



Southmead School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113139
LEA Devon
Inspection number 279102
Inspection dates 29 June 2006 to 30 June 2006
Reporting inspector Margaret Dickinson AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wrafton Road
School category	Community		Braunton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Devon EX33 2BU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01271 812448
Number on roll	283	Fax number	01271 812448
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jasmine Chesters
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr David Brown

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

As well as recruiting pupils from Braunton and the neighbouring villages of Heanton and Wrafton, the school also serves the families from the forces base at Chivenor. The average posting for these families is generally under two years. The school is situated in a tourist area, where some families tend to settle for comparatively short periods. These factors mean the school has a very high turnover of pupils, with around a third joining or leaving during the school year. When children start in Reception, their standards are broadly average, although writing is a weaker area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Southmead School is a good school which gives good value for money. It is well led and managed. Inspectors' view of the overall effectiveness of provision matches that of the school. Progress since the last inspection has been good and the school has good capacity for further improvement. Pupils achieve well and leave school with above average standards, having entered the school with broadly average standards. The school analyses test results well and takes appropriate steps to improve these. For example, performance in English dipped slightly in 2005 and good initiatives were put into place which proved to be important factors in many more pupils reaching Level 5 in English this year. Teaching is good. Most lessons are well planned and structured and, when teaching is outstanding, pupils are highly motivated and extremely keen to complete their work. Provision in Reception is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. The school's curriculum is good overall with some clear strengths, such as the strong emphasis on developing pupils' writing across the school, and the way the school enriches pupils' learning through visits, visitors and clubs. A weaker aspect is that children in Reception do not have enough opportunities to take part in a range of practical activities, including play, when they can exercise a degree of choice and develop their initiative and independence. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes. They are enthusiastic about learning, especially when they take part in practical activities, and their behaviour is good. Pupils contribute very well to their school and local community. Many pupils are very interested in developing healthy lifestyles, for example, through cycling to school and watching what they eat. Pupils are particularly well cared for. The school has very good systems for helping pupils who are new to settle in and feel welcome. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning and to their personal care and guidance. The school's systems for tracking individual pupils' progress are not sufficiently developed to provide a clear overview of each pupil's progress from the time they first enter school to Year 6. This is especially important, given the school's frequently changing population.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for children in Reception to take part in a range of planned practical activities to develop greater initiative and independence.
- Further develop the way information from assessments is collated, to provide a clear overview of how well individual pupils achieve as they move through the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Children enter the school with broadly average standards and, by Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average. The test results in 2006 indicate standards by Year 6 are improving further and that pupils continue to do well. Pupils make good progress overall as they move through the

school and consistently so for the majority of pupils in Years 1 to 6. Progress of children in the Foundation Stage does not quite match that and is satisfactory overall. Whilst sound attention is given to basic skills in literacy and numeracy, they do not make enough progress in exploring and investigating, and in developing a degree of independence. Pupils who join the school later than others also make good headway because they are helped to settle in quickly and receive good support if they need it. The school has recently been focusing on how it can support the more able, gifted and talented pupils. This is having a positive effect and these pupils are making greater headway than they have in the past. The school sets itself suitably challenging targets for standards in English and mathematics, and often exceeds these, despite the high numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school. The 2006 test results show pupils in Year 6 have made good progress based on their earlier standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behaviour is good. Year 6 pupils are good representatives for their school and are enthusiastic about many aspects of school life. They especially enjoy the extra-curricular activities, trips and visits that make such a valuable contribution to their social development. The school works diligently to encourage good attendance. However, this is below average, because some families from the Chivenor base, and those involved in the tourist industry, tend to take holidays during school terms. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show good commitment to environmental issues. For example, they appreciated planting trees in a local conservation area and were pleased they were making a contribution to the environment. Members of the School Council take their responsibilities seriously. They have played an important part in improving the toilets, for example, and providing equipment for playtimes. Pupils contribute very well indeed to their local and school community, through raising money for several charities and supporting local events and projects, such as the Braunton Museum. Pupils feel very safe in school. They say that the few incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are dealt with well. The small numbers from minority ethnic groups are respected and included. Pupils choose sensibly from a range of foods and take part regularly in physical activities, such as the Cycle to School Week. Pupils develop a good range of personal and social skills and are well prepared for their next stage of education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and most pupils learn and achieve well. The majority of lessons are well planned and well structured. Learning intentions are shared with the pupils so that they understand what they are going to learn. In many lessons, teachers make good use of discussion and questioning to challenge and motivate pupils. Teachers

