



Sholing Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116108
LEA Southampton LEA
Inspection number 279753
Inspection dates 4 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Olive HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Heath Road
School category	Community		Sholing
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Southampton SO19 2QF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02380447447
Number on roll	143	Fax number	02380442177
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Peggy Mayell
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Gibbons

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This average-sized infant school serves a mixed social area with some significant levels of deprivation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than average. Less than 10% of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language.

The school has a number of nationally recognised awards including Investors in People (IIP) status, The Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark, Healthy Schools Status and is a Centre of Excellence for Family Learning within Southampton.

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 with some outstanding features. The achievement of pupils is good and the standards they attain are improving. The key to the school's improvement is the very good, reflective and well-focused leadership of the headteacher and senior team. They have evaluated the school's performance in an accurate and self-critical manner. The school is always striving to make things better and the whole staff work together as an effective team to ensure developments are implemented successfully. The school development plan has a number of very well founded targets for improvement. However, while the school monitors provision and outcomes, the methods of monitoring are not always as well considered so the school is not always in a position to appreciate the contribution of the different initiatives to the overall improvement.

When they join the school, the pupils' attainment is below that expected for children of that age. In the Reception year, the quality of provision is good and the children make good progress in all areas of learning. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and by the time the pupils leave Year 2, standards are in line with the national average. For the last few years, standards have been rising and nearly all the pupils have met their individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics and some have exceeded them. The quality of teaching and learning is good, although there are some inconsistencies. The lessons are stimulating and enjoyable overall. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well and as a result make good progress.

The care, guidance and support the pupils receive is outstanding. The relationships between members of staff and the pupils are excellent and enhance the positive attitudes the pupils have towards their work. The pupils respond well, demonstrating polite and considerate behaviour in the classrooms and around the school. Pupils are well prepared for their future education and their awareness of healthy lifestyles is outstanding. The pupils and parents are very happy with the school, seeing it as a caring, supportive and welcoming place where everyone is encouraged and expected to do their best. The improvement in standards and wider developments since the last inspection illustrate the school has a good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan the monitoring schedule so as to evaluate more precisely the impact of recent initiatives and maximise their effectiveness.
- Build on the current areas of good practice to improve all teaching and learning across the school to the standard of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in the Reception class with attainment below that expected, particularly in language and literacy. Children make good progress in all areas of learning during

their first year at school, although many still have weaknesses in their language skills when they start Year 1. In 2005, the pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics continuing the improvement of the previous year. The results for 2006 in reading and writing have improved further, reflecting the priority the school has given to developing these essential skills.

All groups of pupils achieve well and meet the challenging targets set for them. This includes those pupils with additional learning needs, as they receive good support and are given well-focused catch-up work.

The progress of all pupils is tracked and reviewed very carefully. This information is used effectively to provide intervention strategies for groups of pupils at all levels of attainment to maximise their achievement. This year, assessment information was used to target support to the pupils of average ability; the reading and writing results in 2006 illustrate the success of this initiative.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Parents agree that their children are happy learners who enjoy school. Pupils' moral and social development is very good; they behave well throughout the school, playing and working cooperatively and know how to keep themselves safe. Improved opportunities for working together and increasing involvement in lessons are improving the pupils' motivation and confidence as well as developing important life-skills. Attendance has improved; it is now in line with the national average as a result of the school's successful work with individual families and outside agencies. The pupils' spiritual development is good, promoted well through assemblies and other activities; they are comfortable discussing personal feelings. Cultural development is satisfactory although the pupils' understanding and awareness of different cultures could be extended further. Pupils have an excellent grasp of healthy lifestyles and know why they should eat well and the importance of exercise. Fruit and water are available and the school has worked extremely successfully with families to promote healthy packed lunches. Through opportunities such as raising money for local and national charities and the growing influence of the school council, pupils are encouraged to make a positive contribution to their community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although there is some inconsistency. However, the school monitors teaching thoroughly and is very aware of what needs to be improved. The helpful feedback provided to teachers enables them to improve their classroom practice further.

