



Sowe Valley Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103671
LEA Coventry
Inspection number 276971
Inspection dates 17 January 2006 to 18 January 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew McDowall HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Princethorpe Way
School category	Community		Coventry
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		West Midlands CV3 2QX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	024 76456063
Number on roll	183	Fax number	024 76459768
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Mandy McDermot
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Karma Aston

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 17 January 2006 - 18 January 2006	Inspection number 276971
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is a smaller-than-average primary school in the Binley area of Coventry. The great majority of its children attending the school come from the immediate area, which consists of mixed housing with above-average levels of social deprivation. There are an average number of children with learning difficulties. The number of children joining and leaving the school during the year is above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where children make good progress. From a low starting point they go on to reach above-average standards by the time they leave. This is due to the lively curriculum and the good teaching they receive. The children in the reception class have a positive introduction to school and make good progress, and teaching in Years 5 and 6 is outstanding. Occasionally work is set that does not meet the needs of all abilities. When this happens the work is too easy or too hard for some children. The children develop well as young people and feel valued by the school. The school keeps them safe and promotes healthy living.

The headteacher leads the school well and is ably supported by her senior teachers. She has successfully built a team who are all committed to doing the best for the children. The governors are supportive of the school but they are not involved enough in the overall development of the school. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement. The areas it has identified for improvement are the right ones, but there needs to be greater clarity regarding how the school will measure its success in continuing to improve progress and standards.

The school has a good track record of improvement and has made good progress since the last inspection. It provides good value for money and has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all teachers plan and teach lessons that meet the needs of all abilities in all classes.
- Increase the involvement of all governors in setting priorities for the school, planning for improvement and monitoring progress.
- Improve the targets in the school improvement plan by making them more measurable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are generally below those expected, with many having very low-level skills in early reading and writing.

They settle well in school and make good progress in the reception class. By the time they move to Year 1, their skills are broadly in line with those expected, with the exception of reading and writing, which remain below average. All children, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach standards that are broadly average. Standards at the end of Year 2 have fallen in recent years. This is due to the changing nature of the children attending the school and the increasing number of children starting with poor social development and language skills.

Progress in Years 3 to 6 is very good. The children go on to achieve above- average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave, with many children reaching the higher levels. The school aims high, sets challenging targets for the children and is successful in reaching them. Children with learning difficulties also make good progress, with many achieving the nationally expected standard in all subjects in 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. They have good attitudes to school, enjoy their lessons and work hard. One girl said 'I enjoy school because lessons which could be boring are made fun by the teachers'. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Children behave very well in lessons and during playtimes. They respect their teachers and each other and take good care of school equipment.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older children happily accept responsibilities such as helping reception children. The school councillors make a positive contribution to the school community. For example, the new Jungle Gym is due to a request from them. They also raise money for charity. As they get older, children gain in self-confidence and are able to understand how people might feel in different circumstances. Children develop a good understanding of their own culture and a sound understanding of other cultures.

Children understand the need to stay healthy, with many joining the different sports clubs, but too many children in Years 3 to 6 bring crisps to school as a snack. The children's good basic skills in English and mathematics, plus their ability to work very well together, means they are well prepared for the next stage in their education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children are very keen to learn. The staff know them well and plan interesting activities for them to do. The great majority of teachers have high expectations of the children, who respond positively by behaving well and enjoying their lessons. The recently acquired interactive whiteboards are used well by the staff to engage the children in their learning.

The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is outstanding. In these classes the teachers have very high expectations of the children. They provide well-planned activities that are carefully designed to meet the particular needs of all children in the class. These teachers mark the work very well and provide children with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. These features are not so well developed in the small minority of lessons where the teaching is only satisfactory. Here the teachers do not expect enough of

the children and set the same work for them all to do. Consequently the work is too easy or too hard for some children.

The teaching assistants are well deployed and make a very positive contribution to the learning in the school. They work in close partnership with the teachers and provide good challenge and support for children who need a boost to help them make progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The children enjoy the range of activities they are given to do at school. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors that help to make lessons more interesting. For example, Year 1 visited a local DIY store to learn about concrete as part of their materials topic. The residential trip in Year 6 helps children to develop social skills and promotes teamwork. Visitors such as a string quartet and people who have visited Africa help children to appreciate their own and other cultures. The good range of clubs also adds to children's enjoyment of school, with the sports clubs helping them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Teachers link subjects well so that pupils practise skills learnt in one subject while learning another. A good example of this was when children were learning about history through literacy and wrote moving accounts of the Jarrow March. The curriculum is well designed and steps are taken to cater for children of all abilities and interests. To do this children are sometimes withdrawn into small groups so that they get the support they need to understand the work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff encourage children to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Younger children are given milk and fruit and children throughout the school are encouraged to drink water regularly. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety, including those for child protection, are securely in place. There are good arrangements for dealing with any allegations of bullying. Children have great trust in their teachers and are confident that staff will listen sympathetically to any problems they may have. Consequently children feel safe in school.

Induction procedures for children into the reception class are good. For those who start at other times they are excellent. Nearly all teachers guide pupils well on how they can improve their work so that children of all abilities make good progress. The school closely monitors pupils with learning and emotional difficulties and provides very good support for them so they achieve well, many reaching the nationally expected standards at the end of Year 6.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is dogged in her determination to provide the best possible education for the children. She is well supported by her deputy headteacher and senior teacher, who provide good role models for other staff. Governance of the school is satisfactory. The governors are very supportive and monitor aspects of the day-to-day running of the school well.

Their involvement in the strategic management of the school is less strong. They are not sufficiently involved in planning for improvement and reviewing the progress the school is making. At present the priorities for improvement lack clarity. The school is not clear enough regarding how it will measure its success in terms of how progress and standards improve.

The senior team have good systems in place to check on the progress all children are making as they move through the school. This information is used well to identify groups of children who need extra support. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school.

Children and parents are regularly consulted about the school and action is taken in response to ideas and concerns. The school makes the best possible use of its cramped accommodation. The headteacher and governors have successfully improved the building since the last inspection and have plans for further work. The school has a good track record which, along with the strong teamwork, indicates a good capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children

Can I start by saying a big thank you to everyone for being so helpful to us when we visited your school recently. You told us you like your school and you think it is good. We agree with you.

These are the things that we liked

- We think you all behave well and work hard.
- We think your teachers plan interesting things for you to do in lessons and organise good clubs and trips for you to join in with.
- Your work in literacy, numeracy and science is good.
- All the people working at your school really care about you and work very hard to keep you safe and help you get better at your work.

To make your school even better we think the teachers need to sometimes plan work better so it is not too easy or too hard for you. We also think the school governors need to be more involved in deciding what the school needs to do next to improve and they need to write clear targets so they can see when you have achieved them.

Finally we think your school will get even better in the future. Thank you again for all your help in the inspection.