

# Southwood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131845
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	341231
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gulshan Kayembe

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>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	485
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs C Van Dongen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Margaret Pease
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Keppel Road Dagenham Essex RM9 5LT
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## Introduction

### Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at wide range of documentation including policies for safeguarding, accident and behaviour incident logs, analysis of the school's data and records of the school's checks on teaching and learning. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires returned by 166 parents, 26 staff and 96 pupils.

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

- pupils' progress in English in Years 3 to 6 to see how it compares with their progress in mathematics and science and identify reasons for any differences
- the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 to determine if it is enabling pupils to make sufficient progress
- strategies to raise attendance in order to identify if there is anything more the school could do to improve it
- the role of governors to establish their effectiveness in helping the school to move forward through the challenge and support they provide.

## Information about the school

Southwood Primary school is a larger than average sized primary school. Most of the pupils are drawn from the local area. The majority are White British. About 40% of pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds and this is higher than in most schools. Nearly a third of pupils speak a language other than English at home. Though many are still learning English, few are complete beginners. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The school has a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A nursery unit, together with the Reception classes, forms the school's provision for Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school is organised into lower and upper school, where the lower school includes Years 1, 2 and 3 and the upper school comprises Years 4, 5 and 6.

**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

Southwood primary school is a good school where pupils achieve well and develop into mature and thoughtful youngsters ready for the challenges of secondary school. Pupils progress well from low starting points to attain standards that are in line with national averages. Standards are above the national average in science, slightly above in mathematics and average in English. Progress is better in mathematics and science than in English, where, though at least satisfactory, it is not always as secure and particularly so in writing. This is reflected in the quality of teaching, which is good overall but better in mathematics than in English, where able pupils are not always challenged enough and pace can be slow. In addition, pupils are not involved actively enough in literacy lessons. A strong curriculum in mathematics supports the good progress pupils make right across the school. Developments in the English curriculum are enabling teachers to focus better on key aspects such as vocabulary and grammar and this is helping to improve pupils' writing. However, not all teachers take full advantage of opportunities to practise writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. Support staff provide good help especially to those with additional learning needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress.

The school tracks pupils' progress well and has become adept in identifying and taking action to support those who show signs of lagging behind or those who find learning difficult. Focused work on basic literacy and numeracy with these groups is helping them to improve their skills at a good rate. Pupils' work is regularly marked and there are examples of excellent marking that provide clear and constructive feedback. However, pupils do not consistently receive written feedback on how well they have achieved against lesson objectives or guidance on how to improve their work. Monitoring of marking by senior staff is rigorous in the lower school but is not as well developed in the upper school.

A good curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour in lessons is particularly good and supports pupils' learning well. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with one another and appreciate the school's cultural diversity. While there are ample opportunities for them to contribute to the school community, they have limited opportunities to be more actively involved with the local and wider community. This limits the extent to which they can contribute to improvements, for example, to their local environment or exchange views and ideas, and hence learn from the experiences of people living in different parts of Britain and globally.

Pupils are well looked after and cared for. Most pupils are good at keeping fit but they are not always keen on food that is good for them. The school has worked hard and effectively to address the issues of attendance raised at the time of the last inspection.

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Attendance is now just in line with national averages. However, a few parents continue to take their children on holiday during term time and there is a small, though decreasing, number of persistent absentees with whose families the school is working closely.

The school is well led and managed. There is a clear drive and ambition to make the school better and to further improve pupils' achievement. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and is working on the right priorities. It has a good track record of improvement. For example, standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 6 show rising trends and the strategies to raise attendance have been effective. Hence, the school has good capacity to improve further.

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

- Improve pupils' progress and standards in English by:
  - making sure that lessons provide sufficient challenge for the most able
  - giving pupils opportunities to work on their own or in groups in lessons
  - providing more opportunities for writing in other subjects of the curriculum
  - building in more frequent opportunities for writing in activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Make sure that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work by:
  - ensuring that written comments when work is marked clearly identify how well pupils have done against the learning objective
  - giving pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work
  - monitoring teachers' marking more effectively in the upper school.
  - Extend the opportunities for pupils to make a stronger contribution to their local and wider community.

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

**2**

Different groups of pupils make equally good progress in the main. Progress and achievement across most subjects are good. In writing, progress is a little uneven for all groups of pupils but more noticeably so for higher attainers. Pupils who are still developing English language skills are well supported in lessons and their progress in learning English is very secure. Those from minority ethnic groups are well represented amongst the higher attainers. They perform particularly well in mathematics and science. The school has been successful in targeting lower attainers, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to develop a secure foundation in basic skills especially literacy. As a result, these pupils are making good progress in their learning.

Pupils enjoy learning. They are attentive in lessons and particularly like being actively

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involved. When given the opportunities to do so, they show good independent learning skills. For example, in a Year 2 reading and spelling workshop, pupils enthusiastically researched books to find words in the past tense ending in 'ed'. They were able to explain why words such as 'feed' did not fit this category. As one pupil explained: 'You can't really say feeded!' Others enjoyed thinking up sentences in the past tense, with many composing complex sentences which almost told a story in themselves. However, pupils do not always get such opportunities for independent and challenging work, especially the more able.

Pupils are, and feel, safe at school. They are confident about going to adults if they have any concerns. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are responsible and caring individuals. They work together well taking a serious approach to their work because they want to do well. This coupled with the overall good progress they make in their learning prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Most have good attendance records and are keen to come to school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</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>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

<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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Good teaching accounts for the good progress that pupils make across the school. Learning objectives are clearly identified and shared with pupils so that they are clear about what they are learning. Teachers are aware of the different needs of pupils in their lessons and pitch work that meets the needs of most although, at times, the more able are not challenged enough, particularly in English. Teaching assistants are well deployed and work effectively with individuals and groups. Work is generally well structured, especially in subjects such as mathematics, so that it becomes progressively more difficult. However, in some English lessons, work is too structured, leaving limited opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or to discuss ideas with one another, especially in preparation for writing. New technologies, such as electronic projectors, are well used in lessons and support learning well.

