

South Petherton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123720
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	363967
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wyn Burke
Headteacher	Catherine Walker
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed and three teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and a range of other documentation. Fifty-nine responses to the parental questionnaire were received and analysed, together with 104 pupil and 10 staff responses to their respective questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of teaching, learning and the curriculum in raising rates of progress in English.
- The impact of provision on outcomes concerning pupils' personal development, particularly their knowledge and awareness of cultural diversity.
- The effectiveness of assessment in helping pupils know how to improve, especially the role of pupil self assessment.
- The effect of shared leadership (including governance) on school improvement. The effect of shared leadership (including governance) on school improvement.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average-sized school serves its local area in rural Somerset. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Only a very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. An average percentage of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including physical, moderate and specific learning difficulties. With new housing in the village, the school roll has risen over the last three years, and an increased number of pupils have entered the school after the beginning of Year 3. There is a breakfast club but this is not managed by the governing body and is subject to separate 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

South Petherton is a good school. Pupils benefit from effective teaching and a lively curriculum which ensure that they make good progress and achieve well. By Year 6, attainment is above average overall. The successful development of pupils' ability to assess and improve their own work, together with their ability to work individually and collaboratively, combines with their above average attainment and high attendance to mean that they are exceptionally well prepared for the next step in their education. Spiritual development is outstanding. The school is rightly proud of the work it does to promote art education, and the quality of pupils' art work on display is high.

Pupils are happy and secure in school. The sense of safety amongst pupils and their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe are outstanding. Pupils show high levels of confidence that adults will help and support them. The quality of the care, guidance and support provided by staff is outstanding, ensuring that all pupils are individually valued and their personal well-being is considered at all times. Pupils behave well overall and many behave in an exemplary way. The small number of pupils who have difficulty in controlling their behaviour are very well supported and are helped to improve. Teaching assistants play a particularly high quality role within this. There are, however, a few occasions when teachers expect pupils to sit for too long listening to them and when this happens, some become restless and this leads to missed opportunities for pupils to learn as well as possible in the available time. This is a reason why learning is not yet outstanding.

Teachers work hard to interest and motivate pupils through the activities they plan. The curriculum, particularly the use of enrichment activities such as visitors to the school, supports this well and pupils report that they like school. High levels of attendance help show this is the case. Teachers, through their assessments, are very aware of the different levels of attainment of the pupils in their class and plan to suit differing needs. Nevertheless, higher-attaining pupils were quite right when they said to inspectors that they are not always fully stretched when the teacher is teaching the whole class together. When pupils work individually or in small groups, they work extremely well, showing high levels of ability to concentrate and to work collaboratively.

The majority of parents and carers are pleased with the way the school operates. However, a minority are less happy with various aspects, including the information they are given to assist them to help their child at home, and this is an aspect that inspectors are agreed could be further developed. Some parents and carers are not happy with the way suggestions and complaints are dealt with, and although inspection evidence does not fully support this view, action is needed to improve communication so that the parental opinions can be fully explored.

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The headteacher gives exceptionally strong, dedicated leadership that has provided the staff with a clear vision and a determination to move the school forward. School self-evaluation is accurate and the development work has been successful. For example, over recent years, attainment in mathematics have been more consistent than that in English, but successful school development work to improve pupils' writing means that currently pupils are making good progress in both subjects and any differences in attainment have been eliminated. The greatly developed use of assessment information is being used to help pupils to know how to improve their work and to accelerate their progress. Staff and governors support the headteacher well. Since the last inspection, staff are taking an increasing leadership role, which has strengthened the capacity to improve effectively. This development of shared leadership continues to be ongoing, as a few are still increasing their leadership role in the drive to make leadership outstanding in the future. The track record of improvement, and the shared determination to improve the school, means that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality teaching and learning so that more is outstanding by:
 - fully challenging pupils in all ability groups in every part of each lesson
 - ensuring pupils are not expected to listen to teachers talking for too long.ensuring pupils are not expected to listen to teachers talking for too long.
- In order to promote outstanding leadership, develop the roles of more key staff in assisting the headteacher to lead and manage the school.
- Improve communication with parents and carers in order to ensure:
 - they are better able to assist their child at home
 - they feel their suggestions and concerns have been given due attention and consideration.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils usually show great enthusiasm for their work; they make good progress and all groups achieve well. Year 4 pupils, for example, concentrated for a significant period when researching to identify the mini-beasts they had found in the school's environmental area. They showed an ability to use the skills they had learned in English to efficiently read and make notes about their findings. However, interest levels, especially of higher-ability pupils, are occasionally lower when pupils are being taught as a whole class. Nonetheless, the most-able make good overall progress over time. As a result of the well-targeted support from teachers and very effective teaching assistants, as well as suitably challenging activities, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. Pupils who enter the school after the beginning of Year 3 make particularly good progress.

Pupils are generally very polite and friendly. They are very willing to accept responsibility, both through supporting other pupils and through taking responsibility for their own actions. They want to show their school off to best effect and through the school council play a significant part in helping to improve facilities. Pupils show that they have well-thought-out views about the education they receive. Pupils enjoy physical activities and show good knowledge about sensible eating, which promotes their good health. Pupils not

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only feel secure but understand that they have a responsibility to act to help to keep themselves safe. The way pupils are kept safe is an aspect of the school that parents greatly value.

