

South Green Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114946
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	378967
Inspection dates	31 January–1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Jackie Cousins

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Oliffe
Headteacher	Marianne Norman
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2007
School address	Hickstars Lane Billericay CM12 9RJ
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jackie Cousins

Additional inspector

Nichola Perry

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 16 lessons or part lessons and observed all nine teachers. They met with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, records of pupils' progress, policies, minutes of meetings and the school's self-evaluation documents. They received and analysed questionnaires from 86 parents and carers, as well as surveys from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This junior school is smaller than the average-sized primary. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs or those who have a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, and very few speak English as an additional language. The school has the following awards: Inclusion, Basic Skills, Healthy Schools, Activemark and Investors in People. Trust status was achieved in September 2009. The school exceeds the floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- The overall effectiveness of South Green Junior is good. Pupils are involved successfully in all activities whenever they join the school. This is because of good leadership and management and staff who welcome pupils from all backgrounds and abilities.
- The key to the school’s success is that care and guidance for pupils are excellent, both in their academic work and personal development. As a result, their behaviour is outstanding, attendance is high and pupils say they feel extremely safe in school.
- Pupils achieve well from their starting points and attainment in 2011 was significantly above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Over the last three years, the oldest pupils’ attainment has risen steadily. Their achievement is not outstanding because a small number of pupils in each year group do not make the expected progress. The school’s systems to track the progress of individual pupils is not fully developed.
- Most pupils make good progress because teaching is good. Teachers use imaginative resources such as films and pictures to capture pupils’ interests and the marking of pupils’ work is excellent. Occasionally, pupils are not totally clear about how to extend their learning in lessons so that they are attaining a higher level of skill.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher consistently set very high expectations. A good level of engagement with parents and carers means pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils’ achievement to even higher levels by:

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- ensuring that all pupils make expected or better progress every year
 - tracking each year group's attainment and progress even more rigorously every term.
- Develop the consistency of teaching and learning by:
- making sure all lessons extend pupils' learning to even higher levels of skill
 - ensuring pupils always know what the most important things are for them to learn in each lesson.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said their children are making good progress and that their particular needs are met. Inspection findings confirm that pupils progress well from their starting points which are above average. This is because teachers have high levels of expertise and they effectively use information and communication technology to motivate pupils. In an outstanding lesson observed in Year 5, pupils learned to write a description of a scene extremely considerately because the teacher emphasised the need to describe how the child was feeling and thinking. Reading is taught rigorously and so pupils learn to read words fluently and discuss the meaning of texts in detail. This ensures that pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is significantly above average. More-able pupils achieve well because, for instance, they learn to use technical vocabulary and recognise similes and metaphors. Work in books demonstrates that pupils in Year 6 use vocabulary well, for example, when they write a story about a boy in Victorian times who is a pickpocket. Pupils' presentation skills have improved significantly since the last inspection because this aspect of learning is taught more rigorously. Occasionally, a few pupils do not make expected progress in a year.

Boys' and girls' achievement in mathematics is good. In a lesson in Year 5, discussion was used successfully and so pupils learned to decide whether they should use a mental or written method to solve a problem. Work in pupils' books in Year 4 demonstrated that they develop numeracy skills well when, for example, they learn to double three-digit numbers accurately. Pupils learn their times tables and so their basic skills are promoted efficiently. This means that, for example, pupils in Year 6 use this knowledge thoughtfully when they quickly calculate 50% and 25% of a number.

Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs make equally as good progress as others. This is because teachers and teaching assistants use time and resources carefully to assist pupils to catch up and fill any gaps in their understanding. Individual and small-group intervention programmes allow pupils to improve their key skills successfully. 'The Reading Race' programme ensures pupils read regularly to an adult and encourages them to develop their skills quickly and efficiently. Individual education plans are used thoughtfully to support pupils'

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learning and make sure all staff are clear about the particular targets pupils are working towards. The school works well with other agencies to support pupils with additional needs. Transfer to secondary school is managed astutely because staff share information carefully.

Quality of teaching

Nearly all parents who sent in a questionnaire said that their children are well taught. Teachers use questioning creatively and so pupils learn to think profoundly for themselves. For example, a teacher's effective use of questioning in a science lesson in Year 5 allowed pupils to investigate the solubility of some materials. The pupils explained thoughtfully why some chemicals dissolve and others do not. Teachers capture pupils' imagination and so they develop creative ideas effectively when, for example, they paint images in the style of Japanese artists. Teachers are knowledgeable and so, for example, pupils in Year 3 learned to link sentences effectively using connectives which helped to explain the reason for actions. Occasionally, one or two pupils are not fully aware of which features to add to their work to show a higher level of attainment.

Assessment is used resourcefully to plan lessons and to create personalised targets for pupils. Virtually all pupils who answered the questionnaire said the school staff help them to do well. Pupils understand how to improve their work because marking is exemplary. It often explains in detail what they have done successfully and what they can do to improve. Pupils are rigorously involved in self-assessment of their work. For example, they underline their writing words and phrases which meet the learning objectives. Teachers regularly record, with dates, when pupils' personal targets are met.