Lessons are planned well and teachers ensure the pupils know what they are going to do and learn. Teachers make their expectations of behaviour clear, leading to well ordered classrooms and a good working atmosphere. Resources are usually chosen thoughtfully to stimulate the pupils' interest and pupils enjoy their active involvement in lessons. The teachers know the pupils' needs very well; on-going assessment is strong and enables teachers to adapt the work to match the needs of the pupils accurately. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance teaching and learning. Teaching assistants provide high quality support enabling all pupils to play a full part in lessons. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly with motivational comments or symbols the pupils can understand; at its best, it provides good guidance on how pupils can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and creative. Cross-curricular links and first-hand experiences enrich the curriculum and give a greater relevance to the lessons, including enhancing the pupils' writing. The good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum are enabling them to improve their vocabulary and understanding in different subjects. The 'Plan, Do, Review' sessions in the Reception class and Year 1, promote the pupils' skills of independent learning and responsibility and provide a high level of enjoyment. The Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities. Close links with the local secondary school and community groups enable specialised teaching in art and gymnastics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school provides a very safe, caring environment in which pupils enjoy their education. Relationships between the pupils and teachers are warm and contribute to the positive ethos of the school. Teachers and other members of staff are evidently committed to pupils' welfare; pupils know that they can talk to adults if they have any concerns. Child protection procedures are clear. Those pupils with learning difficulties, disabilities or emotional needs are treated sensitively by the staff and the other pupils so that they are involved fully in what the school offers. The school has established links with a wide range of outside agencies to provide effective support for vulnerable children. Liaison with pre-schools and the junior school is good. The safety of the site has been improved and there are secure systems for assessing and addressing health and safety risks.

Individual targets in literacy and numeracy ensure pupils are very clear of what they need to do to improve. Targets are regularly referred to by staff and enable the pupils to take greater responsibility for their own improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She is well supported by effective senior managers and a very committed staff team. The care and concern for every child as an individual permeates the work of the school. The school evaluates its performance accurately and has identified relevant school development targets to continue to improve standards. The role of subject managers in monitoring and evaluating provision has developed as they have become more responsible for the developments in their own subjects. There are many valuable initiatives aimed at raising standards and improving the pupils' well-being and development; however it is important to be specific about the intended outcomes of each initiative when monitoring and evaluating its success. Whilst the school uses an appropriate range of monitoring methods, they are not always the most relevant to measure the success criteria of each action.

The governors fulfil their statutory duties and are supportive of the school. There are effective systems to enable the governors to improve their understanding of the way in which the school works; for example, through class link governors. However, governors are not sufficiently well focused on school development issues to challenge the school to improve further.

The school has very good relations with parents; it regularly seeks the views of parents and acts over relevant issues; for example, the pedestrian access to the school building. Parents are very supportive of the school and consider their children to be making good progress and to be very well cared for.

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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	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	3	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	1	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?	1	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

Children

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly during my visit to your school. I enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and seeing your lessons. I was very pleased to see how much you enjoy your work and how keen you are to learn. I think your school is a good school and most of you and your parents agree!

These are some of the things I thought were good:

- Your school is a happy place in which to learn because you get on well with each other and with the adults. All the staff take a lot of care to ensure you are safe and enjoy school.
- You work hard and are making good progress in lessons because your teachers plan work which is enjoyable and just hard enough.
- Your teachers know how well you are doing and provide helpful targets so you know what you need to improve.
- You behave well in lessons, in assemblies and around the school and play sensibly outside.
- You know how to keep yourselves healthy and safe and why you should exercise. You also know about eating food that is good for you and your lunch-boxes are very healthy.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school even more and make sure you learn as well as you can.

I think these things could be done better:

- All the lessons should be as good as the best ones. This would mean that you could all make even better progress and learn even more.
- For the teachers to find ways of checking up on some of the changes that have been made to see if it is really making a difference to the way you learn; for example your 'Plan, Do, Review' days.

I wish you well in the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Olive

Her Majesty's Inspector