make learning basic skills enjoyable and meaningful. They use interactive whiteboards well to enliven learning. In the best lessons, teachers know exactly what pupils need to do to move on in their learning and planning in these lessons is very effective. In the minority of lessons when teaching is satisfactory, the planned activities are not sufficiently challenging for the range of needs in the class. Teaching assistants are used well to support individual pupils or small groups, including those with learning difficulties and or disabilities. Because some of the learning goals are not fully met, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Reception. That is more a reflection of some weaknesses in curriculum organisation rather than weaknesses in teaching itself.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and supports pupils' achievement well overall but there is insufficient emphasis on the importance of practical activities and learning through exploration, investigation and play in Reception. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy in the school, which is having an impact on improving standards. There are some good examples of practical investigations in science and design and technology. The recent work on developing creativity in the curriculum is also having a positive effect. Pupils say, for example, that when they did a topic on Aztecs, they very much enjoyed the variety of approaches and the way they felt more involved in how they learned. The annual multicultural arts week gives pupils an understanding of the richness of cultures other than their own. The school also enriches the curriculum well through visits and through inviting visitors into the school. There is a good range of after-school activities to extend the curriculum and encourage healthy lifestyles. The good provision for sport and physical activity is very popular with pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Personal care and guidance is well planned and monitored for most pupils. Health and safety routines, risk assessments and child protection procedures are fully in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well, although a few parents wrote with concerns about how the school identifies and supports their child's needs. The school is particularly successful in supporting pupils whose family circumstances mean they change school frequently, as well as pupils who, for whatever reason, are vulnerable. Most pupils reach their targets because teachers' marking gives good guidance and assessments are used well. A weaker area relates to pupils' academic guidance. The school does not have an effective enough system for showing how well individual pupils make progress as they move through the school, which makes this difficult to monitor.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is perceptive and provides strong leadership and direction. The new deputy headteacher, together with the senior staff, are committed to improving the school and providing good support and guidance for colleagues. However, their roles are not fully articulated and there is some lack of clarity as to where specific responsibilities lie. Staff work hard to provide the best possible quality of education for the pupils and many have undertaken additional training to develop their leadership and teaching skills. This has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement and enjoyment of school. Two examples are a greater commitment to creativity and successfully raising standards in writing. The school plays a key role in training new entrants to the profession. The school has an effective governing body. Governors play an active part in school life through, for example, being involved in the staff action groups. They are supportive and have a good understanding of the strengths of the school. They fulfil their statutory requirements well. The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate and takes into account the views of parents, pupils and governors. Although test results are analysed well, the school's monitoring of the quality of teaching and the provision for Reception children is not sufficiently evaluative to identify areas for improvement. The school has successfully tackled the issues for improvement at the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further.

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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
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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	3	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	1	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	3	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	2	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 We visited your school recently and very much enjoyed meeting you and seeing all the good work you do in school. Thank you for making us feel welcome and talking to us about your school. We wanted to write to you to let you know what we thought about your school. Some of the good things we found:

You do well in school and reach above average standards by the time you leave because you are taught well.

You behave well and enjoy school. You are particularly kind and caring when children join the school for the first time.

The school works hard to help you to keep healthy, through eating well and taking exercise. You know a lot about this and try to follow the good advice you are given.

Your headteacher and teachers care for you all really well and work hard to think of things that will make your school even better. We would like the headteacher, staff and governors to work on two things to make the school even better.

Provide children in Reception with a better range of practical activities.

Make better use of your assessments to check and make sure all of you make good progress each year. With best wishes
Margaret Dickinson
Lead Inspector