The school's emphasis on creativity means that pupils show real appreciation of expressive arts and natural beauty, and show outstanding spiritual development in the way they can respond emotionally to both of these. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development, when combined, is good. To make this outstanding, the school is working to further enhance pupils' awareness of cultures beyond their own.

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	2
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching moves pupils' learning on well. Teachers give very clear explanations and use resources, including technology, well to aid them with this. They often start from pupils' own experiences, giving relevance to what they are teaching. In a Year 5 English lesson, for example, pupils were asked to analyse well-known television advertisements before writing their own. Pupils report that they work at their best when they are actively engaged in activities, an observation borne out by inspection. Activities that follow initial teaching are well-planned and in the many good lessons, teachers use the knowledge they have about their pupils to challenge them correctly. Time is used least well when teachers do not have a variety of challenge for the most-able pupils when they teach the class as a

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whole, or when introductions are too long, making some pupils occasionally bored and restless.

The staff have worked hard to improve the quality of the feedback they give to pupils. This has resulted in high quality marking which is specific in helping pupils know how they can improve their work and giving them opportunity to act upon this advice. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing the quality of their own work, which is having a very positive impact on the progress they make.

Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Pupils are very well known to all adults in the school so their well-being is promoted at all times during the day. The school has very productive relationships with a range of outside agencies, who they call upon whenever there is a need. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are promoted well through support in school and good links with other local schools. Because each individual is valued as an individual, all pupils are significant beneficiaries of high quality care, guidance and support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

Through regular checking of the quality of education being provided, the headteacher very accurately evaluates the school, and actions to improve are based on this analysis and a determination and vision to do the best for the pupils. Data are used well to check that all pupils are making the progress expected of them and to ensure that an increasing number make accelerated progress. This approach ensures equality of opportunity for all, as does the focus on care of the individual. Staff and governors ensure pupils have equality of access to all that the school provides and there is very effective work to make sure there is no discrimination. Other leaders contribute much to school improvement because their roles are developing well. The headteacher is keenly ensuring that responsibility for planning and monitoring improvements is shared further so that they are conducted rigorously and have the best impact on improving outcomes for pupils. Staff work together very well as a team, so planned developments are systematically worked on and successfully accomplished.

The governing body are proactive in supporting and challenging the school. They are visible in school and quick to respond when there is a need; for example, one governor replaced a teacher at the Year 6 residential visit in order to reduce the number of teachers out of school during the inspection. There are systems in place to allow parents and carers to express opinions and concerns, but these are seldom used by them. The size of the minority of parents and carers who feel that their suggestions and concerns are not acted

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upon, however, shows that this is an area for improvement. Governors and staff make concerted efforts to ensure pupils are properly safeguarded and this is successfully accomplished through very tight systems for child protection, good staff training and regular checking of health and safety provision.

The school has promoted community cohesion through a well-devised plan and although not fully complete, there is improvement evident in the impact of the school's approach to extending provision to the United Kingdom and world communities. As the village and school population expands, leaders understand that there is a need to look again at the ways in which the school promotes community cohesion locally, as they are keen to make this outstanding in the future.

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspection team received a larger-than-average number of responses to the inspection questionnaire. Although the school enjoys the positive support of the large majority of parents and carers, as identified earlier in this report, this support is not universal. The vast majority agree or strongly agree that their child is kept safe and that their child likes school. Inspectors' judgements match these positive opinions. Information to parents and carers concerning their child's progress is good and appreciated by them. Some parents express the opinion that teaching is not good in the school and that inappropriate behaviour is not managed well. Lesson observations, pupils' books and progress data show that teaching is successful. Behaviour management strategies are good and were observed to be consistently implemented throughout the inspection. However, inspection evidence concurs that they should receive more regular information concerning what is being taught and how they could support this at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Petherton Junior 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	51	24	41	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	54	24	41	3	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	27	34	58	9	15	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	29	31	53	10	17	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	37	22	37	14	24	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	27	29	49	14	24	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	32	36	61	4	7	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)	23	39	28	47	5	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	32	30	51	6	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	22	27	46	12	20	7	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	25	26	44	10	17	6	10
The school is led and managed effectively	17	29	29	49	8	14	4	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	41	27	46	7	12	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 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



22 June 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of South Petherton Junior School, South Petherton TA13 5AG

We really enjoyed our time in your school and one of the highlights was talking to you. You will be pleased to know that we think that yours is a good school and that you develop very strong skills to help you in the future.

These are some of the things that are the best.

- You make good progress in English and mathematics.
- You behave well, work hard and want to succeed.
- You are given a wide range of opportunities to study art and nature and the way you express your thoughts and feelings about these is exceptional.
- You are good at working together and supporting each other.
- You receive good teaching that helps you to be interested in what you are doing.
- Everyone in school takes outstandingly good care of you. This makes you feel very safe and teaches you how to take very good care of yourselves.
- Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body have worked hard to make improvements to the education you receive.

To make things even better we have asked your headteacher, governors and teachers to do these things.

- Make sure teachers use what they know about what you can already do to give you challenging work during every part of each lesson and ensure that you do not have to listen to teachers for too long before doing activities for yourselves.
- Make sure all your parents and carers feel satisfied with what happens in school and know how they can best support you at home.
- Help some of the adult leaders to become outstandingly good at helping the school to improve.

We think that you made some very sensible suggestions as to how your school could be improved and that you could, help your teachers to do these things.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions

Lead inspector

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