and accurate evaluation of the school and her encouragement of colleagues have raised teaching quality and made staff far more effective in tackling underperformance of specific pupil groups. Assessment is now used much more effectively at senior level, though less so in day-to-day lessons. Senior leadership has very recently expanded and comprises of four capable staff who work very well as a team.

Standards over recent years have not been as high as the school would wish. Test results in English, mathematics and science are together broadly average, though above average in reading. Standards in writing, calculation and the use of decimals have previously been a little below average, but are beginning to improve. Several specific groups of pupils, notably the most able, lower attaining girls and those with special educational needs, have tended to underperform. The school has tackled these issues with determination and skill during the past year, producing a strong improving pattern in current assessments. Standards in all year groups, including Year 6, are higher than in previous years. Teaching and progress in the lessons seen were good overall and sometimes outstanding. A minority of teaching remains satisfactory, because pace, the variety of tasks and the challenge to different ability groups are adequate but not good. While this is so, learning and progress cannot improve at the rate the school wishes. The general improvements in teaching made have not yet had time to affect end-of-year test results and so pupils' overall progress remains satisfactory. Many aspects of pupils' personal development are established strengths, including their good behaviour, the way they feel safe and pursue healthy lifestyles and their eagerness to contribute to the school community and beyond. Their enjoyment of school is evident in lessons and across school life in general. Revisions to the curriculum enable many topics to be taught using real-life contexts and problem-solving, resulting in increased enthusiasm for learning and better progress in lessons.

Care, guidance and support are good. The caring attitudes of staff are underpinned by reliable systems to safeguard and encourage pupils, setting out clearly the conduct expected of them and support available.

The governing body has a satisfactory impact and is aware of how to provide more focused challenge and support. The school is very inclusive and ensures good equality of opportunity for pupils, strong safeguarding and good links with parents and others in

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the local community. There is less effective provision for helping pupils to understand the variety of other people's faiths and lifestyles at national and global level.

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

- Raise Key Stage 2 standards so that by 2011 they significantly exceed national averages in English, mathematics and science, by embedding recent strategies to strengthen writing skills, calculation and the use of decimals.
- Improve teaching so that by the end of 2010 over 80% of lessons are good, and at least 15% are excellent. Do this by ensuring that lesson planning always includes timings to guide the pace and a variety of tasks and objectives to match the full range of pupils' needs.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to appreciate the variety of religious, ethnic and economic backgrounds in the UK and globally.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Standards in tests are broadly average and long term achievement is satisfactory. However the quality of learning seen in lessons during the inspection was good, largely because current teaching quality is good. This improved progress reflects the strong pace and good relationships that now predominate, with pupils showing real enthusiasm for their work. Learning remains satisfactory in a significant minority of lessons where the challenge for different groups of pupils is more limited. In test results English standards are generally a little above average, reflecting strong reading skills, with writing standards broadly average. Mathematics and science test results have varied widely in recent years, though some aspects of mathematics, including use of decimals and calculation skills, have been below average. Evidence in lessons and assessment records for the last year show that previously underperforming groups, notably the most able, lower-attaining girls and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are now progressing well. Detailed analysis of their work by the headteacher has identified specific weaknesses and led to the introduction of carefully designed and focused support for those tending to fall behind. Their progress is rigorously monitored and shows that these measures and general improvements in teaching are raising overall standards. Attainment in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 generally exceeds expectations and progress here is good. Improvement is evident in Year 2 assessment, especially in writing.

The school works well to support pupils' understanding of the need for simple and fair rules, democratic principles and how all can work together to make a positive contribution, within the school and the wider community. As a result, pupils accept responsibility willingly. During the inspection, school council members and Eco Rangers were monitoring energy use, encouraging recycling and promoting waste reduction.

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Behaviour is good and pupils from all groups work together well for the benefit of all. They have a good awareness of health and safety issues and put this knowledge into practice in their daily routines.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good due to the very high emphasis placed upon this aspect of development by all staff. Attendance is good, reflecting the high level of enjoyment that pupils show for learning and for school life in general. Good relationships, based on mutual respect and trust, support good behaviour and consideration for others. Their capacity to work constructively as members of a class team prepares them well for their future lives.

*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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The majority of lessons feature strong pace, shared learning intentions, very caring relationships and good group work. The outstanding practice seen in some also demonstrates excellent use of assessment to shape different objectives and tasks for all the pupil groups in the class. Teachers frequently use very effective communication and management skills. Pupils learn most effectively when activities are practical and

<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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obviously relevant to them, for instance when they were buying and selling in mathematics.

In other lessons, marking and assessment are variable, and this limits the teachers' scope for fully stretching able pupils and focusing support on the specific learning needs of others. In the minority of lessons judged satisfactory, pupils' interest dipped at times because some activities were too long as lesson plans rarely had timings to prompt teachers to change tack. Pupils have targets in literacy and mathematics which provide them with their next steps in learning, although not all pupils can confidently say what these are. Teaching assistants generally make a good contribution to lessons and an outstanding one when they are given the freedom to take the initiative alongside the teacher.