The curriculum is tailored well for the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those still learning English. The school has a satisfactory and improving curriculum for English. Staff have received relevant training in developing pupils' speaking skills and vocabulary so as to prepare them better for writing. While there is encouragement to staff to provide writing opportunities through other subjects, a coherent and consistent whole school approach to this has not yet been established. Regular opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) are enabling pupils to develop good skills. A rich range of visits and visitors support pupils' personal development well and extend their knowledge of the wider world. Music is particularly well developed. For example, all pupils in Year 5 are learning to play a musical instrument.

The school cares and supports pupils well and this is reflected in the high level of confidence amongst parents that their children are safe at school. Good use is made of all the statutory agencies and staff, such as a parent support assistant, to support particular individuals and their families, especially where vulnerable pupils are concerned. A wide range of strategies to encourage good attendance is now bearing fruit. The school has plans to go to even greater lengths to ensure that attendance continues to improve, especially amongst the most persistent absentees.

*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	2
<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 is an excellent role model. Her tireless energy and drive underpin the school's success. Staff, parents and pupils find her approachable and are confident

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about taking issues to her for resolution. She has established a good staff team across the school. Leaders of areas such as inclusion, mathematics, ICT, the Early Years Foundation Stage and the lower school are particularly good at bringing teams together to drive up performance. The leadership of literacy is beginning to have the same impact. Staff share common aims and are clear about the direction of development. However, they would welcome greater involvement in setting this direction. Teaching is well monitored and teachers are given useful feedback to support their development.

The school promotes equality successfully and ensures that no groups of pupils suffer discrimination. It has used data to track progress effectively so as to narrow differences in the performance of different groups of pupils. The school has identified the need to improve the progress of more able pupils in English, particularly in writing.

A significant minority of governors are new to their roles but are being well supported to develop their roles. Governors are very well focused on key issues such as improving writing and attendance. The Chair of Governors provides a strong lead in challenging the school about its effectiveness.

All safeguarding arrangements and policies are in line with requirements and systematically reviewed. The school has a satisfactory, planned approach to community cohesion. At school level, there is a strong, cohesive community. There are good examples of the school's positive impact on the local community. The curriculum is used well to teach pupils about life in different parts of Britain and abroad but there are no direct links with schools in these more distant locations to personalise pupils' experiences.

*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>2</b>



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children begin with skills and knowledge that are significantly below those expected for their ages, especially in literacy and language. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes so that, by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, standards are closer to age-related expectations. Standards have been rising and in 2009 were slightly below national averages indicating very good progress. Teaching is good. Well structured and practical activities successfully engage and motivate children's learning. Provision for numeracy is particularly good and many activities across all areas for learning include a numeracy strand. As a result, children become confident with numbers. Writing is not woven into as wide a range of activities across the curriculum, hence opportunities are missed for children to have a go at scripting their own ideas and views. Provision for personal and social development is a strength and children develop good levels of independence and enjoyment. They willingly help one another in lessons and enjoy, for example, dressing up and pretending to be someone else. The area is well managed and led. Children's work is well assessed and the information used to support learning. However, data is not always pulled together to get an overview of progress across the whole stage. Progress of individual children is well tracked and support provided where such tracking highlights a need. There is a good sense of teamwork in the Early Years Foundation Stage, a strong understanding of what constitutes good practice and a drive which is successfully embedding best practice across the whole stage.

*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 are very positive about the school overall, and show a high level of satisfaction with the quality of education provided and the leadership of the school. They particularly agree that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. A few do not feel that the school takes account of their suggestions or concerns. Inspection findings suggest that the school works well with parents and does encourage their input into the school. Concerns, including formal and informal complaints, are taken very seriously and dealt with extremely well.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Southwood 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 166 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 485 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	102	61	59	36	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	92	55	72	43	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	77	46	81	49	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	41	91	55	5	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	45	84	51	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	38	91	55	6	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	33	102	61	5	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)	51	31	90	54	7	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	31	96	58	10	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	37	86	52	9	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	27	94	57	12	7	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	68	41	91	55	7	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	45	84	51	7	4	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.**



27 November 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Southwood Primary School, Dagenham, RM9 5LT

We enjoyed visiting your school, and in particular, we enjoyed talking to you. We should like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. The school gives you a good education, and you achieve well as a result.

These are some of the best things about the school.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education.
- You enjoy school and get on well with one another.
- By the time you are in Year 6, you are responsible, thoughtful and keen to do well. You are more than ready for secondary school.
- Teaching is good and you are well supported in lessons. As a result you make good progress in your learning.
- Your headteacher is working successfully with staff and governors to make the school the best that it can be.
- You are well looked after and your parents agree that you are safe in school.

There are a few things that we would like your school to do next.

- Make sure that in all literacy lessons you have interesting tasks and those of you who find learning easy are given work that challenges you.
- Give you more opportunities to practise your literacy skills in other subjects.
- Ensure that you are given clear guidance on how well you are doing and how to improve your work.
- Provide more opportunities for you to mix with the local and wider communities.

We were pleased to see that your attendance has improved. Most of you attend school regularly but there are still a few of you who miss too much school, sometimes because your parents take you on holiday during term time. You can help your education by making sure you keep up a good attendance record.

Yours faithfully,

Gulshan Kayembe - Lead Inspector

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