A good curriculum ensures physical education is taught successfully and so pupils develop their personal fitness levels well. Pupils learn to be independent and work cooperatively with others because of teachers' high expectations.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children are safe in school. Pupils feel safe in school because staff manage any minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour calmly and firmly. Pupils are extremely polite and kind to one another. They value highly the 'Star of the Week' award which, with staff guidance, promotes outstandingly good behaviour. In recent years, very few pupils have been excluded. Bullying incidents are extremely rare. One pupil summed up others' comments when he said, 'Teachers sort out bullying right away.' Anti-bullying training very successfully informs pupils how to reduce the chances of being bullied and how to handle challenging situations. Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding because the staff are enthusiastic and have high expectations of the pupils. For example, in one lesson in Year 5, virtually all pupils keenly answered the teachers' questions and then immediately started to write their ideas down carefully. Pupils' views are shared extremely successfully through the school council and so

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they are helping to improve the school. Their attendance is consistently high and their punctuality is very good because it is monitored rigorously.

Pupils' social skills are promoted superbly by staff. This ensures that they work together well. The pupils learn the difference between right and wrong due to excellent guidance from staff. Pupils' spiritual development is very carefully supported by all staff. This ensures pupils learn to reflect on their feelings perceptively. Their multi-cultural awareness is effectively established.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead by example successfully, because their leadership has focused very astutely on key areas for development. The school has used performance management targets conscientiously to maintain previous good performance. Pupils' speaking and listening skills have been improved considerably since the last inspection because the school uses drama activities and performance to large audiences well. The quality of teaching has been developed through good use of continuous professional development and highly astute support from the deputy headteacher. Self-evaluation is utilized methodically by staff and leaders at all levels. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

Since the last inspection the governing body has enhanced its role by carrying out more monitoring activities. This makes sure that school leaders are challenged frequently by probing questions about the quality of education. The governing body ensures that pupils are safeguarded well. For example, several staff have up-to-date first-aid qualifications, policies on administering medicine are suitably applied by staff, all employment checks are carried out and recorded accurately for staff, and child protection training is regularly updated.

The promotion of equal opportunities is tackled well and discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are involved effectively in all school activities. Those who speak English as an additional language or who are looked after children make good progress. While pupils' attainment is monitored carefully by senior leaders and staff, the system in use does not make it easy for them to analyse the achievement of different groups of pupils in each year group. This means that, for example, a few governors are not clear about how well different year groups attain and progress from term to term.

Pupils' needs are met successfully because the curriculum is well planned. For instance, pupils very much enjoyed a topic on the Second World War where they found out about what happened at Dunkirk. Pupils say they like French lessons and are proud of the competitions they have won for speaking the language. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievements creatively. They are encouraged to develop their information and communication technology skills when, for example, they present the water cycle using images and text from the internet. Basic skills of communication, literacy, numeracy and science are promoted successfully and so pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education.

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The school's leaders engage successfully with parents and carers. The good level of response to the questionnaire shows how keen parents and carers were to contribute their views. Nearly all those who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school responds well to their concerns. Virtually all parents and carers said they would recommend the school. One parent summed up their thoughts when they recorded, 'My child has made fantastic progress at South Green Juniors. The staff and headteacher are approachable and dedicated. I am extremely happy with the school.' Parents value the breakfast club which cares for pupils effectively. The school works thoughtfully to bring together the community and pupils take part in local events. For example, last year pupils took part in many local sporting competitions. Pupils are aware of global issues and actively recycle materials and shoes at school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Green Junior School, Billericay, CM12 9RJ

Thank you for helping us to find out about your school. It was enjoyable to speak to some of you and to hear your thoughts. Your school provides you with a good education. You told us that it is a happy school where you all get on very well together, and we agree. These are some of the best things about your school.

- Your attainment by Year 6 is well above average and you make good progress.
- You behave outstandingly well in school because staff guide you thoughtfully.
- You feel safe in school because staff work considerately to care for you.
- You told us how much you enjoy the many topics you study in literacy, numeracy, science, art and history.
- You are taught well and staff work hard to make lessons interesting.
- Nearly all of you told us in your answers on the questionnaire that teachers are interested in your ideas.
- You contribute to the community effectively and you told us how proud you are of the plays you have performed for others.
- The school staff have established a strong partnership with your parents and carers.

Your headteacher and deputy headteacher have very good ideas about how to improve the school and so we have asked them to make things even better by carrying out the following improvements.

- Raise your achievement to even higher levels by ensuring even more of you make the progress we expect every year.
- Watch over the progress you make even more carefully each term.
- Make sure your teachers highlight what the most important things are for you to do each lesson so that you work at even higher levels of skill.

Continue to listen carefully to your teachers' comments, come to school every day and enjoy all the great things you are learning at South Green Junior School.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins
Lead inspector

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