The curriculum is well planned. It meets the needs of individuals and groups effectively and has helped stimulate better learning. It offers a growing number of special events that link the skills and knowledge of different subjects well, such as a Year 4/5 literacy lesson on Twelfth Night using skills learnt in music and knowledge from work on the Tudors. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs and sports activities to help pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem and learn new skills. Visits are used well to heighten enjoyment and promote learning, for example regular trips to the National Gallery and the Year 6 residential. The art curriculum is exciting and creative, enabling pupils to make very good progress and reach high standards, as seen in the wealth of artwork around the school and acknowledged in their Arts Mark gold award. Pupils' experience of music and physical education (PE) is equally well developed. Weekly current affairs lessons successfully support good personal development.

The school takes effective steps to help children settle into Reception and older pupils to transfer to their next stage of education. Collaboration with the adjacent pre-school provision is especially good. Teaching assistants provide good support for those who require additional help. Good use is made of strong links with external specialists, such as speech therapists and social services, and this also benefits pupils' learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has had an extremely successful first year in office. On appointment, she immediately identified areas needing improvement and galvanised the support of

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those around her to work for change and raise the school's shared expectations. Significant gains have already been made in several key areas and attainment in all year groups is better than predicted from pupils' starting points. Many initiatives have not had time to make their full impact, so the pattern of long-term achievement is improving but by no means transformed.

Leadership of equal opportunities and safeguarding matters is good. The school tackles discrimination effectively by treating pupils from all backgrounds fairly and by its willingness to take and manage pupils at risk of permanent exclusion from other schools. It is particularly alert to several aspects of safeguarding as it takes pupils off site more frequently than many schools. It has good partnerships with other providers, such as the local sports centre and nearby secondary school. Parents and staff rate the headteacher's personal and professional style and early impact very highly; morale and hopes are high and the school roll is rising because of parental choice. While the school's leaders offer a clear view of how community cohesion can be developed, much remains to be implemented. Pupils' understanding of the local community is strong, but they lack a sufficiently coherent picture of cultural and religious variety either nationally or globally.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</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**

Children enter school with a wide range of skills, but overall they are just below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress across the different areas of learning, and in personal, social and emotional development it is particularly good.



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Children behave and work well because staff create a supportive and caring environment, giving them just the right amount of help while also encouraging them to be independent, for example in choosing activities, changing for PE or taking the register to the office. Children play well together. They are active and busy learners and enjoy coming to school. A very systematic approach to the teaching of letters and sounds, and good opportunities for writing for a purpose have boosted reading and writing skills well. Teaching is consistently good. Staff have a good knowledge of how young children learn and achieve the right balance between teacher-led activities and those that children choose for themselves, encouraging them to explore and experiment for instance through sand and water play. Relationships are good and behaviour is managed well.

Assessment is good so the activities are at the right level, though on occasions whole-class sessions do not give sufficient challenge to all. Longer-term evaluation is also effective; half-termly assessments of progress are analysed by teachers and the headteacher and effective actions are put in place to sustain good progress. The leader has a good understanding of strengths and areas for development, correctly identifying the need to develop the outdoor area. Partnership with parents is very good. Parents say that the induction arrangements, and in particular the visits teachers make to their homes, help the children to settle very quickly into school. Partnership with pre-schools is good, particularly with the on-site provision where children start the phonics programme.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school. All those responding to the questionnaire say they are happy with their children's experience at the school. They believe their children enjoy school, are safe there and receive good teaching. They all consider that the school is led and managed well. A very small minority consider that the school could take more account of their suggestions, but even here, the great majority believe the school is very successful. Inspectors' evidence supports the majority view.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Southam 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 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 265 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	62	23	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	70	18	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	54	28	46	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	53	26	43	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	41	67	20	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	62	21	34	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	66	20	33	1	1	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)	36	58	23	37	2	3	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	51	27	44	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	47	30	49	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	47	30	49	2	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	40	63	23	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	63	22	49	0	0	1	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"><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.**



12 October 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Southam Primary School, Southam, CV47 0QB

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You clearly enjoy your school, which gives you a satisfactory education with some good features. Much of what it does is improving.

We were especially pleased with:

- your good behaviour and positive attitudes
- the strong leadership given by the headteacher
- the fact that your progress in Reception is good
- the fact that your standards are above average in all subjects in Key Stage 1 as well as in reading at Key Stage 2
- the way the school has shown it can improve things that are not yet as good as they should be
- the openness with which pupils of all backgrounds and needs are welcomed by the school
- the opportunities for you and high standards seen in art, music and sport
- the way the school works with parents to help you make progress.

If the school is to improve further it needs to:

- raise standards in Key Stage 2 by setting challenging targets for all those of you in Year 6, in English, mathematics and science
- make sure that by the end of this year, all groups of pupils, including those of you who find learning quite easy and those who find it especially hard, make at least good progress
- help teachers give more good or outstanding lessons - all lessons need to have the lively pace and challenging work for all abilities that we saw in the best ones
- help you learn more about other peoples faiths and lifestyles in the UK and abroad.

Best wishes for the rest of your time in Southam Primary.

Yours faithfully,

Bob Drew

Lead inspector

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